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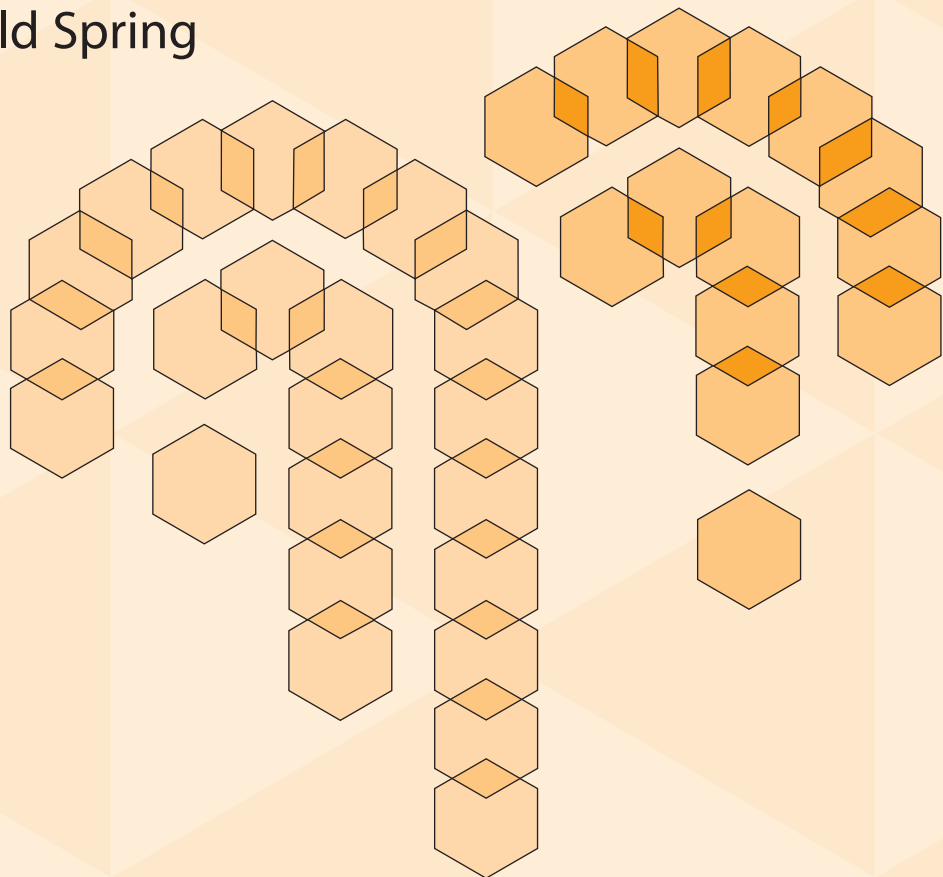


**Munich Re
Foundation**
From Knowledge
to Action

Gender and Disasters

Human, Gender and Environmental Security: A HUGE Challenge

Úrsula Oswald Spring



SOURCE

'Studies Of the University: Research, Counsel,
Education' - Publication Series of UNU-EHS

No. 8/2008

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Úrsula Oswald Spring was Minister of Ecological Development in the State of Morelos, México. She also served as a first General Attorney of Ecology in Morelos in Latin America. Between 2002 and 2006 she was General Secretary of the Latin-American Council for Peace Research. Prior to that, she had been elected President of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) and was involved in multiple conflict resolution and mediation processes. As a member of the international non violent group and the Latin American representative of Diverse Women for Diversity, Úrsula Oswald Spring co-founded the Peasant University of the South in Mexico. She has written 48 books and more than 200 scientific articles and book chapters on peace, sustainable and regional development, social vulnerability, risk disaster reduction, poverty, gender, identity, water and environment and is the editor of book 39 of the Encyclopaedia on Life Support Systems (EOLSS) from UNESCO on International Security, Peace, Development, and Environment.

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Úrsula Oswald Spring

Foreword

Human security is intrinsically linked to the individual, but also to the characteristics of different demographic groups. To achieve human security requires an understanding of how threats to that security interact with these characteristics. The focus of this SOURCE issue “Gender and Disasters” brings a unique perspective and shows the interrelation between environmental risk factors and social vulnerability factors; and how they create particular patterns of vulnerability to extreme natural hazard events of natural origin.

In this essay, Úrsula Oswald Spring successfully provides a wide spectrum of thoughts about gender and security issues and shows challenges but also opportunities of disaster risk management. She makes a clear case for considering gender as an aspect of social vulnerability. She argues it with the fact that men and women try to fulfill socially defined expectations and roles required of them by their communities and cultures. Of particular relevance today, the author identifies core variables driving gender-related social vulnerability. The author also shows how these variables interact with environmental risks in ways that affect not only the individual of the community, but the human security as a whole. These findings come in the face of international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals including the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Prof. Oswald Spring points out why achieving these goals, especially achieving them in a gender-inclusive way, is so vital for the welfare of the entire community. Yet she also critically examines those vestiges of social and cultural values that stubbornly defy international and national efforts to improve the welfare of men, women, and children across ethnic and demographic divisions. These are the challenges of conceptualizing human security including gender security to a range of risks.

This analysis alone would be useful, but the author does not stop her critique and analysis at this point. Instead she pioneers forward to outline a series of policy-relevant issues for human security. This SOURCE concludes with a roadmap to reduce vulnerability and enhance human security for women, men and children. The map calls for renewed efforts to reduce social vulnerability by critically examining gender-specific beliefs, perceptions, and actions that lead to violence and victimization. She describes the complexity of grasping social vulnerability and underscores the need to understand gender in the context of human security.

Prof. Oswald Spring was the first chairholder of the Munich Re Foundation Chair on Social Vulnerability at UNU-EHS. She is a renowned academic from the Regional Multidisciplinary Research Centre (CRIM)-National University of Mexico and brings expert field experience to the study of social vulnerability in developing countries. Her experience in politics, science and advocacy gave a unique touch to her tenure both symbolizing and contributing to what UNU stands for: policy relevant science and knowledge-based approaches to improve human security.



Janos J. Bogardi
Director UNU-EHS

Foreword

The Munich Re Foundation strives to serve people at risk and to move “from knowledge to action”. The Foundation is a catalyst for knowledge accumulation and implementation. In 2005, we entered a partnership with the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) to foment policy-relevant research on social vulnerability. Together we established a Chair on Social Vulnerability at UNU-EHS. This SOURCE publication represents the work of the first in our team of MRF Chairs, Professor Dr. Úrsula Oswald Spring, of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and a former environment minister in Mexico.

All over the world women are the center of the family unit in terms of meeting the emotional, social, and physical needs of family members. Thus women form a backbone of not only family units, but societies across the globe. Women work for the welfare of those around them – women make up the majority of the world’s farmers and ensure the nutrition, safety, and education of human population. In Africa alone, women spend an estimated 40 billion hours each year walking and transporting water on their heads.

Women not only organize families but also cope with crises. Yet the central position and responsibility of women in society also makes them vulnerable. As this paper and others document, women are often hit the hardest when disasters strike also because they are over-represented among the poor. Additionally women are primarily responsible for those most vulnerable to disaster – children, the elderly, and people who are ill or disabled. Emergency aid distributed by community women has the best chance of reaching those most in need, so the experiences of relief agencies.

The care-giving role, intrinsic in social networks and created as well as maintained by women, ironically weakens the resilience of women to crisis situations: The physical and emotional safety of women and the people who depend on them is more than often placed at risk.

More must be understood about the gender aspects of risk and vulnerability. This paper by Professor Dr. Úrsula Oswald Spring represents a rich contribution to the effort to disentangle important root causes for social vulnerability. It highlights the role of women and shows the importance of women within the risk management and resilience building community.



Thomas Loster
Chairman of the Munich Re Foundation

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1 Introduction: New Conceptualization of Gender Security in Disaster Studies

The core query in this paper revolves around a few questions concerning the different meanings of nature, environment, disaster, risks, and vulnerability. How is the established Cosmo-vision affecting gender security? Why is this perception a result of thousands of years of identity processes, and how does this perception create and increase social vulnerabilities? Why is a woman's vulnerability always sub-estimated or not taken into account before, during, and after a disaster? What concrete mechanisms can women develop to increase their resilience and develop coping capacities, allowing them to deal better with recurrent dangers and disasters by mitigating their effects? What kind of multi-resilience building is required for women to deal with the complexity of social, psychological, physical and gender vulnerabilities? How can an integrated *Human, Gender, and Environmental Security* (HUGE) help women reduce their vulnerability and increase their resilience? How can HUGE reduce fatal outcomes and strengthen a community-based preparedness to improve living conditions and support *Disaster Risk Reduction* (DRR)?

The paper starts with a conceptual analysis of gender perception, which creates identity processes leading to specific gender insecurity. These processes are the result of thousands of years of social praxis, and the outcome of this social construction leads to high social vulnerability. Gender security is a broad concept interlinked with human and environmental security concerns, gender equity, and human rights. Taken a step further, one can analyze the longstanding identity processes that lead to ever increasing social vulnerabilities and limited self-reliant responses. Thousands of years of gender discriminations have created social representations able to trigger adverse situations and confront people with extreme living conditions. This triggering discrimination process should be analyzed, in turn reinforcing social vulnerability and the personal negative identity-building that creates structural dependency. As a result of the preceding analyses, one may examine how social construction of different representation building blocks can reinforce resilience and reduce social vulnerability. In conclusion, pledging for a widening and deepening understanding of gender security confronts the increasing risks and uncertainty in a world threatened by *Global Environmental Change* (GEC), disasters, marginalization, terrorism, violence, migration, and refugees. Changes in consciousness, identity, and social representation processes create elements sustainable for bottom-up decision-making and resilience-building dynamics. When reinforced with top-down participation and democratic support from governments, international organizations, and NGOs one might be able to challenge the present security factors facing mankind.

1.1 Gender Equity, Security and Human Rights

Gender security is a recent scientific concept and therefore still in the process of development. The UN Security Council referred to this concept in Resolution UNSC 1325 as 'gender, security, and human rights'. Khalida Tasneem, Janaki Jayawardena, Rekha Shrestha, Sarah Siddiq, Kazi S.M. Khasrul Alam Quddusi, Deepak Prakash Bhatt, and Kazi Anarkoly (2007) introduce a modified definition of 'gender, security, and human rights' including cultural diversity as a result of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition of the South Asian region. Even within these countries they mentioned the diversity of cultures. The authors concentrate on social security concerns and work to ensure groups' rights enhancement to maintain sustainable living conditions. They combat marginalization and different forms of violence (domestic violence and physical harassment) with community-centered actions; in turn, they postulate that communities should not be threatened by different needs and desires.

In several studies on gender and security, formal guidelines from international organizations (UNESCO 2003; UNDP 1994, 2005; UNEP 2007; UNFPA 2004, 2005; UN 2006, 2006a, 2005, 2001; UNSD 2005; UNMP 2005, 2005a; IFAD 2005) mentioned key elements regarding the economic security of women with respect to property rights, equal access to paid work regardless of ethnic, religious, and caste differences, and the encouragement of small scale business within local areas (see Box 1, agreed during the Beijing Conference 1995).

Box 1:**The Beijing Plan for Action's 12 critical areas of concern for promoting the status of women:**

1. Women and poverty
2. Education and training of women
3. Women and health
4. Violence against women
5. Women and armed conflict
6. Women and the economy
7. Women in power and decision-making
8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
9. Human rights of women
10. Women and the media
11. Women and the environment
12. The girl-child

In developing countries the gender and security guidelines include basic services such as electricity, water, sewage, and communications, especially in areas lacking such facilities. The guidelines are often combined with the reinforcement of political participation. For professional and trained women barriers blocking upward mobility and better pay are limited by the -so called- 'glass ceiling'. Out of over 180 countries only 13 were recently led by women: Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, New Zealand (previously also Sri Lanka) in Asia; Panama, Sao Tomé, and Chile in Latin America and the Caribbean; Finland, Germany, Ireland, San Marino, and Latvia in Europe. Female ministers remain concentrated in social areas (14%) compared to legal (9.4%), economic (4.1%), political affairs (3.4%), and the executive (3.9%). Only 7% of the world's total cabinet ministers are women¹ (UN 2006a). Worldwide, 14% of parliamentary seats and 11% of ministerial or sub-ministerial posts are occupied by women. Niger accounts for 1% in parliament and Sudan has no female ministerial official. 61% of women among 15-64 years correspond to labor force and 86% of men; however, their salaries represent a fraction in comparison to men's salaries. For example, women earn 85%, 79%, 71%, 54%, and 50% of men's wages in manufacturing sectors in Sri Lanka, France, Mexico, Brazil, and Bangladesh, respectively. In the Gulf neither Kuwait nor the United Arab Emirates have given women the right to vote or stand for election (UN 2006a). This male organized system brings multiple discriminative behaviors into governmental agencies limiting law processes and restricting progress for gender equity. The World Bank (WB 2001) estimates a 1% reduction of GDP in economic growth in the Arab countries without gender improvement.

The above mentioned practice also limits the bottom-up empowerment of women and other marginalized groups. Therefore, insensible governmental behavior provides a forum for voicing the concerns of the disempowered, including bad governance. Bad governance is seen as one of the major obstacles for progress in south Asian states and as a gendered entity, the state often tends to marginalize certain groups from decision making and implementing processes. Consequentially, good governance is a key issue for bringing the voice of the marginalized to appropriate forums. The marginalized are therefore the ones who facilitate the expression of ideas, views, and opinions of the people at the local levels, and give governing institutions legitimacy and public support for common work (see www.rcss.org/gender_security_report.doc). Marsha Henry (2007) from India points out women's reproductive decision-making ability in her analysis and shows the involvement of women in peacekeeping missions.

¹ In the economy only five women direct the 500 enterprises listed by Forbes and in disaster agencies and UN related organizations men direct the institutions.

IFAD (2005) established that women are faced with three sets of pressures:

- **external** pressures: vulnerabilities caused by the macro policies, with which individual units of poor and powerless women are unable to deal (i.e., with regard to food supply);
- **internal** pressures: challenges from within extended households in the form of traditional power hierarchies, be they patriarchy, caste or religious norms, apart from practices such as alcoholism or indigenous rituals (the allocating process);
- **given** variables: the entitlement base.

Along with pressures among these three alternating processes, women operate also from an initial resource bundle or entitlement of at least six variables:

- a. productive assets (land, forests, livestock, seeds);
- b. non-productive assets (jewellery, a house, savings);
- c. human capital (empowerment, literacy, household labor power, age, caste and children, resilience-building, preventive disaster management);
- d. income and employment (livelihood base, type of employment, resource base, types of income from agriculture, micro-enterprises, wage work, migration);
- e. social claims, (the public distribution system, mid-day meals, subsidies, or extension support);
- f. community claims in the form of traditional practices supporting individuals and families, such as the sharing of cereal, meat, food, etc or other forms of support, exchange, and barter systems that are based on reciprocity and can be considered entitlements (N. Azad, IFAD 2007).

