



Chulalongkorn University

Debate on gift economy and ecofeminism

Úrsula Oswald Spring
CRIM-UNAM, U. Chulalongkorn
UNU-EHS, Project PAPIIT 300213
9 December, 2013



Western civilization & patriarchy opposed to gift economy

- Never in history have so many people been **confined to poverty**, income reduction, expulsion, expropriation, and extreme exploitation, again, most of them women and children (deadlocks). For **transnational corporations** (global players), the planet & we are “**play material**” for making profit.
- Human nature is not ego-centric & dominate : In what is it rooted? **Patriarchy** began after armed invasion, violent conquest, and systematic destruction of matriarchal societies by armed hordes due to forced migration for climatic or other catastrophes (**5000 B.C. onwards**) in China, India, the Middle East, North and Central Africa, Europe, and the Americas (Gimbutas 1994; Mies 2003) and continues until today. The development of patriarchal society is related to the invention of war, and since then patriarchy has been **dependent** on the war(s) even in so-called peace times.
- The decline of resources is already underway. With the resulting “resource wars” (Klare 2001)—the new global wars for oil and water—we are witnessing the beginning of the **end of the modern world system**, as a logical consequence.

Patriarchy

- 1) Patriarchy invented a **political system** based on states with **hierarchical dominance** of armed men over the conquered people and dominance of men over women, because women were at the centre of pre-patriarchal society.
- 2) Patriarchy invented an economy based on the plunder of other peoples' property, called **private property** (privare = deprive; priva re: private matter), and systematic exploitation of the conquered, especially the women, because of their control over the means of production —life, food, and human security—and were responsible for the integration of everyone into the community (Vaughan 1997).
- 3) Patriarchy split society into social classes, races, generations, and sexes. This means that women were regarded as being **subject to men by nature**, a belief fabricated by patriarchs to prevent re-establishing a matriarchal society.
- 4) Patriarchy invented in Occident a **God-Father or male creator-religion** based on the “big man” (Godelier 1987), to give life and to take it away. Goddesses were replaced by an omnipotent, violent, and jealous single God.
- 5) Patriarchy invented a **technology** based on war namely by transforming the pre-patriarchal philosophy of alchemy into a patriarchal one. Men have systematically used (female) **knowledge** about life and nature to control life and nature, trying to replace life, women, and nature through “technological progress” (Werlhof 2004a).
- 6) Patriarchy invented a **psychology for competitive** patriarchal individuality (Girard 1992). Patriarchal order of society is a total break with the matriarchal or gift giving social rules, traditions, and taboos (Werlhof 2004b).

Relation women and nature

- Nature and women were no longer respected in their **own subjectivity**, beauty, truth, goodness, and strength, their inventions, abilities, products and culture, their **gifts to the world** since immemorial times. They were seen, instead, as representing the chaos, the sin, and the evil that had to be necessarily **subjugated** under and **transformed** by the socio-economic-political-ideological-religious-technological project of patriarchy.
- From this point of view, women and nature had to be **oppressed, exploited, expropriated**, transformed, and destroyed in a way that they could be used as **proof of male superiority**, strength, and creativity.

Negation of matriarchy (Werlhof 2003)

- **Destroying matriarchal society** as a social order on its own.
 - **Appropriating everything** from matriarchal society that seems important to the patriarchs, robbing and usurping these things, especially the image and the abilities of the mother (and the goddess), because patriarchy does not have an original culture of its own and can destroy but cannot originate life on its own.
 - **Transforming the original matriarchal society into a patriarchal one** by developing policies of divide and rule, by dissolving the interconnectedness of people, communities, genders, generations, culture, commons, and nature in general
 - **Perverting everything matriarchal into its opposite** is the way patriarchal is defined.
 - **Replacing** these and the entire matriarchal order with a purely patriarchal one.
- The crucial significance of especially this last process of the transformation and substitution of nature and women has almost never been recognized. (Werlhof, 2003)
- “in the beginning is the mother”: **life stems from mothers: arche** (ἀρχή) is beginning and “uterus” (Markale 1984: 207). Therefore, life, death, the mother, and the goddess, are always here in this world, and they all belong to each other, so that there is neither the need for, nor the idea of, another (metaphysical) world than the one in which we live every day (Chattopadhyaya 1973).
 - The new concept of the father is a triple fiction: it imitates the fiction of a **powerful** patriarchal mother (goddess) and imagines to have **successfully replaced her**. This way the **father is defined as a patriarchal mother**.

