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Gender Security: A HUGE Challenge



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- A woman wearing a white headscarf and a patterned dress is standing in a field, possibly a farmer. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery and a wooden structure.
- 1. Securitization of Global Change**
 - 2. HUGE: Human, Gender and Environmental security**
 - 3. Obstacles: Social Vulnerability**
 - 4. Gender Security**
 - 5. Holistic Sustainability**
 - 6. Sustainable Peace**
 - 7. Conclusions**

1. Securitization of Global Change

- **Securitization:** as an **inter-subjective** understanding is constructed through discursive & political processes to transform something into an existential threat that enables the use of exceptional measures to deal with the threat.
- **Asking: Which security** (determination); security of whom (reference object); security of what (values at risk); security from what of from whom (sources of threats)
- **'Referent object':** that is **threatened** such as the state, the survival of humans and the environment
- **Values at risk: free-market values, identity, biodiversity, climate system**
- **Sources of threats:** globalization, state, GEC, patriarchy
- **'Securitizing actor':** who pointed to the **existential threat** (speech act) able to legitimize extraordinary measures
- **'Audience':** permitting **extraordinary measures**
- **What is the shift** from a normal political issue to 'a matter of security'?

Source: Copenhagen School, Brauch et al. 2008, 2009

Human, Gender, Environmental Security

Determina- tion Which security?	Reference object: Security of whom?	Value at risk: Security of what?	Source(s) of threat: Security from whom or what?
National security	The State	Territorial integrity	State, substate actors
Human security	Individual, humankind	Survival of humankind people	Natural events, state, globalization
Environmental security	Ecosystems, rural and urban systems, water and food	Sustainability	Humankind, natural events
Gender security	Gender relations, indigenous people, minorities	Equity, identity, social relations, solidarity, tolerance, culture	Patriarchy, totalitarian institutions (élites, governments, religious fundamentalism, dominant cultures), intolerance, violence

2. HUGE

- Human, Gender and Environmental Security (HUGE) combines a **wide gender concept** (vulnerable: including children, elders, indigenous and other vulnerable groups) **with a human-centered focus on environmental security and peace challenges.**
- HUGE analyzes the patriarchal, violent and exclusive structures within the family and society questioning the existing process of social representation-building and traditional role assignation between genders. HUGE asks for the obstacles to overcome the consolidated discrimination of women and poor, but also narrow feminist approaches of male-female opposition.
- HUGE's '**human security**' includes equity, development and conflict resolution through social organization, specific governmental policies, private ethical investments and legal reinforcements by stimulating socio-political participation of women, young, elders and marginal.
- At the **international level** HUGE analyses the potential of free and equal access to world and regional markets and the limits due to existing trade distortions.
- HUGE revises the obstacles for world solidarity to support poor countries with financial aid, technology and debt relief.

- As a holist concept, the ‘**environmental security**’ component of HUGE studies concerns of a healthy environment, integral management of natural resources, prevention and remediation practices that can reduce vulnerability from hazard impacts.
- As nonviolent conflict resolution is a central part of personal and social identity in a world where processes of unification and diversification are occurring quicker than ever in the past history, 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 offering persons and groups the possibility to get familiarized with the social and material world, on behalf contradictory messages and behaviours.
- HUGE analyses thus the consolidation of **participatory democracy and governance** with conflict prevention and peace-building; in summary the concept studies a ‘huge’ solidarity process of sustainable, equal and peaceful development.

3. Obstacles: Social Vulnerability

- Social vulnerability is a **historical** and accumulative result of poverty and an **unequal access** to material & cultural consumption and power
- **Increase susceptibility** of a community or people confronted with extreme events; women headed households are at greater risk of hazard impacts & crises
- Poor women are at highest risk: **poverty has women's face** (82%; UNEP 2009)
- Hazard impacts **can empower** affected people and prepare them to cope with disasters and new risks: **resilience-building.**

4. What is Gender Security?

- Refers to the process of socialization to “**become**” a **gendered** human being; a man or a woman, depending on the position of the social structure.
- Gender security is **socially constructed**. The relations are linked to gender status—ethnicity/race, class, age and minority—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, dominant, aggressive and authoritarian institutions such as non-democratic governments, churches and élites.
- The symbolic distribution of space and time assigns the male the **public sphere**: production, *res publica*, *homo sapiens*; and the **women the private**: reproduction, home, *homo domesticus*. The distribution of power acquires also generic forms and creates special risks and threats for women.

Main Attributes of Social Identity

- Thousands of years of experience have created a society in a specific socio-historic environment where **symbolic elements** have developed (class, ethnicity, age, religion, race, nationality). They are in permanent change, but its main attributes –**gender, sex and race**– and the socioeconomic conditions –**rich, poor**– are stable. Each process of classification implies relations of identity; inclusion or rejection and exclusion, what constitutes the basis of any power exercise, discrimination and violence.

Social Representations

- “**Systems of values, ideas and practices**” create a **system of order that is** able to offer a person the possibility to get familiar with its social and material world.
- 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).
- Social representations originate & change 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.