Damian (2002) speaks of “poverty of time,” that forces emphasized women to compensate for the increasing economic losses related to regressive globalization with survival strategies and greater self-exploitation. Women are intertwined with human capital, such as the lacking of basic services (clean water, housing, fuel, toilets or latrines, sewage facilities, kitchens, and cooking facilities), and domestic and productive waste management. All of these factors are critical for the development and support of daily life, but limit also the formation of human, cultural, and environmental capital.

Most international organizations, such as the *Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality* (UN-IANWGE) relate security concerns with gender equality² to human security, equity, mainstreaming, empowerment, livelihood security, security, and gender improvement (Canadian’s Perspectives on Security, Conflict and Gender 2003). FAO (2007) defines gender as the promotion of household security, family well-being, planning, production, and many other household and survival activities as a key for food security. Several other definitions emphasize livelihood security, allotting women the responsibility for the well being and survival of the family. Gender, staff security, and safety are developed in the frame of UN peacekeeping and blue helmets, who address specific threats, security norms, and dangers for gender during peace-keeping activities.

European security concerns are related to gender perspective starting with a gender-inclusive decision-making for peace and justice (Gitti Hentschel, 2006). Revising further literature, Hillary Ward introduced “women’s security” and related it to the Canadian understanding of human security, where lacking health security limits freedom from want in daily life. In Asia gender and human security are threatened

2 Gender equality promotes the same application of law. It includes equal opportunities without differences in remuneration for the same work and responsibility. It promotes processes enabling women to surmount the glass ceiling which denies them the access to leading positions in business, policy and public life. Therefore equality also includes the same political and economic influence, preparing all people to participate in a common development processes. Often human, social, natural and cultural capital is included, enabling all persons, but the discriminated mentioned above, to improve their situation and to bring its positive efforts for society. Thus multiple researchers speak of a different feminist behavior and a new masculinity (Jiménez/Tena 2007), where thousands of years of patriarchy are overcome in favor of the present and future society.

by the trafficking of women and girls. In most treaties gender-based violence is mentioned (UNFPA 2005), especially in critical situations, such as conflicts and wars (UNSC Resolution 1325). Rape is treated as a security issue in South Africa (Muthien/Combrinck 2003; Muthien/Taylor 2002) and international organizations are promoting specific support for disenfranchised women (UNFPA 2005).

The *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG 2000) recorded the key demands from Beijing and included the improvement of maternal health and the combat of infectious and vector transmitted illnesses (see Box 2) increased by GEC. UNFPA (2005) focuses on gender equality and reproductive health to avoid new cases of HIV/AIDS, undesired pregnancy, abortion, female feticide, feminicidios, and intra-familial violence.

Nevertheless, the term 'gender security' is not used throughout the prior mentioned reports and science articles. It is within the peace research community that the term was first analyzed. Hoogensen (2005:1) argues "global gender perspectives can in many respects transcend the constructed barriers and stereotypes between the Global North and South, thereby reducing if not eliminating the hierarchical and unequal relationships that have often been a result of human security efforts." By recognizing that there are many gender security experiences which are shared across and within regions, the us-them nature of human security comes into view. Not only does this demand a broadened understanding of security that recognizes war-torn areas, immediate post-conflict situations, and insecurities outside of these conditions, but also allows for more equitable communication and cooperation between regions. Hoogensen found out the existing marginalized regions in the Arctic permit the development of human security activities between Norway and Canada and thereby strengthen the network on human security.

Box 2:

The Millenium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

1.2 Gender Security

Gender security is a complex concept developing slowly in social and gender sciences. As a historically developed concept it is appropriate to integrate some former theoretical inputs. Betty Reardon (1996) was the first to analyze gender perspectives related to security concerns, peace-building and peace education. She understood the root causes of gender-related violence and traced it back to occidental masculine behavior, its institutions, and the organization-building. They are all based on competition, exclusivity, and hierarchical violence with a centralization process of human relationships. As a result of these behaviors, symbols of hyper-masculinity are socialized with the image of war and violence; consequentially, heroism received superior value. This identity building is reinforced by the narrow military and nation state vision. Several feminists have seen the inclusion of women in the military as highly controversial, due to the gender stereotype that a soldier is the ultimate fulfilment of manhood and thus women can not be good soldiers because of their socially constructed gender identity of careers.

To challenge this deep-rooted maintenance of domination, hierarchal violence, and oppression of women, a paradigmatic shift is required and this shift must reach the Southern nations and be extended to the poor. In epistemological terms both the world mind-set and science require a 'trans-radical' knowledge transformation to overcome the existing dual rationality of: man and woman; good and bad; and rational and irrational. Feminist epistemologies have analyzed ways in which metaphors of

masculinity operate and aid construction of such ideals like rationality and objectivity (Bordo 1990; Lloyd 1997; Lloyd and Duveen 1992). Sandra Harding (1986) argued that dualisms such as nature-culture, subject-object, and masculine-feminine underwrite modern epistemological analyses. The first task for proponents of feminist epistemology is to deconstruct this dualism (Stuart 1990). Several other studies have shown scientific theories contain a gender bias, not only due to the under-representation of women, but also to the construction of objectivity and underlying values (Harding 1988, 1991; Harding/Hintikka 1991). Thus, feminists propose the incorporation of explicit gender-related values, represented by a wider selection and confinement of the object of study, the inclusion of the subject as a participative actor and analyst, empirical field research, and the elimination of the so-called objective theory-building. This objective theory building explicitly explains the constructive process and ideological bias of these theories³.

In research and empirical studies scientists make numerous choices, on the basis of analyses, and are contingent on poised research questions that must be answered, on the terms they use in their analyses, the instruments employed, and the methodology used. All these decisions orient the research in a certain direction toward specific goals. These decisions constrain the hypotheses they concoct and limit the future research agenda. Still, other researchers hypothesize different outcomes. However, science always relies on subjective elements that generate clear constraints. Values and mind-sets enter at this stage of the investigation, and the influence of these values determines the choice of preferred theories. Furthermore, 'good science' must critically evaluate the implicit assumptions and expose the underlying values. But how can diversity and values be included in a so-called rigorous or objective scientific analysis, especially within the security discussion? How can the narrow concept of military security be scrutinized and substituted with a wider human, gender, and environmental approach? Only an explicit value-oriented approach may overcome some of these constraints, creating higher legitimacy when implicit values of the inquiry are explained.

Karen Barad (1999) bridges the gap between a descriptive and normative epistemology, and between naïve realism and constructivist social approaches. She postulates that any science has its practical side with descriptive elements, but also with analytical components. Focusing on the oppression of women from a Marxist perspective and using the 'dependencia' theories from Latin America, Sandra Harding (1986, 1988, 1991) developed a standpoint feminism, where women's knowledge, culture, political ability, and peace-building challenged the neutral objectivity of globally dominant science (López Austin 2004). Epistemology and value theories are all socially constructed and emerge from the interplay of power and gender relations. Harding suggested science must not only be 'socially situated,' but also placed into perspective. Women, specifically those marginalized, are disposed of an 'epistemological privilege' because they can better comprehend the complexity of the marginalization process, due to the fact they have endured a prolonged under-privileged lifestyle. Everyday work, empirical studies, and daily knowledge from a gender-centered perspective offer women the opportunity to reconstruct normative epistemic concepts and to question rationality, justification, and knowledge (Foucault 1996; Gadamer 1995; Habermas 2001, 1995, 2001).

Starting with critical epistemology, local situations, novelty, complexity, and interactive heterogeneity feminists are introduced to a systematic analysis of empirical realities. Accuracy, perspective, and normative consistency where political correctness is criticized, allow moral and political values to be included in this introduction (Giddens 1994). In order to guarantee these vital interactions, an epistemic community must: a) establish public forums for criticism; b) create an openness conducive to flexibility of theories and analytical approaches in response to criticism; c) take into account shared critical public

3 The use of Fukuyama's "end of history" after the end of the Cold War (1992) was developed to justify ideologically the predominance of USA as superpower. When the confrontation with the USSR was over Huntington used the Islamic fundamentalism in his clash of civilization (1993) as a theoretical justification to create a new core enemy and again a dichotomy post-modern world. This was used as part of the validation to start in Afghanistan with the 'war on terrorism'.

standards of science; d) recognize a 'tempered' acceptance of intellectual authorities among the inquirers; e) allow them to understand the existence of cognitive virtues and vices; and f) prohibit a social position of power as an incentive for serious scientific discussion (Longino 1993: 128-135, 1990: 76-81, 2006).

In one of its study programs, *Aberdeen University* (2007) analyses alternative approaches to security. In modern geopolitics researchers still find rivalry, not to mention conflictive and creating divisions. In their program they understand the administration and organization of space is still related to the traditional values of the state, hierarchy, and power. They also found a contradiction and called it 'territorial trap', because the concept of power and sovereignty is managed in terms of boundary control and external convenience. This creates an opposition between non-ethical power behavior in the foreign sphere and a different presence in the domestic sphere. This is based on a consolidated democracy promoting truth and the welfare of its people, assuming the survival of political actors depend on the future confidence and will of the electorate. This contradiction opens the door for the post-modern state, where the realist approach in international relations is reproducing the existing power structure supported by a political economy of globalization (O Tuathail/ Dalby/ Routledge).

As a result of this hierarchical thinking in the international arena, security threats are still narrowly defined in a military and nation-state ideology. Not only does modern war-ideology consider 99% of civilian deaths in the Iraq war 'collateral damages,' but the *demonization* and black-white thinking also induce dehumanizing processes. In these cases human, gender, and environmental security concerns are excluded from their security agenda.

Given this complexity, 'gender security' is understood in this work in a broader sense. It corresponds to the agenda of human and political emancipation, and it tries also to overcome a Western middle-class feminism. Gender security includes culture and space as integral parts of the Cosmo-vision, which can be re-appropriated by powerless people (e.g. Domitila, a powerless indigenous woman in the mining region in Bolivia, Viezzer 1977).

Within this theoretical background Mary Caprioli (2004) used 'women's security' to demonstrate how democracy and human rights are gender neutral; therefore, its application implies gender bias. Because there still exists a lack of indicators for women's security, she proposes to measure personal and health security (fertility rate, gender violence, rape, and percentages of births attended by health staffs); economic and political security (economic inequality, political inequality of women in legislature, policy, underemployment, and job structure); social and cultural security (education, illiteracy, structural violence i.e., poverty levels); and measures of human rights and democracy (personal integrity rights, polity type, executive recruitment, and democracy). She concludes that gender bias exists in all these variables and human rights are again promoting unequal freedoms and rights for women—increasing the gender gap.

Hoogensen and Stuvoy (2006) criticize the 'societal security' of Waever's "identity, the self-conception of communities, and those individuals who identify themselves as members of a particular community" (Waever 1997: 9; 1995). Waever agrees with the author regarding non-state security concerns, the voice of the security discourse, and the deconstructing and post-structuralist approach (Waever 1995). However, Weaver is overlooking the diversity of identities and the conceptualization "does therefore [not] reflect diverse security needs" (Hoogensen 2006: 10). Her 'gender security' understanding analyses a multi-standpoint approach with diverse understandings of security. She insists on the recognition of power relations and on vocalizing previous unheard voices. In her conclusion "human security is achieved when individuals and communities have the freedom to identify risks and threats to their wellbeing and the capacity to determine ways to end, mitigate, or adapt to those risks and threats" (Hoogensen 2006: 12). However, her approach dilutes the main gender issue of power gap in a global theater and she still does not vividly define the 'human security' conceptualization.

In a later article Hoogensen and Stuvoy (2006) argue that gender theory brings a broadening approach to the 'human security' theory, when bottom-up reflections are added to the top-down approach. This human security approach includes practises of resistance; focuses on freedom from fear and want; and places the individual in the center of concern. By including the perspective of dominance behind closed doors, intra-family violence is embodied in an otherwise very normal, abstract concept of human security. While their approach of a bottom-up alternative is understood in the traditional sense of NGO support for poor and powerless women, they forget their capacity of social organization and their longstanding proved survival strategies, which have empowered their position in a context of double discrimination: as women and as marginal.

Within these existing conceptual limits, the present article searches for a deepened and widened understanding of constituent elements of 'gender security', including visions from the South. It refers to the process of social construction and socialization to 'become' a gendered human being – a man or a woman, depending on the position in the social structure. Gender is an analytical tool that is socially constructed. The axis of classification is linked to genital difference (sexual dimorphism: female-male), facts that often induce a biological explanation of social representations. This leads to the mechanisms of distinction, the processes of discrimination. Each culture recognizes sexual differences and specifies the characteristics that classify the sexual beings in diverse genders (Skjelsbaek 1997; Rosales 2002; Szasz/Lerner 1998; Foucault 1996). The number of sexual characteristics varies inter- and intra-culturally, although the generic classification is manifested in all known societies⁴. For this reason it is considered a universal classification and the main base of discrimination and violence. Marcela Lagarde (1990) criticized this process of gender construction as biosocial-cultural, based only on the sexual differences.

As a primer conclusion, 'gender security' is therefore not biologically determined, but socially constructed. It is a systemic and constituent concept of the present patriarchal society. Gender is understood as a social trait because it is socially reinforced by discrimination, marginalization, and benevolent acceptance. The social relations developed and related to these identity processes are linked to the status of gender: women, ethnicity, race, class, age, and minority status in relation to the model of reference. Equity and identity and survival and livelihood are a few of the principal values at risk. The source of threat appears initially from the hierarchical patriarchal order, characterized by exclusive, dominant, and authoritarian institutions such as non-democratic governments, churches, and elites, reinforced by the daily violence of intra- and inter-family relations (see Table 1).