Subjectivity in gift giving & market

- The **subconscious** is placed in the gift giving position, giving energy, memories, ideas to this self reflecting mechanism. Our idea of consciousness in its **capacity for self-evaluation** towards the image of **preparation for exchange**. The self-reflecting consciousness floats upon the **gifts** of the subconscious and of experience, without a clear indication of **how those gifts come into the mind**.
- Similarly the **market floats** on a sea of gifts without a clear indication of where they come from and how they constitute profit. In individuals, the **coexistence and conflict**, as well as symbiosis of these two kinds of **ego structures**, one tending towards others and therefore somewhat transparent to itself, the other tending towards itself, and self reflecting, can be seen as a result of the **exchange paradigm**, not its cause.
- It is not that **human beings are greedy** and therefore create the market and capitalism. Rather, **Patriarchy, the market and capitalism create the human ego structures** that are well adapted to their needs.

(Vaughan, 2004)

Capitalism: exchange economy

Exchange is ego-oriented and gives value to the **ego**, while **gift giving is other-oriented** and gives value mainly to the other. Exchange places the exchangers in **adversarial** positions; each tries **to get more** than the other out of the transaction. The values of patriarchy are implicit in exchange, and drive capitalism. Each contender struggles to reach the **top of the hierarchy** to own more and to become important. The kind of ego that is based on the exchange logic is necessary for the market, while the **gift giving personality is eliminated**, or easily **victimized** and becomes the **host of the exchange ego**.

Capitalist patriarchy

- The **market** is one of the **solutions** society has provided for the **conundrums** created by the imposition of **binary gender categories** upon its children. It is an area of life and a location where people can deny their other orientation and **turn production for others to their own advantage**. The fact that **women** can participate equally with men in **this ungiving arena** simply shows that its roots are not biological but **social**, deriving from a social construction of gender.
- Capitalism—as well as socialism— with its activism, optimism, positivism, rationality, and its irrational **belief in patriarchy**, world domination, money, science, technology, and violence, is not just capitalism, but has to be defined as “**capitalist patriarchy**”. There is **no post-capitalist**, post-modern epoch in sight— **unless capitalist patriarchy is stopped by a breakdown of its resources**, technologies, markets, and money systems, by huge **natural and or social catastrophes**, or by an **upheaval of the people** who do not want to lose their lives, their planet, and the future of their children.
- The “**roots**” of **this war system** must **be recognized at all levels of society**, individual life, history, and the globe. This will occur like a **huge transdisciplinary research-project of and for the people**. Out of this experience, the alternative will be a systematically **non-capitalist and non-patriarchal** one. It will be based on the remains of the “**second culture**” of **matriarchy** and of the **gift-paradigm** within patriarchal society, because they offer a body of **concrete experiences** people have been familiar with ever since humankind began on earth.

Patriarchy and capitalism

- Patriarchal capitalism justifies itself by the **exchange paradigm**: everything in terms of the exchange logic (marriage market, military exchanges, justice as payment for crimes, equations of a self reflecting consciousness). Promotes the market, where gift giving is absent.
- **Gifts of women's free labor in the home, surplus labor of workers for surplus value (free gift given for the capitalist). Free gifts of nature and culture are called profit and motivate the whole system.**
- **Female (gift giving) vs. male' economic behavior (exchange).** This two economic structures rise to distinguishable ideological superstructures (**value systems & worldviews**). The practices of gift giving or of exchange have to do with **celebration of the other, compassion**, and the affirmation of life; on the other hand with **subjugation** of the other, egotism, competition and the affirmation of value-free objectivity.
- **These two cultures coexist** at various levels, and, can be found within the same person.

Mothering

Mothering involves the unilateral **free distribution of goods and services** to young children and the creation of **human bonds** between givers and receivers. Society has **assigned** this role to **women**. Mothering is not seen as an economic category, the **market devaluates** mothering, making it dependent and **subservient**. **Commodities** as no-gifts and superior, disqualifies mothering/gift giving as a **non-category** in economy.

Shifting to the gift paradigm allows us to see that the direct **distribution of goods and services** present in mothering. It can be understood as an example of the practice of an **alternative economy**. As a **mode of distribution**, it is present in all societies because it is **required**, not by the biology of women, but by the **biology of children**. Children's biology does not allow them to independently satisfy **most of their own or others' needs**. It requires **unilateral gift giving** from their caregivers.