Obstacles to Human, Gender and Environmental Security: HUGE

- **Top-down policies:** unequal development processes, environmental destruction, injustice, concentration of wealth, and weak health, school and public security.
- **Bottom-up:** weak internal organization, unemployment, gender violence, analphabetism, missing solidarity and training, hunger, illness and violent conflicts.
- **Violent conflict resolution:** intolerance; imposition of authoritarian solutions, undemocratic decision, apathy.

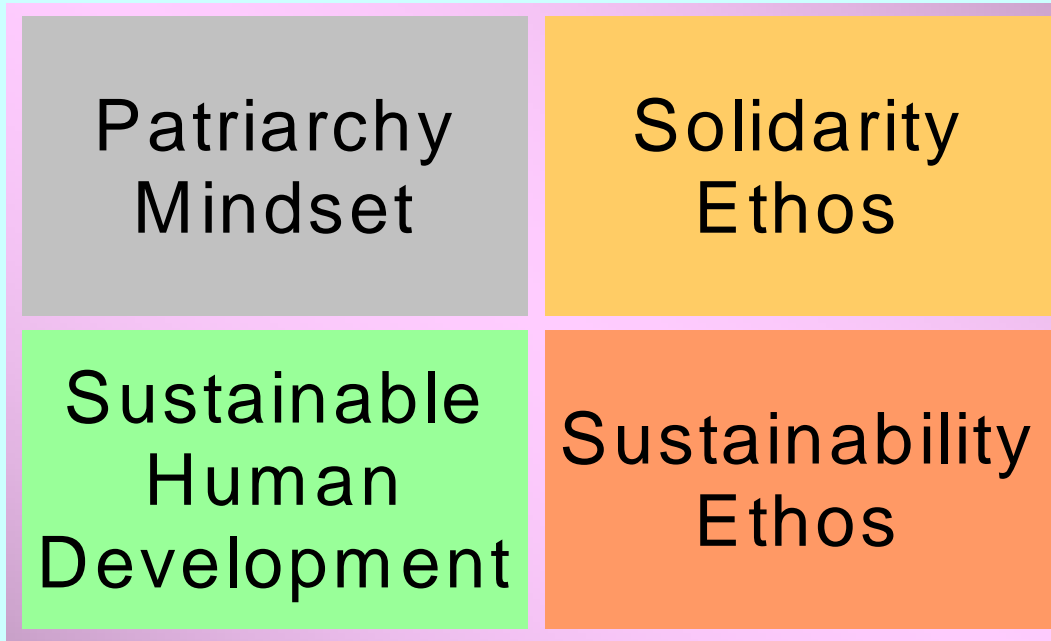
Alternative: A 'HUGE' solidarity process of sustainable and intra- and inter-generational equality and development, reinforced by international and local collaboration, solidarity and nonviolent conflict management and preventive risk reduction.

5. 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.**

**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)

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

Source: Luis T.
Gutierrez, 2008

6. What is Sustainable Peace?

- ‘**Preventive diplomacy**’ (Boutros Ghali) tries in a **preventive** way to avoid escalation and spreading of conflicts through political solutions, widely used in Africa to support peaceful emancipation.
- Orient contributed to **nonviolence** where the ‘*ahimsa*’ concept signifies to do no harm to any living organism due to re-incarnation and the development of the spirit.
- China’s Taoism proposed a **harmony** among sky, earth, and humans generating cosmic energy which is the way to intelligence and fruitful life.
- Indigenous societies, living in difficult environmental conditions, have also developed a **deep respect and unity** with nature
- Dark history of gender **discrimination**, intra-familial violence, feminicides, rape, trafficking of women and girls, aggression against women and children have created higher vulnerability of women; acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that reinforced the ongoing gender mainstreaming in the UN bodies. Women are crucial for development and sustainable peace.

7. Conclusions

1. **Global security challenges** posed by GEC are urgent and women play a key role in adaptation, mitigation and resilience-building.
2. An integrated policy perspective (strengthen governments, relief agencies, socio-environmental organizations, peace activities and conflict resolution groups, technology and businesses) can **overcome the gaps what women are doing and what is happening at the policy level.**
3. Coordinated **stakeholders and transdisciplinary approaches** are able to mitigate negative outcomes and social failures.
4. **No simple solution exists:** biofuel from grains has created more hunger; from waste biofuel avoids food and energy insecurity.
5. **Forests are habitat of wild fauna, flora** and restoring them mitigate the GHG and reduce health risks.
6. Corral reefs, mangroves, swamps and wetlands **mitigate disasters** and host great biodiversity.
7. The **complexity of GEC** requires adaptation, social agreements and a **new ethic** for production and consumption.
8. The future is becoming **more complex and highly uncertain.** Technology itself is becoming a factor for risk (Beck). Everyone will have to learn to live with new risks, uncertainty and complex threats, where diversity, openness and solidarity will be the most important parameter for survival of humanity and the Earth.

**Thank you for
your attention**

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