Thousands of years of subordinated gender identity processes have created a mutual reinforcing pattern of dominance and subordination, and have undoubtedly established hierarchical power relations. They have generated a socially constructed, symbolic distribution of space and time, which is reinforcing the status quo of gender. It assigns the male the public sphere: production, *res publica*, *homo-sapiens*; and the female the private: reproduction, home, *homo-domesticus*, or in terms of Genevieve Vaughan (1997, 2004) *homo-donans*. Men (governments, churches, generals, warlords, husbands, fathers, brothers, etc.) exercise a vertical domination and superiority. The distribution of power also acquires generic forms. Women live mostly without proprieties and are subordinated, exercising their powers from the oppression as maternal powers (mothers, wives), erotic powers (wives, lovers, [prostitutes]), and the altered [crazy, nuns] (Lagarde 1990). Thus, female powers are marginal (minimal in comparison to the man) and merely delegated. They can only be exercised with permission of the dominant group (father, husband or boss). The main control of material goods remain in the hands of men, who decide on family expenses, property, productive activities, inheritances, and gifts. The lack of property ownership, lower salaries, unpaid household work, etc. has created a structural position of inferiority. Once a woman is married, the margin of manoeuvre becomes further reduced by her own

4 There are cultures where three or more sexes exist. The terms third gender or third sex describe individuals who are considered to be neither women nor men. Those societies who recognize three or more genders give them specific roles of *Mujes* in the Zapotecan culture or shamans in Polynesia. In the Western societies they are defined as lesbian, gay or homosexual, transgender or intersex people and are normally socially excluded and often repressed, due to the fact that they represent a threat to the established social representations.

family and the husbands' relatives, for whom she normally lives and works. These socially consolidated processes are reducing the negotiation capacity for women and are conducive to their high dependency. They are exposed to suffer inter-family and social violence, if they try to transgress the assigned social and family roles. Together, social norms, related isolation, and economic dependency are inhibiting women from breaking free from this vicious, discriminative circle.

1.3 Human, Gender and Environmental Security: HUGE

Based on the above introduced approaches, the author developed a concept oriented to integrally understand the position of the vulnerable (Oswald 1990, 1991, 2001, 2007). From a constructivist approach she has developed an integral gender security understanding. Together with *Human, Gender and Environmental Security* (HUGE) she embraces also a vast understanding of gender – including children, the elderly, indigenous peoples, minorities, and other vulnerable and powerless groups – with a human-centered focus on environmental security challenges, peace-building, human equality, and gender equity. Her 'gender security' analyses livelihood, food sovereignty (Vía Campesina 2006, MST 2005), health care, public security, education, and cultural diversity in a historical context, created by violent, patriarchal, and exclusive structures affecting family, society, and nature. HUGE is questioning the existing process of identity and social representation-building – the socially constructed roles between different genders.

The present effort intends to understand the deeper security links and to mainstream the component of the vulnerable within an increasing global risk culture (*Weltrisikogesellschaft*, Beck 2007), where power relations establish and recognize the risks and distribute them among the world's social groups. This creates an 'exclusive' (Stiglitz 2002; Salazar 2003), 'regressive globalization' (Kaldor/ Anheier/ Glasius 2003; Oswald 2007) or 'a globalization of organized violence' (Held/Mc Grew 2007) with increasing negative effects on global environmental change (IPCC 2007). In this complex constellation the traditional nation-state security approach is insufficient. From a constructivist approach and a positive understanding of peace as "freedom from fear" and "freedom from threat", the Copenhagen school (Wæver, 2000, 1997; Buzan/ Wæver/ de Wilde, 1998) has widened and modified the security concept from a national narrow military point to political, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The security concept has changed its interest from state concerns to human security concerns. In 1994, the UNDP Human Development Report popularized the human security concept and sectorialized it within seven broader categories (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security). Furthermore, Brauch et al. (2008) proposed a *horizontal widening* from national military security to five dimensions (political, military, economic, social, and environmental); a *vertical deepening* from 'state' to 'human' and 'gender' security as well as from 'national' upward to 'regional,' 'global,' and downward to 'societal' and 'local' security with a *sectorialization* to energy, food, health, water, and livelihood security.

Møller (2003) systematized several types of securities. He started with the narrow state vision focused on *national security*, which was applied in realist security studies and in the intellectual tradition of Tzun Tzu (a Chinese general around 320 BC), the historian of the Peloponnesian War Thukydides (460 – 400 BC), Niccolo Machiavelli (1454 and 1529), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Karl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), Hans Joachim Morgenthau (1904-1980), and Kenneth Neal Waltz (1924-1979). Going beyond this traditional realist approach of Wolfers (1962), the Copenhagen school's security definition distinguishes between different referent objects (state, nation, societal groups, individuals, humankind, and ecosystems). Depending on the security conceptualization, the values at risk are sovereignty (Kaplan 2003, Saxe Fenández 2007), national unity, survival and sustainability. It was discovered that the sources of threat were other states, nations, globalization, and nature (OECD 1994). The process of classification offered a specific heuristic contribution to International Relations (IR) that has inspired subsequent additions and modifications of security concerns. 'Societal security' was understood as extended (Wæver 1997) and labelled as incremental and radical; 'environmental security' was termed ultra-radical (see Table 1).

Table 1: Human, Gender and Environmental Security (HUGE): A Transradical Approach

Degree of expansion	Denomination (security of what?)	References object (security of whom?)	Value at risk (security of what?)	Sources of threat (security from whom and for what?)
No expansion	National Security	The State (political, police, military)	Sovereignty, territorial integrity	Other states, terrorism, sub-state actors, guerrilla
Incremental	Societal Security	Nations, societal groups	National unity and national identity, group representations	Nations, migrants, alien cultures, mass media
Radical	Human Security	Individuals,	Survival, lively-humankind hood, quality of life, human rights	State, globalization, elites, terrorism
Ultra-radical	Environmental Security	Ecosystem, Humankind	Sustainability Anthropocene	Nature, global change, GEC, humankind
Trans-radical	Gender Security	Gender relations, indigenous, children, elders, handicapped, other minorities	Equity, equality, identity, solidarity, resilience, social representations	Patriarchy, totalitarian institutions (governments, religions, elites), dominant culture, discrimination, intolerance, violence

Source: Møller 2003:279; Oswald Spring 2001, 2004, 2007

The security dynamics can be aligned to threats endangering individual identity and social representations; not only are physical aspects in immediate danger, but culture and customs can also be compromised, often reinforced by religious beliefs and traditions. Gramsci's 'ideological apparatus of state' can be linked to identity and social representation theories similar to Galtung's with its understanding of peace as freedom from physical, structural, and cultural violence (Galtung 1971, 1982, 2007). Thus, several further theoretical developments have been based on the Copenhagen approach. Throughout the past decades many Southern nations have suffered from impoverishment, environmental destruction, forced migration, and depopulation of rural areas due to desertification, low agricultural prices, wars, and other disasters. Consequentially, these events have forced more and more women to assume the duties involved with survival strategies (Oswald 1991). Expanding the focus to 'gender security,' the author proposes a trans-radical level of expansion. The origins of threats arise primarily from the patriarchal system, characterized by totalitarian institutions such as authoritarian governments, churches, and elites. Secondly, these emergences of threats are established and developed from social relations and self-assumed identity processes. They penetrate most intimately – the person, couple, and family, which affect labor relations, political and social contacts, and community life interactions, leading to intra-family and gender violence. These threats are consolidated by abuse of power, where a system of discrimination and stigma dominates and menaces equity and equality and also personal, gender, and minority groups' identities.

By comparing levels of expansion and reference objects, the value at risk and the sources of threats can be analyzed. HUGE focuses on 'human security' with equity and development concerns, where survival strategies, social organization, specific governmental policies, private ethical investments, and legal reinforcements could stimulate political participation and the social improvement of the vulnerable. It explores specific governmental policies, transparent institutions, and legal reinforcements to decrease levels of discrimination and stimulate political and social participation of women, the young, and the elderly. It manages environmental security concerns capable of improving and nourishing failing environments, by mitigating negative effects from *global environmental changes* (GEC). For hazard-

prone areas HUGE analyses technical, financial, and human support enabling potentially vulnerable and exposed groups to reinforce their bottom-up organization with resilience-building. Combined with top-down policies and tools such as effective early warning, evacuation, disaster help, and reconstruction, immediate and efficient support for isolated regions could prevent such disasters and their long-term effects, such as famine and violent outbreaks, from occurring.

Political and cultural diversity support complex systems capable of generating non-violent conflict resolution processes and peace-building in hazard-prone and resource-scarce regions. Non-violent conflict resolution represents a central part of personal and social identity in a world where processes of unification and diversification are occurring more rapidly than ever before. HUGE includes reflections on the consolidation of participatory democracy and governance through conflict prevention and peace-building. Human beings have a basic necessity to simplify complex realities through social comparison. This upcoming systems of values, ideas, and practices simultaneously create processes of living together by offering the possibility to become familiarized with the social and material world, on behalf of contradictory messages and behavior.

At the international level HUGE analyses the convenience of free and equal access to world markets without trade distortions, where just international agreements can diminish regional and social inequities and strengthen the socially vulnerable. Combined with horizontal interchange, it fosters world solidarity, where the poorest countries and socially vulnerable groups are financially supported and receive debt reductions, free from dependency and specific interests. In conclusion, the HUGE concept integrates gender, social, environmental, human, cultural, and identity concerns with solidarity, resilience, peace-building, and equity in an increasingly insecure and fragile world. These elements were retaken by social movements and were systematized in various World Social Fora.

2 Why Is Gender Identity Increasing Social Vulnerability?

Hoogensen and Rottem (2004) recognize the interconnections between domestic and global violence.

The year 2005 represents a milestone in historical commemorations: 60 year anniversary of the UN Charter; 30 years after the First Women Conference in Mexico; and 10 years after the Fourth Women Conference in Beijing. All of these events generated important governmental agreements to protect the lives and psychological integrity of the vulnerable (see Boxes 1 and 2). Nevertheless, the results are still limited in terms of human rights achievements and the data confirm it: gender violence is still the most expanded and common violence.

New official reports disclose about 36% of girls and 29% of boys have suffered child sexual abuse (PAHO/WHO 2003). Available data suggest that globally at least 10-15% of all women are being forced to have sex and considerable proportions of the victims of sexual assault are younger than 15 years old. In most parts of the South 25% of women reveal having been violated by their partners during their relationship (PAHO/WHO 2002).⁵ All these official reports underestimate the real violence, because

⁵ Worldwide, the data indicate that between 16-52% of women throughout the world have been assaulted by an intimate partner. In the USA, ten women are killed every day by their partners with 74% of these deaths occurring after the women have left the relationship (The World Bank 2001: 33, 35, 74, and 99). A study of court records in Zimbabwe revealed that 59% of homicides of women were committed by the victim's intimate partner. In Russia nearly half of all murder victims were women murdered by their male partners. In Papua New Guinea, 18% of all urban married women had to seek hospital treatment following domestic violence. In India, between 1988 and 1993 more than 20,000 women were murdered or committed 'suicide' because they were unable to meet demands for increased dowry. Seventy percent of the 22,000 divorces in Vietnam during 1991 were sought because of violence. In rural China, suicide is thought to account for 30% of healthy years of life lost and in Sri Lanka death from suicide is five times the rate of death from infectious diseases. In urban Maharashtra and Greater Mumbai, one in every five deaths among women aged from 15 to 44 is from 'accidental burns' and for younger women this figure is one in four. (UNDP 2005)

women's are threatened (lives and dignity) if they speak about the intra-family violence. 75% of all HIV infections are sexually transmitted between men and women – many of the husbands being the hosts and infecting their wives and up to half of new HIV infections are among young people. Today's generation of young people is the largest in history. Nearly half of the world's population (almost 3 billion) under the age of 25 requires finding a way to reduce poverty and start new developments. Youth (ages 15 to 24), who live on less than \$2 per day, accounts for over 500 million of the population (United Nations 2004: 1). Their world is different to their parents' world; AIDS, information and communications technologies, and globalization are powerful forces challenging their lives. Women are lacking capacity to negotiate and rape is a frequent outcome. Moreover, many young, poor women are at an even higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases, because they lack the power and are not given the tools and opportunities to protect themselves.

In the next decade 100 million girls under 18 year will be married; every year 14 million adolescent girls give birth (UNFPA 2004: 76). Compared with women in their 20s, these young victims/ mothers endure extreme pregnancy complications and the infant mortality rate is 2 to 5 times higher (UN 2001). Their babies' chances of survival plummet and newborns without mothers are 3 to 10 times more likely to die than others (Starrs/ Hoope-Bender 2004). Almost all (99%) maternal deaths occur in developing countries⁶. Every minute a woman dies from the complications of childbirth or pregnancy, and another 20 are seriously injured or disabled (UN MDP 2005c), almost all in developing countries. Each year 35,000 women and babies die in Nepal alone due to substandard or unsafe conditions during birth and neonatal management (WDR 2006). In Afghanistan a woman dies every 20 minutes during birth because of insufficient health services, the second highest rate of maternal deaths in the world, after Sudan.⁷

Poverty leads to transactional sex and each year up to 800,000 people (over 80% are girls and women) are trafficked across borders and exploited in sexual trade (US Department of State 2005). Conflict has started in 40 countries since the beginning of the MDG. Crises induce the disintegration of community and family protections, enabling gender-based violence to remain a permanent risk, often increasing internal conflicts. The lack of health services sharply increases infant and maternal mortality rates. Armed groups forcibly recruit children and adolescents as soldiers, or force them to serve as domestic servants or sexual slaves. Women are frequently left alone to struggle for themselves and their children; they also have to care for other survivors. Furthermore, natural disasters are becoming more and more frequent, more and more intense, and are affecting larger populations with higher economic losses (MunichRe 2006), creating complex emergency situations (ICG 2007).⁸

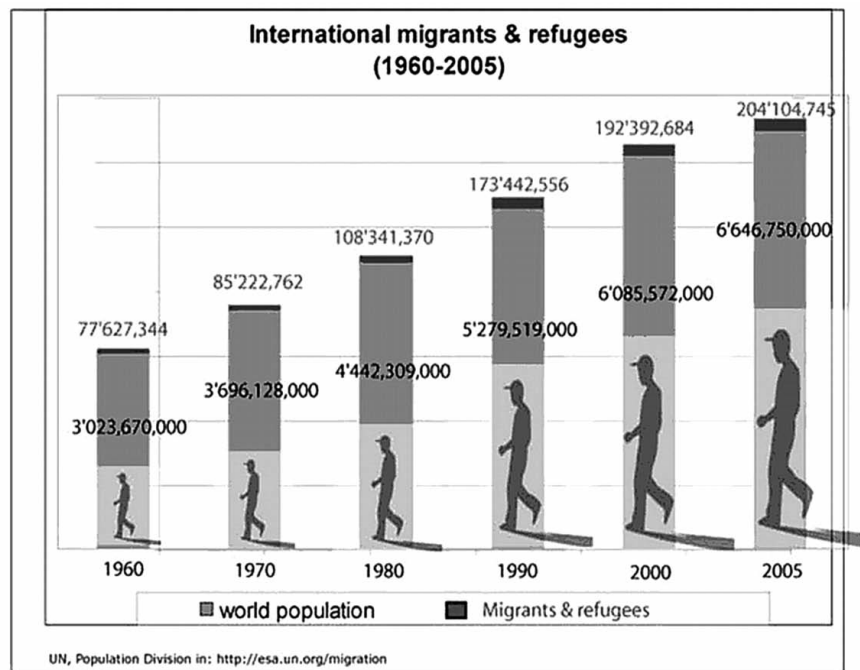
Additionally, there are other social vulnerable groups, such as disabled persons who make up to more than 10 % of the population in industrialized countries and almost double in developing countries (around one billion). An estimated 370 million indigenous people live in some 70 countries worldwide (UN Millennium Development Project 2005b: 120). International migrant populations are on the rise and along with refugees they represent 3% of the world population (see graph 1). As a result of GEC and economic crises, the world situation on migration has the capability of changing dramatically. Kofi Annan estimates there will be almost one billion people forced to migrate, due to environmental catastrophes, desertification, and other conflicts. Gender inequality triggers these multiple forms of discrimination against women and other groups.