Alternative ways

- **de-constructing** patriarchal institutions, policies, economies, technologies, and ideologies;
- making visible **matriarchy** as the second culture with gift paradigm recognizing their importance in every day life;
- giving up the metaphysical **Gnostic worldview**, including the patriarchal philosophy of idealism-materialism;
- re-gaining **matriarchal spirituality** leads to a recognition of interconnectedness of life;
- not defining **technology** any longer as **substitute for life**, women, and nature in general;
- not defining economy any longer as having to produce a “value” and **profit**;
- recognizing this is the **only planet in the known universe** that is full of life and where human can survive;
- taking action to **save the earth** from further human destruction;
- **liberating ourselves** from the idea that material life on earth is unimportant and humble;
- liberating ourselves from the delusion that there life and nature on earth **can be substituted**;
- destruction of nature for its transformation lead to its **destruction** (risk theory of Beck);
- **giving up war, violence** and ruling over others; living in commonality with egalitarian principles;
- accepting our **responsibility** for the maintenance of life on the planet;
- learning to **rehabilitate** and love life, including our own, and the life of the earth;
- maintaining **culture of life** on the earth & acting in favour of;
- giving up “**masculation**” (Vaughan 1997), egotism as the search for competitive identity
- identifying with **gift-giving** and the traditions of men and women in matriarchal cultures;
- learning that **women** can teach us a lot;
- giving up belief in patriarchy; listening instead to the joyful song of **mother earth**

We need to be able to perceive an **alternative to capitalist patriarchy** and see that this **alternative is already in the making.**

Gift economy vs. capitalism

- “[T]he gift economy, gives to the exchange economy ... its value [by means of **exploitation**, which is viewed as the capture of free gifts—e.g., surplus labour, remittances sent by migrants] and thereby **colluding with its own oppression**.” (Vaughan, 2003)
- In spite of their seeming ubiquity and omnipotence, the normative structures of the **logic of exchange** are “actually **rather fragile** and therefore [need] to be protected from the possible alternatives.”
- The damage on the gift economy and its most consistent practitioners is “one of the main reasons for the depth of the **crisis of . . . contemporary civilization**.” (Werlhof , 2003)
- When the dominant logic is in place, the (forced) gift economy is indeed strained, often to the **breaking point**; but when the dominant logic of exchange suddenly fails on a massive scale, the (free) gift economy **is renewed** and flourishes (see disasters).

Gift economy

- **Patriarchy:** gifts by exchange; **subsistence goods by commodities; local markets by a world market; foreign cultures by western culture;** concrete wealth—gifts by money, machinery, and capital—the new abstract wealth; living labour by machines; the brain/rational thinking by artificial intelligence; women by sex-machines and cyber-sex; real mothers and/or their wombs by mother-machines; life energy by nuclear energy, chemistry, and bio-industry; and life in general by artificial life (GMOs). The only problem consists in **how to replace the elements and the globe itself?**
- Gifts have been **invisibilized**
- **Unilateral gift giving** is not the same as **unconditional love or gift giving;** unilateral gift establishes a human relation. Even a dialogue is not exchange but turn taking in giving unilateral gifts.
- **Identification of needs and agency** for their satisfaction creates meaning, in language & life
- **A radically different world is possible,** urgently needed with intersection between feminism and linguistics, economics, semiotics, and sociology as a fundamental part of our humanity
- To generalize **gift giving** to a whole **community, everyone** would be doing it: **no** special merit and recognition would be irrelevant. The way to make people 'modest' about gift giving is to change society so that **everyone is doing it.** Secondly, in **giving value** to others is useful **not to emphasize one's own gift:** women who recognize a need of the other ask for extra value attribution. Unfortunately, it strengthens the **parasite's hold upon** and denial of the host. On the other hand in a gift-based community, the attribution of value to the receiver would be **common place;** extra need for the attribution of value might be **less** with less room for ego.

- “The **gift interaction is transitive** and ... [creates] a relation of inclusion between the giver and the receiver.... Gift giving implies the value of the other while the exchange transaction ... is **reflexive** and implies the value only of oneself. **Gift giving is qualitative** rather than quantitative, **other-oriented** rather than ego-oriented, inclusive rather than exclusive.” (Vaughan, 2003)
- **matriarchal principle** as the organizing principle for the gift economy. “The principle of motherliness is the opposite [from those that underlie the logic of exchange], where **altruism reigns** and the well-being of all is at the centre.”(Goettner-Abendroth, 2003) A treatment of the different economic calculus (distinct from that attributed to *Homo economicus*) **women routinely practice** and the redefinition of wealth that guides women’s choices, a redefinition distinguished by its collective and relational orientation (Christiansen-Ruffman, 2003).
- Giving is a **human attribute** (of *Homo donans*), not one unique to women. “Looking at **language** as transposed gift giving ... confirms the **pan-human character** of gift giving...”(Vaughan, 2003).