6 Preventing unintended pregnancies through family planning could avoid 20 to 35 per cent of maternal deaths (UN Millennium Project 2005c), and save the lives of more than 100,000 mothers each year.

7 Women have an average of more than seven children, and often husbands or fathers in law find it more important to buy a buffalo than to send the women to a hospital.

8 The tsunami in December 2004 caused alone 280,000 dead and more than one million of displaced people (UN 2005c).

Graph 1:



The background of most of these violent behaviors concerning gender discrimination is lack of power. It refers to constructed treatment based on sex and social vulnerability, including diverse connotations of values which change among cultural and social contexts. Nevertheless, in most societies a married women's civil identity is now camouflaged by her husband's and her assets and property are transferred to her husband. There is also occupation segregation within the family and lower wages leave women dependent on men. As the relationship between men and women shows complex interlinks (Tong 1989) partially related to 'societal security,' the threats are not always perceived as purely confrontational. Family structures, schools, work places, and clubs are organized to subsume gender gap into daily life and habitus, avoiding the possibility gender and vulnerability will simultaneously become organized in interest groups. Religions in the East and West are strongly reinforcing the existing gender differences and power gaps through religious identity patterns and supernatural beliefs. However, like the division of gender, religious roles, norms and beliefs are also socially constructed. Nobody is born poor or rich; everybody is born with a body, which acquires a socially constructed generic identity in this world (De Beauvoir 1949; Lama 2002, 1996). From early childhood on, gender and other differences are socialized (Lloyd/Duveen, 1992; Piaget 1950) and consolidated during the personal life history, creating a habitus, which consolidates gender differences and makes them acceptable. The world has been organized for millennia along these gender and power relations. This creates security challenges in a wider sense, where communities and social groups have a legitimate right to achieve their own security based on the identity "trickling up to [that] of the policymakers" (Hoogensen/ Rottern 2004: 169).

A systematic process of identification establishes the differences between status, needs, positions, and privileges of each gender (Falco 1996), based on social and personal established norms. Firstly, they articulate the totality of ways through which one expresses gender identity; secondly, it defines the roles and norms in relation to the type of activities a society determines adequate for a person with a specific gender identity. This does not take into consideration an opposition between objectivism (only the social structure is responsible for social practices) and subjectivism (where the sum of individual acts is creating social actions). The topic at hand uses a systemic, dynamic, and dissipative approach, where an interaction between individual and society and structure and action exists, and where the external social structures create social fields that can be internalized into beliefs, perceptions, and action.

Bourdieu (1972) gave these processes the name 'habitus'. He includes in the term a kind of early warning signal that exists to reduce the threats from supernatural events through ritual-magical behaviors

(social and religious rites, 'rites of passage'⁹, prayer, horoscope, etc.) and the objectivization of hierarchies in things and persons, which reinforce a common cultural arbitrage. Through metaphors, movements, body, language, and displacements the child learns to create a world of objects through practical learning, which can be organized in hierarchical structures (Bourdieu 1980: 129-130). This 'structural constructivism' creates defence mechanisms against changes by reducing the threat for crises through the in-"corp"-oration (in-bodying) of experiences; a person lives what he/ she is (Bourdieu 1980: 123). By creating a practical sense and a practical rationality, the social class has two fundamental dimensions: the 'objective class,' which defines the position in a system of social relations with its material and social conditions; and the 'incorporated class,' where the social class is transformed into body or habitus (Bourdieu 1980: 91).

These processes create permanent adjustments of the subject to its social universe, where the most improbable practices are excluded from the social experiences. In situations of gender violence or disaster, this double class-belonging explains the resistance for change, but also the acceptance of the unavoidable. In social terms, the habitus of class, belief, and behavior creates diversity in the homogeneity (Bourdieu 1980: 101). To clarify the relations of power, the author compares the economy with the symbolic. The belonging to a social class is not only explained by the position in a determined social class, but also by the personal feeling to have the right or not to possess some goods or status, to fulfil some norms, and to accept some rules or challenge them. This double process clarifies how a hegemonic culture is consolidating and is able to impose arbitrary merits through an obscure form of domination. Gramsci mentioned that this process of hegemony is accepted and often defended by subalterns. It also explains the existing 'glass ceiling' stopping the access of women to directive positions.

Thus, the process of gender identity and security in terms of habitus is first a dynamic (and often contradictory) field of structures among classes, social relations, and personal identities. For operation it is functioning in traditional occidental terms of opposition: man/ woman; rich/ poor, etc. Similar to a social game, the habitus creates rules and norms, which are assumed by the person and create changing self-limits. As in any other game the competition is high and is played without knowing most of the rules and the limits of the game. In the fierce competition, economic (money), social (solidity of networks), cultural (intellect, knowledge), and symbolic (autonomy) capitals try to increase the power, mostly on the costs of other players by discriminating. The fatal outcomes may be limited by Bourdieu's (1990: 154-157) term of "ethos": a systematic and objective disposal of an ethical dimension with practical principles. As the ethos is limited by the social field, the tensions can accumulate and the amassed conformities await the best occasion to rebel.

As Bourdieu explains, all these processes are socially structured, highly dynamic, and often contradictory, whenever socially (objectivation) and internally assumed (incorporated class) though self-imposed limits. The behaviors can be challenged and a greater equity can be achieved, thus changing the mechanisms of power through the capitals involved in the game. In this sense, gender identity is understood by sociologists as "a social construct regarding culture-bound conventions, roles, and behaviours, as well as relationships between and among, women and men and boys and girls" (Krieger 2001: 693-700). The gender concept can also refer to the process of how other persons define an individual, based on roles and behavior (hair, clothes, and performance). The formation of gender identity implies a complex development and includes processes of gestation since birth, through vital learn-

9 Van Gennep developed in 1909 the anthropological theory of the 'Rites of Passage'. They refer to the processes how a person moves from one state, level, or role to another one. As this process is psychologically, physically and spiritually intense, different cultures have developed rituals to introduce the person into its new stage and to facilitate its transition. Birth, adulthood, marriage and death have become ritualistically celebrated and are experienced in culturally various ways. Churches all over the world have established daily rituals for belonging to a specific religious community. With specific rites of passage they reinforce these transition moments in human life and therefore increase the belonging to this specific religious community and its institutionalized church.

ing that takes place in early infancy, and later through socialization and the acquisition of social roles, norms, and limits. Many researchers determine the fixation of gender identity in early infancy, even when differentiated and new roles were developed (Piaget 1950; Freud 1923, 1927; Doise 1986). In the symbolic field gender identity represents cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity (Oakes/ Haslam/ Turner 1994; Lacan 1985; Foucault 1996). The stereotypes are reflected in the institutional environment, in job opportunities, and the levels of salaries and work loads. In constructed reality the stereotypes explain how identities are socially identified, how society perceives him or her as a man or a woman, and how he or she assumes and transforms this identity. The stereotype is distinct from the definition of sex, which only describes the biological differences. Because the stereotype is socially constructed, it can be altered, although habits have been socially consolidated for millennia by using gender distinctions for social discrimination and oppression as something given by physiology (biophysiological determination).

Within these wide fields the habitus may be challenged. Inside a conscious society, a systematic analysis of gender relations allows one to understand how men and women deal with certain situations in specific social contexts and how accumulated social tensions can generate new social dynamics. Nevertheless, thousands of years of gender habitus have created longstanding gender discrimination with historically produced inequality consolidated by violent power relations. The struggle for greater gender security has historical roots. First, it was oriented to raise conscience for equity, and later to improve women's opportunities. Gender liberation movements have developed in its historical evolution, with different feminist thinking and practices. Research on feminist studies in diverse countries and social contexts has shown different phases. These movements stem from theoretical feminism through the illustration (Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz) of female suffrage protests and demands (Mary Wollstonecraft 1759–1797; Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815–1902; and Susan B. Anthony 1820–1906). Furthermore, they fought for more equality in the 1960s and 1970s, the same movement that resurfaced in the 1990s, calling for equality in policy, as well as in the business world/ job market (see also Table 2)¹⁰. At the same time more worldwide and local social movements led by peasants, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups promoting equality and equity concerns took place. Independence struggles in the developing world deepened the co-operation among social organizations and established common fronts for certain achievements and demands. Elise Boulding (1992, 2000) and Betty Reardon (1994, 1996) developed a theory that linked peace research studies to gender. After the 1980s a third wave was launched, called neo-feminism (Adrienne Rich 1986). GEC, water scarcity, desertification, regressive globalization, and increasing poverty brought about eco-feminism (D'Eaubonne 1972). Maria Mies (1982, 1998), Vandana Shiva (1998), Shiva and Mies (1997), Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen et al. (1994, 1999, 2001), and Úrsula Oswald Spring (1990, 1991, 2000, 2006) looked at the relationships between nature and gender violence. These researchers worked together with social movement participants, environmentalists, and peace researchers with the goal of developing alternatives to wasteful consumerism by systematizing the subsistence perspectives, the survival strategies, and the social economy. All of these approaches offered a process of diversification and an 'epistemology of opposition' (Ritzer 2002: 391) to traditional Western feminist studies. With the systematic examination of differences in "conditions, needs, rates of participation, access to resources and development, management of the patrimony, of the power, of decision and images among women and men relating to their roles assigned in function to their sex" (lacityennete.com/magazine/mots/glossaireegaliteHF.php), their struggle for greater gender security started to be visible.

10 This structural inequity (Werlhof 1983a/b) is taken into account in some progressive countries through quota systems, which can improve the participation of women. This positive discrimination is a phase for achieving greater gender equity. It gives priority to women – for being women – in a process of selection of candidates for labor positions, when both genders show similar profiles and competences. Female quotas of participation in public, electoral or directive charges are also promoted. It is a concession of patriarchy that alleviates symptoms without changing the structural conditions of root causes. Although it is a matter of positive discrimination, it still remains discrimination.

The results of this longstanding process are regionally and socially different, and gender discrimination has led to inequality and inequity, which has found itself embedded deep inside the social organization. It reflects the habitus to 'become' a gendered human being (a man or a woman, depending on the position of the social structure with clear gender differences as Table 2 exposes)

Table 2:

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
UN 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>>

2.1 Gender Security and the Construction of Gender Identity

As a result of increasing socio-economic and environmental pressures, women have understood that the constructed social identity and habitus is the root cause of any discriminative conduct. The traditional role assigned to women is the role of a housewife, who cares for the children, family, the elderly, and inclusive domestic animals and orchards; it is never quantified in economic terms and registered in the GDP of a country. Why are these productive activities of women without value? What is the amount of this economic gift for the rest of the society? Under normal conditions women produce half of the world's food supply. In developing countries this number is even higher, staggering between 60% and 80%¹¹. Nevertheless, few women own land for housing and agriculture production¹². Even in industrialized countries their input is considerable and economic studies have shown that the non-paid work in the USA represents at least 32% of the GDP (Vaughan 1997). As the service sector is increasing its role in the economy, non-paid services are also increasingly taken into account and valued. Germany has developed a new law regarding public support for those raising children, first to diminish the pressure on the service system, then to reduce the number of miss-adapt or abandoned children, and finally, to reverse the negative demographic trend.

The question then arises: Why are women not overcoming these barriers? Gender biases are related to habitus, social roles, and norms in daily life. Men and women acquire different functions and attributes (military vs. childrearing; public vs. private). Within this context men are considered assertive, logical,

11 Women contribute in Africa to:

- 33% of the paid labor force
- 70% of agricultural labor days
- 60-80% of subsistence production
- 100% of food transformation
- 80% of food storing
- 90% of spinning and weaving
- 60% of harvesting and market activities (FAO, 2002)

12 2% of the land or the collective land rights belong to women (FAO, 2002)

and strong, therefore able to direct, while women are confronted with humble, modest, emotional, weak, stereotypes. There is a third element: women's self-identity, social pressure, and life-learning processes have internalized their habitus and role as career as *homo donans* (Vaughan 1997). Nevertheless, as the former theoretical reflections have shown, the habitus is complexly intertwined with other processes. There exists a historically developed interdependence between patriarchy and female submission, constituted by personal identity processes (care) and induced social habits, trained and socially reinforced for millennia. As a result of this longstanding process, female identity assumes an obligation to be available for others and to care for them as a process of morally and socially reinforced self-identification. As *homo domesticus* they are concerned about children, family, animals, and their well-being. As the weaker sex they are supposed to require protection from men and physical force (military capacity in the case of a state). Therefore, in moments of catastrophes, conflicts, and wars women become the group most vulnerable. In case of confrontations, they are also an appreciated commodity for the aggressors and an object of blackmail among the men in dispute. In moments of risks and threats, their first reaction is to save their children, the elderly, the handicapped, and domestic animals. Empirical studies (Ariyabandu/ Fonseka 2008; Birkman/ Fernando/ Hettige 2006) have shown that their death toll is often four or five times higher than that of men. Similar to men, who are capable of reaching the highest level of honor by offering their lives as heroes for their 'fatherland,' women acquire their sublime self-realization by giving their lives for others in a silent way.

In retrospect, identity includes "all the ways one might understand oneself to be a man or a woman [...] with any subset of gender norms, roles, and traits ascribed" (Anderson: 2007:4) and understood, while repudiating others (stereotypes, racism). In the symbolic field gendered representation exists through conventional association, imaginative projection, metaphoric thinking, and symbolic spaces (male-garage; female-kitchen). Roles determine different social activities (military, childbearing) for men and women. Masculine norms and stereotypes typify men as self-confident, capable, and powerful, organizers; meanwhile, women are socially identified as unable, subordinated, dependent, and fragile. Society expects men and women to conform to these roles. Performance and behaviors are socially constructed and transformable habitus. They do not have fixed traits. With modernization they are becoming more flexible, variable, and gender resilient. The empowerment of women is not only benefiting women themselves, but society as a whole.