Gifts and cosmology

- Corinne Kumar (2003) writes: «What we need in the world today are **new universalisms** ... universalisms *that recognize the universal in the specific civilizational idioms in the world...* Universalisms that will respect the **plurality** of the different societies, of their philosophy, of their ideology, their traditions and cultures; one that will be **rooted in the particular**, in the *vernacular*, one which will find a resonance in the **different civilizations, birthing new cosmologies**».
- The gift giving is **invisibilized** but represent in the USA **38% of the GDP** and in poor societies **over 50%**, whenever the non-paid work is **not included** in the national economic statistics.



Ecofeminism

Origin and principles of ecofeminism

- With the principles of the **Club of Rome** and the Report on **Sustainable Development by Brundtland**, feminists have pondered the relationship between **domination and discrimination against women**, minorities, children and the elderly and the **destruction of nature**. Both processes are related to the **violent patriarchal power and the economic system** of exploitation by profit.
- Ecofeminism was created by **Francoise d' Eaubonne** in 1974 to call attention to women's potential to bring about an ecological revolution". She insisted that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily interactions and this connection has been ignored". She claimed that women in **subsistence economies** who produce "wealth in partnership with nature, have been experts in their own right of holistic and ecological knowledge of nature's processes." However she makes the point that "these alternative modes of knowing, which are oriented to the **social benefits** and **subsistence needs** are **not recognized** by the capitalist system, because it fails to perceive the interconnectedness of nature, or the **connection of women's lives**, work and knowledge with the creation of wealth.
- Now the term refers to "interdisciplinary perspectives on the **inextricable interconnections** among human systems of **unjustified domination—both of humans and earth**" (Warren 2002: 218). and connects the exploitation and domination of women with that of the environment. It argues that there is a connection between women and nature that comes from their shared history of oppression by the **patriarchal Western society** and its system of **multinational enterprises**.
- "Environmental philosophy with a **gender perspective** is a novel **systemic approach to a complex reality** from critical, interdisciplinary and constructivist perspectives. Alice Irene Bugallo (s/d) argues that environmental philosophy or **ecophilosophy** not only highlight current environmental problems but are associated with **values, cultural and economic patterns and styles**, which the more affluent societies or groups should seriously reconsider.

Ecofeminism

- Ecofeminism promoted **sustainable subsistence** in hand of women for **food and wealth** of their families, communities and the planet
- **nonviolent management** of nature and society
- peaceful and **nonviolent conflict resolving** society
- confronted with globalization and rape capitalism, organized crime and depletion of nature, ecofeminism allied to **other social movements** for an inclusive **peace behaviour in daily life** (Reardon 1996; Boulding 2000; Oswald 1990; Campos 1995).

- To deconstruct this dominant model and reconstruct a comprehensive and sustainable scientific concept from a gender perspective, different theoretical and empirical approaches **challenged the positivist androcentric Western** liberal vision of the world, such as **epistemological feminism, empirical feminism, postmodern feminism and point of view feminism**. These theoretical approaches refer to **empowerment and liberation** from the shackles of patriarchy and therefore have questioned the liberal and neoliberal worldview of business-as-usual. Ecofeminists (Mies 1998; Bennhold-Thomsen and Mies 1999; Oswald Spring 1999, 2009) linked the mechanisms of oppression of women to the exploitation of nature. Mies replaced the paradigm of Margaret Thatcher's **TINA** : "there is no alternative" with "there is an alternative". Later ecofeminists from the South developed the concept further to **TAMA**: "there are many alternatives".
- The scientific agenda changed over time and in different spaces, and a group of ecofeminists (Diverse Women for Diversity) analyzed the implications of **new technologies** (genetically modified organisms, cloning, nanotechnology, internet, cellular and genetic medicines, cyberterrorism, geo-engineering) on **human life , natural and society**.
- The critical and **culturally diverse vision of ecofeminism** involved activists and scientists in the South and North in **transgressive and multi-local processes**. Diverse and decentralized political processes have produced political activism and scientific reflection. Their influence spread from the **World Social Fora**, to **Via Campesina** and to various local social movements. .

- The **inclusive frame of ecofeminism** has attracted also several social movements, such as peace researchers, antimilitarists, antinuclear movements and established a global ecological sisterhood. However, these approaches were criticized and denounced as **essentialising women with nature**. In addition, the greater interconnection due to globalisation brought a **critique from the South** to the western development model and thinking.
- The occidental more mechanistic approach has been enriched by **women from Africa**, who insist in processes of racism, involving ecofeminists and white women domination, in number as well as in the theoretical discussions and representation of new ideas. From the South “**Afrocentric ecowomanism**” opened the doors to a natural alliance with **ecoindigenism**, and in **Latin America**, the **dependence** and “machismo” theories linked to **existing class structure with racism and colonialism** - all of them interconnected processes of oppression and exploitation of human beings and nature by the present capitalist exchange system.