3 Why Is Gender Social Representation Triggered by Discrimination?

The described system of habitus, developed values, ideas, and practices with its power relations, is simultaneously creating a structure of order, able to offer a person the possibility to become familiarized 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). Social representations originate in daily life, where society is the thinking cap and acting system. Tajfel argues that social identity means how "we live in a world in which processes of unification and diversification happen with gigantic steps and with a rapidity never ever before seen in history". (1981: 31) "Persons have a basic need to simplify and to impose an order to their reality" (Hogg/Abrams, 1988: 78).

This process induces them to categorize their social environment through social comparisons, where self-esteem is affirmed and maintained in a positive way. It explains also why this individual self-esteem depends on belonging to a group (not necessary within its own social system of reference). Moscovici described social representation as "systems of value, ideas, and practices," which simultaneously "establish an order that permits an individual to become familiarized and to arrange its material and social world" (Moscovici 1976: xiii). Bourdieu (1972) and Arizpe (2004) add precise socio-historical factors found in any culture. Social representations as systems of ideas, values, and practices are fulfilling a dual

function: a) establishing a framework of order in which the subjects are oriented in their material and social world; and b) permitting the communication among members of a collective society with a common code, where all objects are named and processes are precisely classified (Moscovici cited in: Herzlich/ Graham 1993: xiii).

For this reason social representations originate in daily life, where society is the thinking system.¹³ Consequently, a continuum exists between personal and social identity and between inter-personal and inter-group behavior. It includes social beliefs and social mobility, understood as a result of personal efforts able to induce social changes (Tajfel, 1981; Haslam et al., 1995, 1999; Bejar 2007). In this sense the subjective dimension of identity is interrelated with the objective processes where identity is manifested and transformed. For this reason identity is *processual*, since it is gestated and it changes permanently; *relational*, given that it is transformed by exchanges and interactions; *multidimensional*, because it operates in intra-individual, inter-individual, intra-group, inter-group, and ideological environments (Doise 1986); *contextual*, given that it is forged into specific contexts; *essentialist*, because the diversity and the complexity of the social interactions are sustained and transformed through identity processes (Serrano 2004).

The two basic processes of historical production of social knowledge are linked to anchoring and objectification. *Anchoring* is a process allowing the unknown situation to integrate into the existing representation (internalization as the incorporated class behavior); and *objectification* (the objective class belonging) permits these new representations to be projected into the world as concrete objects (Duveen 1997: 87). At the micro level these processes of gender identity are 'making the unfamiliar familiar' through the anchoring process (associative function to other symbols and their denomination). These processes are also contributing to the symbolic objectification of metaphors, analogies, or concrete objects and artifacts, getting used to the types of gender demands and acceptance through image building in the mass media (diffusion of gender role in soap operas, propaganda, fashion, magazines, and notices).

The function is *symbolic*, orienting and facilitating communication from the elaboration of attitudes, opinions, stereotypes, identity presentation of group relations, attributes of responsibility and control, narrative of original myths, ideological domination, and illusions. But it is also *pragmatic* because motivation orients the activities, planning, social describing, and norm-building. The acquisition of these control mechanisms (Maslow/ Frager/ Fadiman 1987) permits women to internalize several basic psychological processes in independent situations. Women should be assigned an identity (social facts) and develop a self-identity socialized with interdependence to patriarchy. The result of these complex processes of identity and social representations creates structural disadvantages for women worldwide and represents a threat to gender security, as it is expressed in Graph 1.

These processes are not only valid for discrimination against women, but similar mechanisms are used for the assignation of subaltern identities. By transforming habitus they are generated in the socialization processes of children, and lead to discrimination against the elderly, indigenous peoples, invalids, handicapped, and other minorities. These marginalized groups together with women share a common struggle for visibility. The values at risk for these subaltern groups are (Gramsci 1977) equity and identity. Furthermore, their sources of threats are linked to authoritarian governments, multinational enterprises, local bourgeois, churches, and other dominant groups within the proper family.

3.1 Social Vulnerability

Social vulnerability is a concept related to unsatisfied human needs and limited access to resources (Melillo/ Suárez/ Rodríguez 2004) which results in the loss of human security; this is also understood as

¹³ These social representations could be reinterpreted as an equivalent for contemporary myths, rites (Eliade 1965; Graves 1985) and belief systems in primitive societies (Moscovici 1984: 181, 1990, 1998, 2000).

freedom from fear (in the Canadian sense) and freedom from want in the sense of Ogata/ Sen (2003). The four pillars of human security (UNDP 1993; Ogata/ Sen 2003; Bogardi/ Brauch 2005; Brauch 2005; 2005a; 2007; Annan 2005) are complementary and should guarantee a minimal access to basic resources for the poorest in a community. Improving human security (HS) may avoid under- and over-consumption and could secure the basic satisfaction of needs of those most vulnerable, independent of geographical location, social status, age, or gender (Bohle 2006). Improving human security may also reduce the impacts from disaster and sustain faster recovery of social infrastructure and natural resources.

Because women and girls are socially exposed to threats, it is urgent to reduce their social vulnerability (Birkman 2006), taking into account their proper cultural context (Oliver-Smith 2004). Thus, the security dynamics should address threats to individual identity, social representation, and habitus, where not only the physical survival is in danger¹⁴, but the cultural one as well (Arizpe 2004). When reinforced by religious concerns, the resistance is anchored in beliefs, which offers greater resistance to change due to the early warning signals consolidated by magical beliefs in the early childhood (Bourdieu 1972). Wisner (2004: 194-205) insists social vulnerability in extreme situations creates contradictory, unexpected opportunities. It opens the possibility for empowerment of the vulnerable to deal better with unknown situations, where the traditional mechanisms of resistance for change and the traditional acceptance of the habitus (Bourdieu 1980: 101) are challenged, due to an extreme circumstance, characterized by a survival dilemma (Brauch 2008). Wisner addresses four approaches for dealing with social vulnerability: demographic, taxonomic, situational, and contextual or proactive; Oswald (1991, 2007a) systematized the coping answers as survival strategies for these highly vulnerable groups.

4 How Is Gender Discrimination Affecting Human Lives and Wealth during Disasters?

The term discrimination comes from the Latin *discriminare* and implies an unequal behavior able to improve (positive) or limit a situation (negative discrimination). Normally, it is understood as harmful because groups are treated unfairly based on prejudice(s). It is measured as the difference between norms and socially accepted mindsets, social realities, and understandings. Discrimination is based on a 'rejection process' of the other, emphasizing critical attributes such as gender, race, sex, age, social and marital status, class and caste belonging, migrant or refugee status, religion, incapacity, and/ or handicap. Indirect discrimination occurs when a specific group experiences disadvantages through neutral conducts and is obliged to justify its legitimate aim and the means for achieving it. In discriminative behavior mind and action can be distinguished. People who discriminate derive both emotional and material benefits, also understood as malice.

The complexity of life induces people to simplify their daily conduct by identifying themselves with social representations of the group and rejecting the other. It is socially used to maintain the *status quo*, by putting obstacles in the way of an individual who tries to go his own way. As a result stereotypes of how to think, believe, and act are created. Furthermore, a system of values, ideas, beliefs, and practices underlies discrimination. Discrimination is acute and discerning, but normally it is oversimplifying complex life situations. It establishes and uses culturally diverse situations to justify different performances with other genders, races, colors, professions, and social statuses.

During disaster situations historically accumulated discrimination against groups based on poverty, gender, race, and class have led to undemocratic power structures and negligence. The discrimination

14 Further, World Bank (1998) documented empirically that with each loss of 1% in GDP in Mexico as a result of induced socioeconomic crises, the rate of homicides increased by 1% and robberies with violence by 2%. Something similar occurs with the global environmental change and the new threats of extreme hydro-meteorological events or the growing poverty in countries of the south, linked to soil erosion and urbanization due to the abandonment of the peasant field.

then continues to manifest itself, increasing the social vulnerability of these groups. Often, it is triggered by long-term emergency situations such as famine, physical or sexual violence, water scarcity, pollution, economic crises, gender violence, race discrimination, and caste and class performance. It reduces preventive actions, limits early warning, restricts aid during an emergency, and limits integral development and resilience-building during the recovery phase. The most important types of discrimination can be systematized in the following typology:

- gender
- race, color, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and other minority identities
- class, caste, and other socio-economic conditions
- age factors: children, adolescents, elderly
- physical handicapped (disability, illness, HIV-status)
- migrants and refugees
- political and institutional discrimination (governments, aid agency, spenders)

4.1 Gender

Gender discrimination refers to different treatment based on sex, including different connotations of values that change with cultural context. It is the most common and longstanding discrimination, and it is triggered by other discriminative behaviors. The mortality birth-rate in Punjab, India for young girls is 1.18%. They have a better chance for survival during birth. However, from 1 to 11 months the ratio male/ female reduces to 0.53; from 12-23 month: 0.51 and from 24-59 months: 0.65. The explanation is child mortality in early childhood is higher for girls, which is an expression of neglect. This is another process of discrimination discovered by Amartya Sen (1990) when she calculated "100 million missing girls" (China 44; India 37; Pakistan 5.2; Bangladesh 3.7; and South East Asia: 2 millions), due to female feticides.

During the tsunami relief in Asia and the earthquake cleanup in Pakistan, Ariyabandu and Fonseca (2007) evaluated the distribution of aid efforts. They found that most help was given exclusively to men, because of their role as head of a household. Some of them may have used the aid-money for alcohol and women were not allowed direct access to relief aid. Often, external support also had gender bias. While fishermen received boats and fishing implements, fisherwomen were not given any tools. This blatant form of discrimination impeded recovery with dignity through productive self-help in Indonesia and India. In the Aceh Besar district the surviving men outnumbered women in a 3:1 ratio (Oxfam, 2005), and in a case study from Sri Lanka women represented 65.3% of the dead (Birkman/ Fernando/ Hettige, 2006). "While there is no gender disaggregated information available on the Kashmir earthquake casualties, there are reports [... that] more women and children died than men" (Ariyabandu/ Fonseka 2007). During the emergency phase, both researchers found that female toilets in the camps were established far away and beside the men's toilets, which made them dangerous for rape at night¹⁵. Another example is the discrimination of relief aid for single mothers in Pakistan after the earthquake or the rape of women in the refugee camps of Darfur, when they search for fuel early in the morning.

In the recovery phase in Sri Lanka, a good intended project ended with gender discrimination, when adolescents were obliged by their families to marry elder widowers with children, who had lost their wives during the disaster. They were promised by the government to get a new house once married. Single mothers and widows did not get houses during the reconstruction and often widows and orphans were legally deprived of their property rights, frequently by their own family or the family in law.

Habitus and social identity are complex and among the root causes of any discriminative behavior. The traditional role assignment for a woman is to be a housewife, who cares for children, family, the elderly,

15 Further, first aid kits often lack hygienic articles for women. Normally, male staff is in charge of refugee camps and women feel ashamed to ask for hygienic towels or traditional cotton.

domestic animals, and orchards. This was one of the reasons why women were inside their homes during the tsunami disaster – they were busy with house work in the morning. They did not see the imminent danger. Furthermore, due to cultural and misogynist taboos, they were not taught to swim and were dressed with saris and had long hair. Their self-identity to care and their habitus with ethos prevented them from running away and saving their own life. The conjunction of these factors imperilled an effective hazard response.

4.2 Race, Color, Ethnicity, Religion and other Minority Identities

Racism is a system of beliefs, sometimes organized as a doctrine, where biological differences among human groups determine individual and social opportunities. These groups in return declare their own race as superior and exercise domination over others justified by this belief system. The Macpherson Report describes it as “the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes, and behaviours, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping that disadvantage ethnic minority people”. In 1985 Maughan-Brown critically examined the “use that is made of fiction as an instrument of propaganda, the way race myths and stereotypes are embodied in fiction.” When discrimination is related to ethnic groups, it is often a reaction of *ethnocentrism* and when it refers to outsiders, it is called *xenophobia*. Ethnic discrimination is reported from all continents, but less known in Africa. Muzangi Mbella Liliane (2007), an indigenous from Congo: “There is a mistake to think that there were no indigenous people in Africa. The ancient migration of peoples and tribes had sparked clashes and formed segmented societies long before Western colonization”.

During Hurricane Katrina African-Americans, Latinos, and the elderly in New Orleans, who lived below river and lake levels, did not receive transportation, financial support for evacuation, adequate protection, or attention during their stay in the Superdome. Their death toll and displacement has shown that their financial capacity was too low to evacuate themselves, but their capability for resilience-building was also limited. This case illustrates a complex discrimination process, where institutional racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and neglect challenged the bases of the democratic society in the USA with severe negative outcomes.¹⁶ Throughout the recovery phase, the low-lying parts, mostly occupied before by African-Americans and Latinos, were not cleaned up and are not prepared for reconstruction due to toxic substances that have diluted in water and soil. The slowness is triggered by administrative reasons: “For eighteen months, the Washington Republicans have consistently punished and discriminated against our people, all for partisan political purposes. A state with 80% of the storm damage from two hurricanes received barely 50% of federal relief funds. Mississippi, with far less damage, received far more money proportionately and six months earlier. [...] Just one recent example is the Katrina cottages program. We have over 64,000 people still living in trailers, yet we received money to help only 600 of those families. Mississippi received \$280 million dollars, nearly four times as much.” (Governor of Louisiana Kathleen Babineaux Blanco on 23 January 2007).

4.3 Class, Caste, and other Socio-Economic Conditions

The National Campaign for *Dalit* Human Rights (NCDHR) claimed they and some tribal groups were discriminated against by members of higher castes in the same community. Discrimination is often

16 Detailed statistics on the victims and economic losses of discriminated groups – to the extent that they have been compiled for hurricane Katrina in 2005 – show a much higher degree of vulnerability of African-Americans. According to a report in the Times Picayune (New Orleans) of 6 March 2006: “Of the 1,840 people still catalogued [...] as missing from Louisiana, 30 were 5 or younger; 74 were 80 or older. Women comprised 910 of the total. The majority – 1,422 people – were from New Orleans. Of 1590 people whose race was known, 1,352 were Afro-American [representing 85%]”.

invisible and transformed into habitus, expressed after the tsunami in 2004 in India by fishermen's behavior against *Dalits* – historically discriminated against and considered as 'without caste or untouchable'. Their self-defence reaction was to leave the refugee camp when threatened by the higher caste. Often, it is so deeply ingrained that it appears as an unintentional act¹⁷. Shelters in India were mostly organized within this social discrimination pattern and the *Dalit* were often forced by supervisors and inhabitants to leave the camps. In other cases they preferred to live separately, fearing humiliation and discrimination, and quite often violence. The administrative official of the Nagapattinam district said, "In a crisis like this there is no time to experiment with caste and religious enmity." Several aid organizations cooperated at the village level with leaders from a higher caste¹⁸, who deviate aid support designated to lower caste members. Lower caste members received little help, and no access to the same benefits¹⁹. The existing social gaps prior to the disaster increased during and after the disaster. In a middle-range term, Naik/ Stigter/Laczo (2007) documented tangible links between migration, failed development strategy, natural disasters, and discrimination in case studies in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Former existing processes (human trafficking, brain drain) are reinforced and social discrimination increased. The social vulnerability has grown in these three countries compared with before the disaster.

4.4 Age Factors: Children, Adolescents, Elderly

Children are the future of the world, however 1.9 billion children are living in developing countries, and one billion in poverty (Sub-Saharan Africa 340; Middle East/North Africa 153; South Asia 585; East Asia/Pacific 594; Latin America 197; Central/ Eastern Europe 108 million children). 640 million children are without an adequate shelter and 400 million without safe water, increasing child mortality and morbidity rates. Interestingly also life expectancy shows discriminative patterns. The life-expectancy worldwide is 63; in Japan 82 and in Zambia only 33 years, due to the fact that children aged 23 months in Zambia are only breastfed without the possibility of supplemental food. Child mortality in Sierra Leone is 284; in Afghanistan 257 and in Sweden 3/1,000 (UNICEF 2007: 103-117).

Age discriminates not only against the young in poor countries, but also against the older generations. 9.4% of those over 60 in Asia will make up an estimated 23.5% or 1.2 billion aged persons by 2050. Asia will then account for 63% of world's elderly population (UN 2006a). During disasters they are often neglected and threats are often triggered by sex. Tsunami-related deaths in Matara, Sri Lanka discriminated in the older generations with those over 60, 38 men versus 91 women died; however, sex was irrelevant for those younger than 10, 31 boys versus 41 girls died.

Old age also induced multiple discriminations during disaster support and recovery in Matara. Two weeks after the tsunami 1,507 elderly persons received very little or no relief assistance. In India, Indonesia, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka the results were similar: the elderly in the camps suffered from limited mobility, lack of wheelchairs, walking aids, eyeglasses, and they had to sleep on the floor without mattresses. They were not given privacy and endured noisy environments, as the shelters were taken over by the young. The dust from the open space increased asthma complications and they weren't

17 The Indian Express reported on 7 January 2005 that the fishing communities refused to share water and claimed that the Dalits would pollute the water. Muralidharan in Nagapattinam denounced: "We had problems earlier as relief materials could not be taken to Dalit areas because the fishing community refused to let us pass".

18 Even some NGOs thought that it could be wrong to change the traditional mindset.

19 When they got to the main road for help or to ask the government for work, the fisher community chased them away. Dalit women, who earlier earned their livelihood by collecting shrimps and seafood and repairing the nets of the fishermen from higher castes, today are without any possibility to survive. During reconstruction the question came up if Meenavars should be relocated further inland. Then the two communities would become close neighbors and that may create major conflicts. "We are frequently fighting with each other. Living close is not a choice for us. At times we have been friendly, but if they shift here, we will be pushed away" said K. Cjithraveli in Pondicherry.

given their special diets or diabetes medications²⁰. Such cases of neglect must be addressed (WDR 2006), and the question arises: Is such neglect discriminatory? How does it limit the survival opportunities of those already vulnerable? Because this performance is based on deep rooted social representations and learned behaviors, it requires clear policy decisions and law reinforcement.

Conversely, psychological services were highly concentrated among children, adolescents, and orphans. Programs to find family members were applied, playgrounds were built, and school facilities were erected; the elderly were mostly forgotten. Furthermore, the elderly often take care of children orphaned in disasters. Nevertheless, reducing stress among children is crucial. Quality and quantity of food is vital for children because children need vitamins and nutrients in order to grow healthily and properly; it also fends off the "perverse poverty syndrome," as described by Alvarez and Oswald (1993). In 2007 Stanford University published a *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (PTSD) article, stating the hippocampus was able to reduce the amount of blood in children due to excess cortisone caused by extreme chronic stress. This often occurs in disasters, combined with losses and sexual and/ or emotional abuse. These irreversible damages in the brain determine the future of these children and their further capacity of adaptation and resilience-building.

4.5 Physically Handicapped (Disability, Illness, HIV-Status)

Roughly 10% of the population has a disability. In developing countries this number is often doubled (nearly 1.3 billion persons). 80% of them live in hazard-prone poor countries, often afflicted with conflicts, weak governance, and disasters. Limited capacity for early warning and refugee support exists, but the handicapped are not given the extra attention they require. Disability mainstreaming criticizes the approach toward special attention and separation policy of handicapped. They focus on a multi-sector approach that is capable of integrating the disabled. However, during a disaster the former discriminative situation often takes a turn for the worst. They are not only highly vulnerable, but once in a refugee camp, they are not given any help or support to cope with their fate.

More than 39.5 million people, or 1% of the population account, are living with HIV/ AIDS (adults: 37.2 million; and children: 2.3 million). In sub-Saharan Africa 5.9% of the population is infected and in the Caribbean 1.2%. This illness ranks fourth among the leading causes of death worldwide (2.9 million) and as the first in sub-Saharan Africa (2.1 million, representing 7.8% of all HIV dead). People living with HIV/AIDS are prone to develop other illnesses and infections due to their weak immune systems (UNAIDS/WHO 2006). Frequently, they contract tuberculosis and pneumonia; children under 5 have high mortality rates when they are infected. During times of peace HIV/AIDS is a highly stigmatized illness and during disasters the existing discrimination is worse. Living without privacy in camps increases the threat of contagion and often ill people are forced by healthy persons to leave the shelter. It is difficult to get special medical care and access to retroviral drugs in these situations. In an ambience of open space, everybody recognizes the HIV/AIDS illness and usually discrimination immediately begins thereafter.

During the tsunami emergency, handicapped boys and girls were victims of sexual harassment and abuse, not only during the rescue or their tenure in camps and shelters, but even more so during reconstruction. In Sri Lanka activists warned tsunami survivors about rape and stated the trafficking of women and children existed in several Asian countries before the disaster and "came to light during the post-tsunami tragedy" (Macan-Markar, 2007). Rape and sexual abuse is rarely reported, especially if there is no special report system, network, or specialists trained to attend these cases. There are also complaints in times of relief because contraceptive pills, condoms, and medical attention are not readily available; this is a highly dangerous situation because "the worst thing a woman wants is to get

20 The person in charge of the Memana Camp in India said "There should be special facilities for the health care of the older persons and there should be provision of special monetary assistance for them (www.helpage.org).

pregnant, when she has no roof, no income, and no future.” “Rape-related pregnancy is a horrible outcome because the father is not usually known,” remarked a handicapped women in a refugee camp in Sri Lanka.

In 1990 the US Congress enacted the Americans with Disabilities Act, because 43 million disabled citizens have been “subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treatment,” due to “stereotypic assumption not truly indicative” of their personal abilities “to participate in and contribute to society.” Helen Sullivan (2006) proposes that their education should start in normal daily life, preparing them for different eventualities and threats. Through this rising awareness, they can increase their preparedness with specialized training; concrete actions, and effective communications. Society can adapt to aide those with disabilities.

Sexual discrimination is common in daily life, but increases during disasters, due to the loss of emotional stability. Furthermore, people try to reorganize their world through stereotypes, often affecting highly vulnerable groups. As the examples have shown, mostly complex discrimination patterns exist, one reinforcing the other.

4.6 Migrants and Refugees

Migration and urbanization are the overwhelming phenomena of the 21st century. Kofi Annan (2005) estimates that in 2050 “drought and desertification will threaten the livelihood of over 1 billion people in more than 110 countries around the world.” Today, international migrants make up 3% of the world population and if refugees are added, they account for 204.1 million people (see Graph 1). Two of the most conflictive and discriminative borders are the entrances of Southern Europe from Africa and the North American border with Mexico.²¹

Immigration has complex roots because people flee from disasters, socio-economic crises, poverty, marginalization, public insecurity, famines, internal conflicts, and wars. The people in the host country often become xenophobic, sometimes aggravated by conflicts over land, water, jobs, and houses. Immigrants suffer from discrimination in many ways and are offered the least desirable, lowest-paid, and most hazardous jobs. As the modern immigration from the South to the North is mostly illegal, no formal mechanisms exist to deal with these non-existent persons in early warning time. Thus, the UN is exploring a status to protect this highly vulnerable population during any disaster. In the present situation they have to develop their own resilience and survival strategies.

Before Hurricane Katrina more than 230,000 Latinos lived in the tri-state Gulf area, most of them extremely vulnerable illegal immigrants²². Confronted with deportation threats, their confidence in American institutions dropped, due to former discrimination experiences. They used their own social networks to evacuate from the announced hurricane. An important number came from hurricane prone backgrounds, and the Honduran Consulate estimates 140,000 Hondurans moved to New Orleans after Hurricane Mitch. They had survived different types of disasters and had learnt self-protection and

21 To limit the increase in migration, the US government is building a triple fence impeding the entrance of undocumented Latinos, sometimes also people from Asia. As a result of this discriminative behavior, approximately 2,000 to 3,000 persons have died during the last decade when they tried to cross the Mexican border to the US (U.S. Government Accounting Office, 2007). More than 1,000 migrants died only in the extreme conditions of the desert in Southern Arizona (Binational Migration Institute, University of Arizona, 2007). This figure is ten times higher than the number of people who died in Germany between 1961 and 1989 when they tried to cross the Berlin Wall (American Immigration Law Foundation 2007).

22 Today Latinos represent the first minority in USA with estimated 45 millions, 12 to 14 millions of them illegal. After 1987, the legal changes turned 85% of immigration as illegal due to the change of immigration laws. In the three southern states of the Gulf, affected by Katrina, the growth rate of Latinos between 1990 and 2000 was between 148.4 to 207.9%. Muñiz (2006:2) insists: “This dramatic growth in the Latino population, accompanied by that of other groups stresses the importance of recognizing the ethnic, cultural, and economic makeup of a given region in order to asses the prospective needs and challenges of those in a potential disaster area”.

imaginative threat-reduction throughout their lives. Poverty situations and neglect from governmental support programs at home obliged them to migrate. Later, the illegal crossing of a dangerous and militarized border gave them experiences and the tools to deal with hazardous situations, and they learned to look for marginal opportunities to achieve their goal. Furthermore, living in a permanent illegal status and facing continuous deportation risks created a habitus for self-protection.

All these social representations increased their resilience-building processes and helped most Latinos to leave the region in time. Those with legal status supported their illegal counterparts, often from the same family, region, or state. The post-disaster mess was mitigated by church support and solidarity among Latinos in safer regions. After the disaster again the Latino community worked together with everyone from neighboring states and communities and repaired what was repairable. They built new houses, where they resided and helped one another; services such as masonry, carpentry, plumbing, cleaning, and restoring damaged houses and buildings, and new job opportunities. "Hundreds of Latino workers were hired for the clean-up of the affected areas, but complained they had not been paid what was promised— some weren't paid at all ... justice came at the end of February when a subcontractor...working for KBR – a subsidiary of Halliburton – was forced to pay ... When they complained to the contractor, the owner threatened to report them to immigration officials" (Salinas 2006:1). Even the African-American Mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin asked: "How do I assure that New Orleans is not overrun by Mexican workers?" (www.nclr.org).

4.7 Political and Institutional Discrimination: Governments, Aid Agency, Spenders

Hurricane Stan was the 10th hurricane in the Atlantic in 2005 and it affected 5 states in Mexico. The torrential rainfalls caused 21.062 billion pesos in damage with horrific effects in Chiapas, a southern state with four million mostly poor and indigenous inhabitants, resulting in 86 deaths. Twenty thousand little communities, 31 thousands houses were damaged and 8,500 people required relocation; 52,000 students were without schools, only in the state of Chiapas. Estimated damages represented 15% of the state GDP. Stan made ca. 1.9 billion US\$ for reconstruction for these states necessary; plus the effect on drinking water facilities represented more than four billion pesos and two billion had to be invested to reestablish the river basins. In Chiapas, forty percent of the land and forests were destroyed due to wind and intensive rainfall; and 50% of the coffee production and 200 thousand hectares of agriculture crops were lost. People with higher rate of marginalization were severely affected and their recuperation was minimal, when they were confronted with the magnitude of damages. The impact of Stan in Chiapas exceeded also the capacity of the municipalities to deal with. Inclusive other municipalities in other states lost support due to the economic transferences and services to the damaged Chiapas (García et al. 2006).

Officially, the Mexican government reported 98 fatalities. A month later, 30 were still reported missing. Stan had dire consequences, principally disrupting the livelihoods of the most vulnerable. In Chiapas there was an insufficient early warning system and all three levels of government made multiple mistakes, which increased the death toll and economic loss. Evacuation started late and only when strong rainfalls produced flash floods. Ultimately, 83, 825 refugees fled to some 492 refugee camps (García et al. 2006).

Hurricane Wilma, a category 5 super-hurricane, hit two weeks later. It killed 12 people in Haiti, 8 in Mexico, and caused 35 hurricane-related deaths in USA. 560,000 people in Western Cuba and 90,000 tourists and locals in the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico were evacuated. More than one million inhabitants were directly or indirectly damaged 36 hours after the hurricane made landfall. All of these evacuations depended on tourism, as Cancun is an international tourist center. 24 thousand tourists were preventively evacuated, together with 36 thousands inhabitants from Isla Mujeres, Puerto Juarez, Holbox, Arenas, Contoy, Punta Allen and some zones in the coast of Tulum. Other 15 thousand tourists were brought into shelters. The economic losses were high, affecting mostly the insured luxurious tourist installations based in

Cancun, Cozumel and the Mayan Riviera. Cancun alone earns yearly 1.6 billion dollars from international and 3.5 billion pesos from national tourists. It is the region with the highest private investments in tourism, and reports 10.5% of national tourist GDP and 40% of foreign devisa. 750 thousand persons live from this tourist economy and the daily income from this activity is 15 million dollars. In both cases, severe environmental destruction (mangrove elimination, destruction of barriers and internal sweet-salty lagoons, massive deforestation of tropical and temperate forests, coral reef destruction due to tourism, ships and diving activities) reinforced the impact of the hurricane. In Mexico, yearly ten thousands hectares of mangroves have disappeared and the Mexican Caribbean shows a high deforestation rate of 12%, basically all for tourist development. After Wilma, SEMARNAT (Mexican Ministry of Environment), announced plans to restrict tourism in regions of mangroves where dunes were destroyed. However, they did not change the norm, which permits economic compensation for mangrove destruction and the rate of elimination has not changed after the disaster nor were damaged mangroves restored.