Social and global movements

- **SM refer to the confluence of various social movements:** feminist, pacifist, indigenous, environmental, anti-globalization who came together to create a sustainable and equitable world without violence and with quality of life for all and care of nature (Via Campesina, MST, WSF, solidarity economy, the other stock market, etc.).

History of social movements:

1970-80: development, poverty alleviation: **social agenda**

1080-90: struggle against military dictatorships, representative wars, democratization: **political agenda**

1990-2000: Earth Summit, Agenda 21; **environmental agenda**

2000-2009: MDG, PPP, equity, social justice: **ethic agenda**

2010-...: Arab Spring, hunger riots, climate change, BRICS: **global agenda**

Tom Yum Shrimp Tom Yum Mix Tom Yum Chicken Tom Yum Fish Fried chicken Boil chicken

ASEAN summit in Brunei 9-10 October, 2013



Priorities of ASEAN countries

Bandar Seri Begwan, Brunei, 9-10 Oct., 2013: **ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) Agreements on:**

•**Social protection**

•Enhancing **cooperation in disaster** management

•**Youth entrepreneurship** and employment

•Elimination of **violence against women & children**

•**Non-communicable** diseases

Final Declaration (Blue Print) by Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddinWaddaulah

“Our People, Our Future Together”: political will for a regional architecture.

•**Social:** strengthening bonds of solidarity and cooperation; better prepare our people in universities; volunteers, the private sector and other stakeholders in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of community empowerment; Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia; protection of human rights; regional food security; labour & job creation; social safety nets; Qualification Reference Framework; Elimination of Violence Against Women & Children; Strengthening Social Protection; non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases);

•**Environment:** Multi-Sectoral Framework on Climate Change, involving our communities, village leaders, civil society, grassroots organisations; agriculture, forestry, bio-energy; water management; Transboundary Haze Pollution;

- **Security:** security community; Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone; Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy; Regional Mine Action Centre; combating terrorism, trafficking in persons, and trafficking and production of illicit drugs; Maritime Security; Military Medicine; Counter-Terrorism and Peacekeeping Operations;
- **Legal:** Common Visa for non-ASEAN nationals; regional maritime cooperation; air transport services;
- **Emergency:** Joint Oil Spill Preparedness and Response; Energy Cooperation Mid-Term Review; Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief;
- **Economic:** Foreign Direct Investment; Comprehensive Investment Agreement; Business Travel Card; Business Advisory Council; financial literacy among people; Non-Tariff Measures; Non-Tariff Barrier; Infrastructure Funds; Development Fund; cross-sectoral mechanisms, resource mobilisation, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches, a communication strategy; Macroeconomic Research Office; Credit Guarantee and Investment Facility; rules-based multilateral trading system
- **Exterior:** Roadmap for an ASEAN Community; forum for dialogue and cooperation on issues of strategic importance to the region, including political, security, economic and development issues for promoting peace, stability, economic prosperity and integration in East Asia; ASEAN and China; Conduct in the South China Sea; Korean Peninsula; Palestine and Israel; peaceful conflict resolution means in accordance to UNSC Resolution 2118;

SOAP CARVING

100B

Не дотрагивайтесь до мыла.

**Thank you very much for
your attention**





Some additional materials on gender, women, identity, social representation, food sovereignty, disaster management and health

Archaeomythology

- A multidisciplinary approach permitted to challenge the patriarchal bids from different angles and overcome the classical exclusivist dualistic hierarchies, such as good-bad, male-female, scientific-popular, characteristic of occidental thinking.
- The inclusion of cultural elements, such as sacred and religious beliefs including goddesses and gods, linked ecofeminism to the archaeomythologists. Systematic archaeological work has shown how throughout history matriarchal organizations were rarely militaristic societies before the Indo-Aryan invasion of Europe and the consolidation of stratified societies in Mesoamerica and Asia. People lived normally in small villages, surrounded by sacred places (Stonehenge, the temples of Malta, pyramid structures and the Temazcal ritual place, where the uterus-like construction brought security, health and community life to traditional societies).