Institutional discrimination was widespread and governmental assistance differed in both hurricanes (see the joint World Bank, CEPAL and CENAPRED evaluation published in October 2006). García et al. (2006) showed that the highest damages were caused by Stan with 21.62 billion pesos (2,162 billion \$US), whereof 65% were direct losses and the rest affected the productive activities and special costs. 71% of this damage was reported in the state of Chiapas alone. Together with the third hurricane, Emily, the overall economic losses were calculated at 48.7 billion pesos (about 4.6 billion \$US) marginally, slowly under the hydro-meteorological losses of 6.5 billion dollars accumulated during the last 25 years (1980-2004). Caritas in Chiapas compared the two hurricane responses and regretted that the federal attention was deviated to Cancun, when the damages in Chiapas were more serious than in the Caribbean. Arely Madrid, a senator of Chiapas insisted "the Chiapas people do not want anything gratis or as the President said 'de gorra' [for free]. What we want is not to be discriminated and marginalized. Don't forget who lost houses, jobs, income, land, livestock and public infrastructure". And the catholic representative Eufemio Flores sustained "it is necessary to continue to give food aid in Tapachula, especially in the mountains, due that the destruction of Stan was enormous, while Wilma impacted above all in the tourist zones of Quintana Roo and Yucatán. But the number of poor people is lower compared with those of Chiapas".

A national newspaper reports: "Its results are painful and exasperate, but inevitable to signalize that the fear of a discriminatory and class governmental action resulted with fundamentals: the marginalized, the poorest have been relegated by the presidential attention, which concentrated in promoting a rapid reconstruction of the hotel zones. The Executive has punctually addressed the demands – justified and understandable – from the owners of tourist establishments in Cancun and Quintana Roo. He was converted into a promoter of national and international credits, renegotiation of debts, and a prompt payment from insurance companies. On the contrary authorities responded too late and provided insufficient, poorly organized assistance for those inhabitants in marginalized zones, who in result lost family members, homes, working tools, personal belongings, livestock, and crops" (La Jornada, 31st of October 2005).

Alberto Molina Rios, the representative of SEDESOL (Ministry of Social Development) in Chiapas, observed that a year later less than 10% of the 10,200 affected homes from Stan were rebuilt. "Most of them still don't have a secure place to rebuild. For this reason 9,000 families are still homeless. The housing programme is also being audited due to missing funds totalling 1.4 billion pesos (10th September 2006)". Given these different conducts during two hurricanes in the same month, country, and region, institutional racism still exists, and inexcusable actions in early warning and evacuation took place in Mexico in October 2005. Wilma made landfall in Cancun, an international beach resort, and the tourists were evacuated efficiently because of the amount of money, time, and support spent in this area. Furthermore, almost all tourist services and hotels were restored for the Christmas holiday season. Stan

affected the mountain regions of Chiapas, leaving poor indigenous groups with limited advice, few disaster relief programs, and little reconstruction efforts. The region particularly related to the Zapatista movement was not only politically marginalized, but foreign aid was limited through military controls.

The examples explained interlinked with conceptual reflections paint a more detailed picture, depicting the different colors of discrimination that are experienced in daily life. Social vulnerability is a result of a historical inequity and exploitation, aggravated by indigenous peoples, gender, social status, class, caste, age, and religious discrimination. The accumulation of these triggering factors threaten not only an already precarious lifestyle, but also the future of children, who live in absolute poverty and are plagued with malnourishment, little or no schooling, and are officially neglected.

5 How Can Resilience-Building Reduce Gender Vulnerability?

Most countries have signed the UN Convention on Human Rights, Gender Equity and Non-Discrimination. Furthermore, most industrialized nations have legally removed discriminative practices and promote individual merit programs instead of inherited social conditions. Nevertheless, unfair treatments of persons, genders, or groups, based on habitus and prejudice are still present. Especially in poor countries this figure is much higher (see Table 2).

5.1 Solidarity and Resilience-Building among Latinos

During Hurricane Katrina the Latino population faced institutional, color, and gender discrimination. Before Hurricane Katrina many Latinos who lived in the tri-state Gulf area, were extremely vulnerable illegal immigrants. Confronted with deportation threats, their confidence in American institutions fell drastically, due to discrimination experiences. In turn, they used their own social networks to evacuate from the massive hurricane. Because they came from countries which neglect their citizens and then face deportation in America because of their illegal status, this group created a habit of self-protection. Institutional and ethnic discrimination before and during the hurricane obliged Latinos to organize themselves. They evacuated collectively, saved their lives, found support through charitable people and churches, and finally restarted a new livelihood, based on cooperation and solidarity as a migrant minority. Their collective organization controlled abusive conducts from contractors and reduced deportation risks.

5.2 Women Self-Help Groups in India

On January 18th, 2007 Minister Deepa Jain Sing informed the 37th Sessions of CEDAW about women self-help groups in India: "Today, there are more than 2.2 million self-help groups in the country, and of these 90% are women self-help groups. Starting with small thrift and credit initiatives, these groups have become an important tool in women's economic advancement, through promoting self-improvement and self-confidence through skill development and income security".

5.3 Resilience and Empowerment by Economy of Solidarity

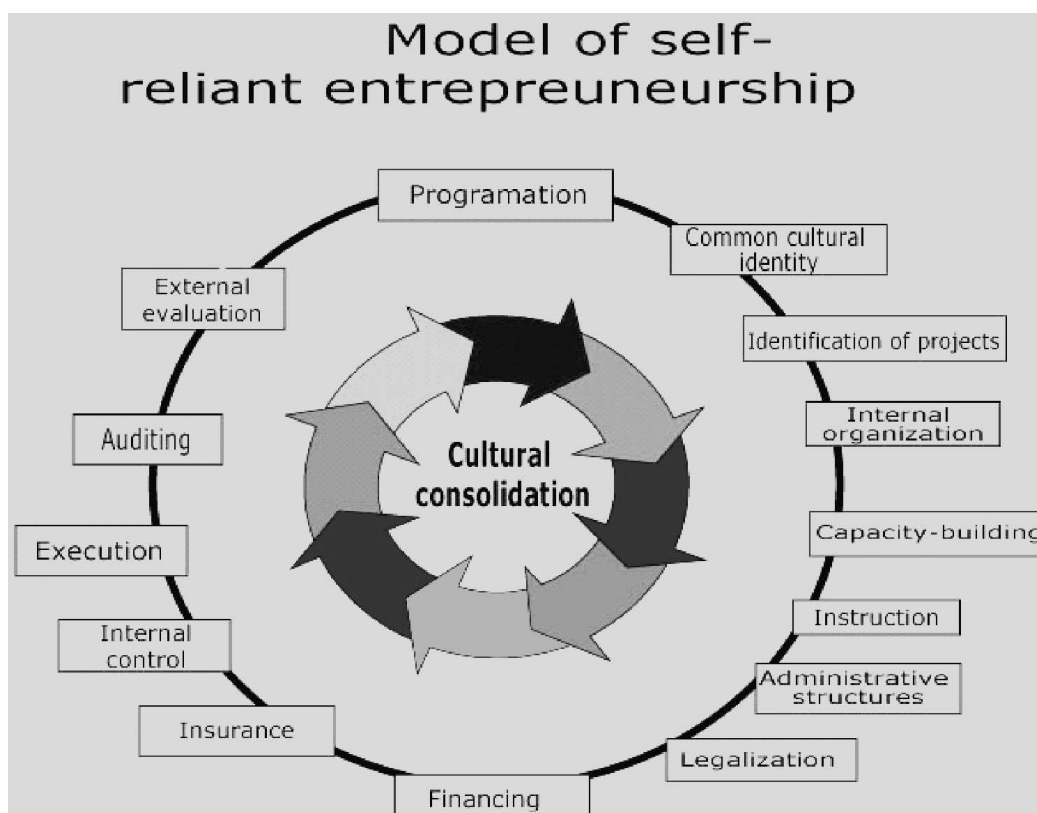
Economic crises in Latin America have obliged 50% of the population to create their own 'economy of solidarity' with micro-business – officially called 'informal economy'. Chains of vertical and horizontal integration of production, trade, and consumption were supported by micro-credits (popular banks), supervision, effective administration, and micro-insurance. They created 37% of the economic growth in the region (Cadena 2005, Collin 2005). Reinforced by territorial integration and systematic capacity building in technical, financial, organizational, and administrative tools, businesswomen have become empowered. A key issue for success is a rigorous evaluation and transparency in financial matters with the involvement of their own small risk capital (Carmona 2004). Simultaneously, disaster preparedness,

cultural activity, and group dynamics defeat existing discrimination and institutional neglect practiced for centuries. They are overcoming poverty, promoting peaceful integration, long-term cooperation, and empowering themselves with dignified live conditions.

A micro-credit is crucial for poor women unable to access the formal bank system, and micro-insurance protects their investment in case of a disaster loss. A successful example was a complex emergency management program in three southern states of Mexico. In 1982, refugees from the genocide in Guatemala were resettled from the border line of Guatemala to safer places in the southern states of Mexico. Getting the option to live definitively in Mexico, the European Union, UNHCR and the Mexican government (COMAR) developed in close cooperation with the local population an ambitious micro-regional integration program. After many former development projects failed, a long-term effort named PAID 1 (Project of Support for the Definitive Integration in the States of Campeche, Quintana Roo and Chiapas) was launched in 1997 with a participatory methodology where women played a crucial role for integrating the Guatemalan with the Mexican culture. Once positive links between both communities were consolidated, a jointly defined regional development process started for these four micro-regions including eight municipalities: seven former refugee camps and 15 villages with 141,307 inhabitants; 26,729 Guatemalans and 114,578 Mexicans, 24% of them monolingual indigenous. After a successful process of training local women and men in administration, saving practices, check-book management, in economic rationality of investment, as well as in auditing and reinvestment, the program started with great success. Advised and trained by international experts and local government officials, they planted 454,594 hectares of irrigated land with different cash crops and alternating agricultural cycles (Carmona 2004).

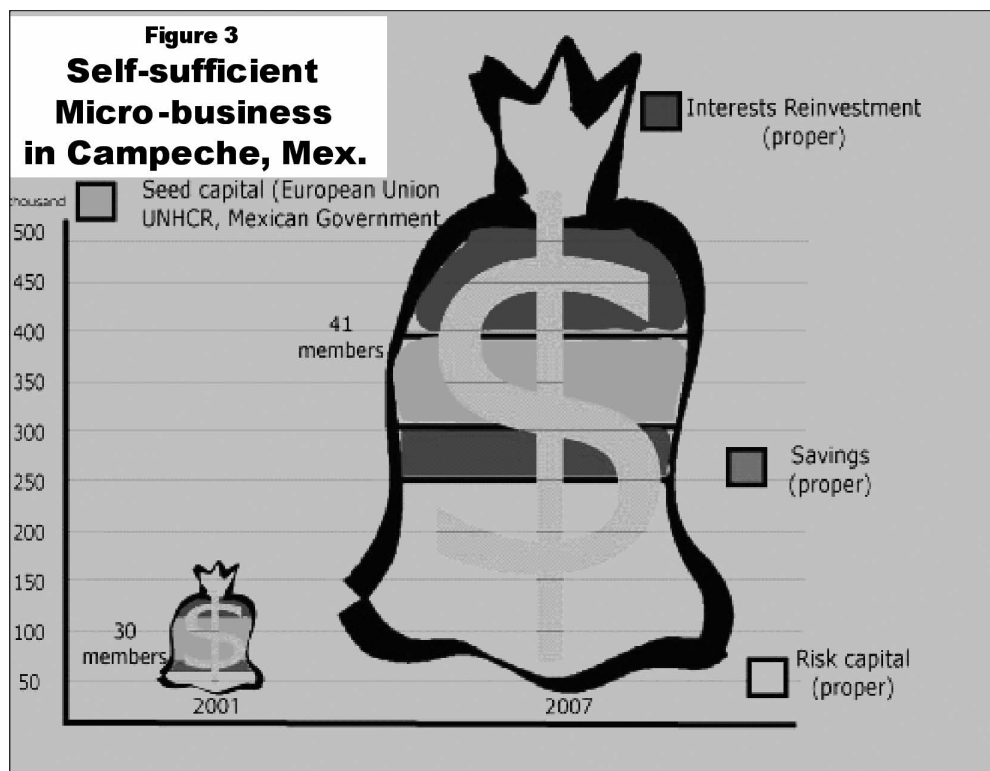
The project was territorially well integrated and created an entrepreneur mentality, able to improve livelihood and create jobs for both Mexicans and Guatemalan refugees. It was based on the self-reliant business model. Women's collaboration, the common cultural past of the Mayans, and the suffering of genocide established a fertile ground for collective work (see Graph 7).

Graph 2:



The success relied on a free and diverse association for business (cash crop agriculture, pork and chicken farms, bakeries, dress-making, grocery stores, services, etc.) and an intensive training for participants. The new model was based on collective learning, co-generation, and cooperation for common interests. Business dignity, sense of responsibility, and empowerment among the participants grew. Their proper decision-making of productive processes implied some risks and failures, which were later avoided by micro-assurance and transparent collective administration. From the beginning, their own money was involved and interest payment allowed them to improve their homes and livelihoods (see Graph 3). The cooperation started with 30 members, 100 pesos proper capital and a saving policy of one peso/ day/ person. Together with a transparent financial management, reinvestment and a risk capital of 30,000 pesos from the European Union after six years this grew to more than 5 million pesos (see Graph 3). All their members have improved their lifestyle and houses. Children live in clean and healthy conditions, have drinking water inside their houses, school breakfast and get lunch in a common kitchen organized by a group of women. During the process they have learned to be aware of punctual payment of credits, DRR, and disaster management. Out of 41 created groups 16 decided to promote a legal constitution. The rest of the communities and the neighboring villages observed this progress and soon they joined one of the societies or created their own. These positive experiences spread over the whole state of Campeche and promoted sustainable forest management. 9,600 ha from Mexicans and Guatemalans rain-fed and forests plots were associated with 9,000 ha from the Mennonites, establishing an area of 18,600 ha of an UMA (Unity of Management for Conservation of Wild Life) for the conservation and rational management of deers (vendado cola blanca), of turkeys (pavo ocelados) and other threatened species through special hunting permissions. Ecotourism and controlled hunting brought income, new jobs, an increase in the number of threatened species, and better living conditions, together with handicrafts and jewelry, which are sold to the visitors and the regional market.