- As bigger cities were established, patriarchal structures displaced local organization. Militaristic sky gods replaced earth goddesses and gods, as the ancient symbols of power. The Earth was linked with evil, hell and suffering whilst paradise was elevated to the skies.
- Male gods killed female and animal deities and Eve or the snake symbolized evil and human expulsion of earthly paradise. These mythological transformations gave rise to new ideological and religious projections, which were studied by “Deep Ecofeminism”.
- “Dao” (the way) in Chinese society means harmony as highest societal goal, exemplified by the physical world with its perennial rhythm of the four seasons. The harmony within human society starts with “Ren”, the highest virtue of human beings in the sense of inner excellence, follows three basic relationships. It is cultivated within the family, “then between the human and physical world and nature, and finally, the human and physical world. A world of harmony where human society is free from war, crime, and all extreme forms of human conflict” (Watkin-Kolb and Qing Chao, 2000: 46).

PATRIARCHY AND DEVELOPMENT

- Patriarchal structures have been affected by the multidisciplinary, decentralized and integrative approach of ecofeminism.
- The UN together with the World Bank decided to clarify in theory and practice the “pay off” from all improvements concerning women. Diverse studies in the Third World brought up very interesting results. Girls education in Arab countries raised the GDP per annum in these countries by an average of 1% (World, Bank, 2004), compared with neighbour states where such policies were not implemented.
- However, there exist further complementary benefits: an educated woman has healthier children, better nourished families, lower birth rate, less infant mortality and morbidity and fewer years of childbearing, because she gets married older. In economic terms, FAO, World Bank and regional development banks proved the boost in agricultural productivity, a feminization of agriculture and the development of human capital, with trained and educated women.

- The control of women over resources gives profits to the whole community, since women invest more in family wellbeing. In politics, women benefit democratic structures and invest more in development and infrastructure of basic needs, instead of public “white elephants”. An interesting process of modernization process is occurring in Turkey, where women have been promoted in government, confronting religious and cultural taboos. This country was the first in the world to appoint a female minister to the Supreme Court (O. Serrano, 2004).
- Facing increasing unemployment, small enterprises and microcredits alleviate poverty and 80% of microborrowers are women. The income goes directly to their families improving overall life styles, facing increasing unemployment, small enterprises and microcredits alleviate poverty and 80% of microborrowers are women.
- The UN also visibilized the role of women in peacekeeping. A special study group gave the Secretary General new suggestions for including female elements in both the missions of the Security Council, as well as in special peace missions.
- However, there are still deep differences between Arab states. For example in Afghanistan, after the war generated by USA, where warlords still fights with arms and repression against women’s rights.
- The USA has not ratified the Convention to Eliminate Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), effectuated by other 175 countries.
- Saudi Arabia has still a special moral police to patrol and enforce discrimination against women and in a recent accident dozens of girls were killed by fire, as the police did not allow them to leave the burning building without being “properly dressed”.

Main attributes of social identity

- Thousand of years of experiences have created a society within a specific socio-historic environment, where **symbolic elements** have developed –class, ethnicity, age, religion, race, nationality, professional adscription, political ideology, education etc. However they are in permanent change, but the **main attributes** – **gender, sex and race**- and **the socioeconomic condition** –**rich, poor**- are stable (Habermas). Each process of classification implies relations of identity; inclusion or rejection and exclusion, which constitutes the base of any power exercise.

Social Identity

- Tajfel affirms that the social identity is lived in a world where processes of **unification and diversification** are occurring with giant steps, quicker than ever in the past history (1979:31). And Hogg and Abrams (1988: 78) add that persons have a **basic necessity to simplify** and to put order into the reality, where the **categorization** of the social environment is done through **social comparison** which improves self-esteem positively.
- Precisely, the social representations of gender are charged with **stereotypes** –weak, incapable, dependent and vulnerable. However they are **social categories**, rich and complex in a symbolic system, where they are socially and dialogically constructed (Habermas, 1998, 2000 and 2001). They form part of an inalienable collective life, enriched by ideologies, rites, beliefs and daily practices (Graves, 1985).

Social Representations

- “*Systems of values, ideas and practices*” creating simultaneously a **system of order**, able to offer a person the possibility to get familiar with the social and material world.
- The communication within a community offers a **code of common social interchange**, where several aspects of life, personal and collective history are **classified without ambiguity** (Moscovici, 1976: xiii).
- Therefore, social representations are originated in **daily life**, where society is the **thinking and acting system**.
- The theory of social identity establishes a continuum between personal and social identity with a **processual, relational, multidimensional, contextual and essentialist** character.

Gender Identity

- Refers to the process of consciousness raising to be a human being: a **men or a women** or a bisexual, depending on the position of the social structure.
- Gender security is normally **taken for granted**. The relations are linked to the **status as gender** –indigenous, poor, minority, women- in relation to the model of reference. **Equity and identity are values at risk**. The **source of threat** comes in first instance from the **patriarchal hierarchical and violent order**, characterized by exclusive and totalitarian institutions such as non-democratic governments, churches and élites.
- The symbolic distribution assigns the male the **public space**: production, **res publica, homo sapiens**; and the **women the private** one: reproduction, home, **homo domesticus**. The distribution of power acquires also generic forms. Men exercise a hierarchical and vertical power of domination and superiority.

Characteristics of Social Identity

- Social identity is *processual*, because it is permanently changing; *relational*, due that its transformation is linked to interaction; *multidimensional*, because it is operating inside, between individuals, groups and ideologies (Doise, 1986); *contextual* in order to forge a relation in specific contexts and *essential*, because the diversity and complexity of the social interaction is sustained and transformed by identity processes (Serrano, 2004, 2005).

Women's Role and Perception

Women's roles and social identity are manifold:

- ***reproductive*** (child-bearing, nurturing and maintenance of households)
- ***productive*** (livelihood support, food production, survival strategies)
- ***social*** (integrating family and community as a whole), and ***psychological*** (stabilizing personal relations and emotions)
- ***cultural*** (historic memory of family, clan and village)
- ***Self-perception*** of women: weak, incapable and depending on men
- ***Socially*** our work force is taken for granted and considered without or with less economic value, producing a historical discrimination consolidated during thousands of years (USA: 38% of GDP).

Women and Disasters Management: Food

- Women in developing countries produces between 60 and 80% of food and half of world food production in normal conditions
- However, only 17% of women posses their land in México and 2% in Africa :
- Women tries to overcome survival strategies and long term disasters such as famine generate in Africa. They generate:
 - 33% of paid labor force
 - 70% of agricultural labor days
 - 60-80% of subsistence production
 - 100% of food transformation
 - 80% storing of food
 - 90% of spinning and weaving
 - 60% of harvesting and market activities
 - 2% own land or have land rights (FAO, 2012)

Food Sovereignty

- Local agricultural production and trade, with access for women and peasants to *water, seeds, credits, technical and financial support*;
- Guarantee women the *access to land for production and livelihood*, in order to overcome the violent and patriarchal structures inside of their families, countries and in the global economic system;
- Promote *women* peasants as *key elements in food issues* and agricultural production and commerce;
- Encourage *participation* of women, indigenous and peasants in the national and regional definition of *rural policies*;
- The right to produce and *consume healthy, permanent and culturally accepted food*, locally produced, sold, cooked and consumed;
- The right of regions and nations to *protect* themselves *from subsidized food imports*, establishing agricultural prices which cover production costs;
- The obligations of national and local *governments to improve the nutritional situation* through stimulation of local food production and transformation, clean water and sanitation and elimination of parasites;
- Linking *environmental services into farming*, land planning and participative democracy in order to create areas and a human right to no-migration, which includes prospects to live a dignified life in their own village and country.

Key Issues linked to Hunger:

- **public resources to reduce poverty and hunger have to come from domestic and international sources, coordinated and interrelated from top to bottom and bottom-up and administered by women;**
- **food security and rural development must be addressed in an integral way;**
- **agricultural financial instruments, risk management tools and volatility of prices creates vulnerabilities for peasants;**
- **poverty reduction has to be combined with global public services;**
- **private investments can complement (but not substitute) public ones, and economic stability;**
- **programs directly linked to access to food in hand of women improve the situation of vulnerable groups, and women-headed households and victims of diseases and disasters should receive special attention;**
- **food aid has to be targeted to avoid distorting non-market and local production systems.**

Solidarity and gender

- Feminism and the emancipation of women will be a factor, but for patriarchy to be dismantled, and for solidarity to take root, feminism (and all other movements seeking the common good of humanity) will have to work together, in partnership. Riane Eisler offers a list of the "seven key relationships that make up our lives":
 1. Our relationship with ourselves
 2. Our intimate relationships
 3. Our workplace and community relations
 4. Our relationship with our national community
 5. Our international and multicultural relationships
 6. Our relationship with nature and the living environment
 7. Our relationship with our spirit

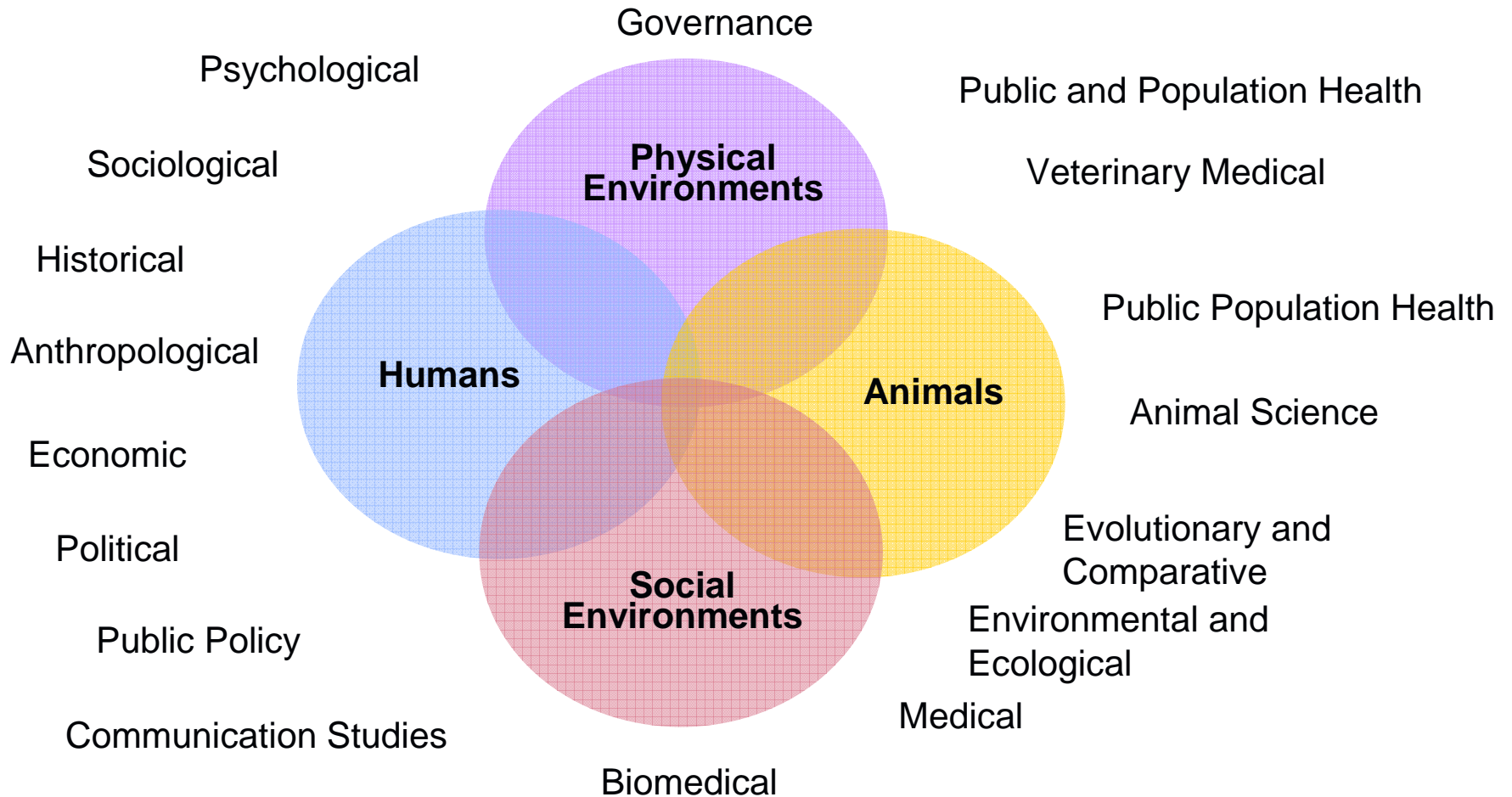
World Social Fora

- New political opportunity
- Innovation against TINA and promotion of TAMA
- Intermediary step between International NGO's (INGOs) and internet anonymity
- Explosion of social fora, termed initially anti-globalization and anti-capitalistic movements
- New agenda: ATTAC: restructuring financial networks; Via Campesina: food sovereignty; indigenous: anti-NAFTA y FTAA; social: water and its privatization
- Divides between alternatives (Other world is possible) and traditional rejectionists

Holistic Sustainable Development

1. Non traditional threats to stability and for fulfilling MDG
2. Anticipation, early warning, prevention and preparation
3. Legal and financial disaster and risk management (top-down)
4. Empowerment and resilience-building (bottom up)
5. Environmentally-friendly and ethical businesses
6. Science and technology: green-house gases must be globally reduced 50% by 2050: small environmental businesses boost the local and national economy and create new jobs, industries and services
7. Decentralized systems of energy, often at small scale, are supplied with renewable energy sources (wind, solar-thermal, solar photovoltaic, sea and waves, biogas, biomass from waste, geothermal, hydro energy) and create local jobs and development
8. Guarantee of basic livelihood for the most vulnerable including health care, food sovereignty, education and training, democratic access to and sustainable use of natural resources, participative planning
- 9. Women are able to contribute to sustainable livelihood, water and food security.**

Integrated socio-environmental and health management



Source: Rock et al., 2009