Graph 3:



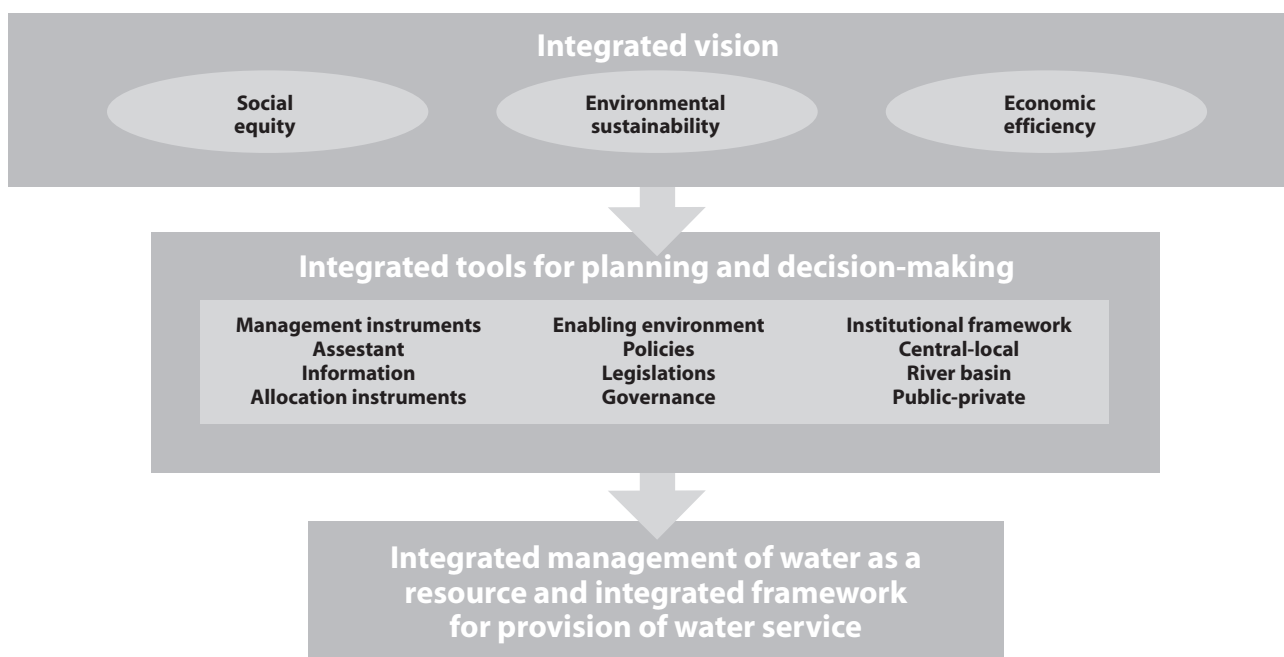
Their model of horizontal integration of agriculture and livestock with environmental services has guaranteed a sustainable mode of production. The vertical integration associated with agri-business, trade, and services has reduced production costs, permitted green agriculture, maintained and recovered highly polluted waters and eroded soils, and created jobs locally. It is a model of self-reliant

and sustainable food sovereignty and social economy, creating dignified livelihoods for marginalized social groups in other regions and countries.

Because it is a hazard prone region with difficult environmental conditions, people and nature require DRR management and disaster preparedness. During the past decade, drought, floods, sea level rise and five hurricanes (three very strong) have obliged government and society to develop preventive disaster management. Early warning and evacuation are getting cultural heritage. They have also learned from the Mayan pyramids that rounder corners and a specific design of higher buildings reduces the impact of hurricane winds and therefore the damage. Government, society, and business have created laws, and some drastic decisions in land planning in coastal areas should avoid future crises and conflicts due to GEC.

The analyzed models show a holistic management of natural resources combined with social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic efficiency. Techniques, information, and policies are integrated in an institutional framework, able to manage scarce resources (see Graph 4), stop environmental deterioration, and avoid an excessive concentration of wealth.

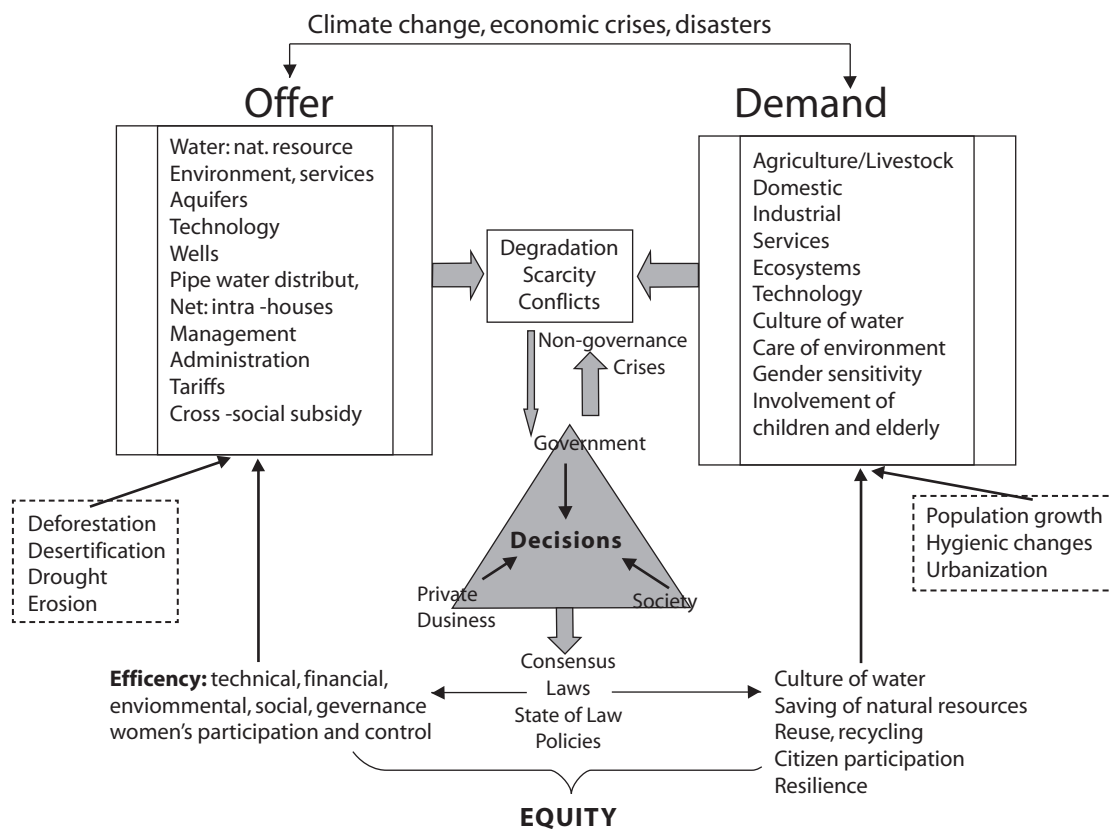
**Graph 4:
Women and Holistic Management of Natural Resources**



Source: GWP, 2002

To reduce the possibility of bad governance and fatal outcomes in the forms of a survival dilemma with environmentally displaced refugees, resilience-building practices, resource saving, recycling technologies, and technical and financial efficiency have created a complex system of natural and human resources. For instance, the water supply and distribution services include sanitation systems and water treatment reuse systems in agriculture. Women are the most vulnerable when water supply shrinks or drinking water becomes polluted. Therefore, governments in southeast Mexico, businesses, and social organizations are promoting development processes, which take into account different opinions and interests (see Graph 5). Consensual decision-making has prioritized community interest above particular business and agriculture. This region, as one of the most affected regions in Mexico by GEC, DRR, and DM, could avoid numerous deaths and economic losses by including the recuperation of everglades, mangroves, internal lagoons, barriers, reforestation, urban and coastal planning, sustainable agriculture, and ethical business. In these collective efforts, the empowerment of women is crucial.

**Graph 5:
Efficiency and Equity with Natural Resources**



Source: Oswald and Sandoval, 2006

5.4 International Institutions and Gender Equity

Throughout the last sixty years, international organizations, social movements, and NGOs have understood gender security to be a crucial element in preventing dangers associated with regressive globalization and GEC. An illustration of some possible interventions for improving security concerns and governance is summarized in Box 3.

Box 3:

Illustration of types of possible special interventions

- Assistance for eliminating discrimination such as violence against women in peacetime and situations of armed conflict, female genital mutilation, reproductive and sexual rights and trafficking in woman, etc.
- Assistance for the development of sex-disaggregated statistics and financial planning.
- Assistance for amending, implementing and enforcing legislation, e.g. concerning inheritance and property rights, and support within the judical system, the police or in the area of human rights.
- Assistance for women’s access to increased political influence locally and nation -ally, e.g. in connection with elections, development of gender equality policies for political parties and assemblies (elected or appointed) at all levels.
- Assistance for advocacy groups, awareness raising and educational campaigns.

6 Some Conclusive Reflections

1. Hazard itself does not differentiate between the various cleavages existing in society, e.g. between men and women, rich and poor, white and colored, the disabled, high and low social classes or castes. However, the impacts of disasters differ for each social group. Thus, disasters trigger historical and social vulnerabilities. Social discrimination reinforces existing gaps and increases threats and fatal outcomes. This can be further aggravated by political and institutional neglect, discrimination, or racism.

2. In most disasters the death toll for women is higher. Their socially constructed habitus and representation-building lead to the constructions of social rules and norms. To be identified and socially constituted as a “man” or a “woman” entails gender discrimination, violence, and power loss. Women are often confined in private spaces for reproduction, made dependant, or violently treated – all factors increase their social vulnerability. However, their self-identity as career and *homo donans* obliges them to save children, the elderly, and animals in cases of threats (Yonder/ Akcar/ Gopalan 2005). Nevertheless, women produce the most significant part of food in the world. During crises and disaster situations they develop complex strategies of survival for their families and themselves. They create resilience and participate actively in reconstruction and normalization processes after a disaster. Strengthening their productive and organizational capacity increases their empowerment in favor of society.

3. In socio-psychological terms, under normal conditions humans live in social networks. During emergency situations these networks often break down, leaving individuals or small groups alone. This abandonment is reinforced by lack of coordination among government agencies, different aid organizations, and NGOs. Assistance should establish these lost networks as soon as possible. The social integration represents an initial investment, but in the long run reduces costs and potential conflicts in refugee camps and during the reconstruction phase. Therefore, women should be actively involved in post-disaster activities, avoiding at any cost further gender discrimination during the disaster management.

4. During crises situations women develop complex patterns of mutual solidarity. After a disaster they often occupy the only available land, often in marginal and risky areas. In forms of survival strategies, they reconstruct shelters from precarious materials (waste) found in landfills and disaster waste areas. Due to unemployment and limited opportunities for income and help, they implement diverse activities. They are forced to collaborate and compromise and utilize half-perished products and transform them into food in communal kitchens; they organize community activities (kitchen, child rearing, cleaning activities after disasters, etc.); they visit public authorities and demand assistance, land, housing, and the re-establishment of communications. Still, they often struggle for basic services (electricity, water, access, security, health and community center) and the legalization of recent occupied land and services. Lack of funds motivates them to fight for public subsidies and poverty alleviation support. Meanwhile, these women still find time for temporary part-time work making handcrafts and domestic tools, selling food, and other re-numerated activities. Last but not least, after a disaster popular colonies and provisional shelters are exposed to organized crime and gangs, often related to human trafficking. Thus, only neighborhood organizations lead the fight against public insecurity; major setbacks and problems occur in restoring security, because the local police is frequently involved in many of these illegal actions. The result of these complex activities empowers women. They are then able to fight against intra-family violence and sexual abuses. An outcome that forces women to assume the role as head of household, struggling alone for the future of their children.

5. Budgets after disasters are normally tight, not accounting for preventive disaster management and resilience-building. Even UN organizations can only provide limited resources for DRR and prevention. UNESCO estimates at least 18% of disaster costs could be saved with preventive measures, which represent less than 5% of the initial costs. Often, privately raised money is given with clear indications for direct disaster relief. This avoids investing in disaster and famine prevention, as well as local conflict resolution. This effective preparedness and awareness with bottom-up resilience-building reducing social vulnerability. When women are involved as objective and subjective supporters of DM and DRR, their role as mothers allows them to socialize preventive behavior among other family members.

During disasters, studies have shown women are emotionally more stable than men, and when they are properly trained, they provide effective help in reducing human losses and illnesses. After a disaster their active cooperation with authority figures helps to re-establish a speedy return to normalcy.

6. Because risks are neither socially nor geographically equally distributed, all root causes of GEC related gas emissions must be reduced (IPCC 2007). Hazards occur more frequently in the tropics and affect poorer populations, often due to their precarious living conditions and lack of functioning shelters. GEC gases are primarily caused by industrialized countries. A basic principle of justice obliges these countries to assume their historical and moral responsibility and support developing countries with technical and financial tools, so they can deal better with hazards and threats.

In conclusion, a holistic *Disaster Risk Reduction* (DRR) is based on the knowledge of habitus, identification mechanisms, and social representations. As a socially constructed process, a critical transformation of discriminative behaviors allows one to overcome obstacles and reinforce bottom-up resilience-building. It implements improvements in environmental, human, and gender conditions that are able to reduce gender discrimination during the three phases of disaster management. It creates a future scenario for sustainable development with solidarity and participative bottom-up disaster management, which is reinforced by top-down practical and legal support, allotting HUGE security for women, their families, and their communities.

7 Summary

The present paper mainstreams the component of the vulnerable within an increasing risky world society (Beck 2007). It focuses on an integral gender approach within a widened and deepened security understanding. Along with *Human, Gender and Environmental Security* (HUGE) it embraces a wider gender understanding -including children, the elderly, indigenous peoples, and other minorities with a human-centered focus on environmental security challenges, peace-building, human equality, and gender equity. Thus 'gender security' analyzes livelihood, food sovereignty, health care, public security, education, and cultural diversity in a historically created violent, patriarchal, and exclusive structure, which is affecting gender, families, and society. It is questioning the existing process of identity and social representation-building.

HUGE focuses on 'human security' and explores specific governmental policies, institution building, and legal reinforcements to defeat discrimination and stimulate political and social participation of women, the young, the elderly, and other minorities. It deals with 'environmental security' concerns that can improve an unhealthy environment and mitigate negative effects from *global environmental changes* (GEC). For hazard-prone areas HUGE analyzes the potential of technical, financial, and human support; in turn, this enables vulnerable and exposed groups to reinforce their own resilience-building through bottom-up organization combined with top-down policies and tools, guaranteeing effective early warning, evacuation, disaster help, and reconstruction. Immediate and efficient support for isolated regions affected by social and natural disasters may prevent long-term effects, such as famine and violent outbreaks.

Gender security creates a socially constructed habitus, where the interaction between society and individuals and structure and action creates a field that can internalize beliefs, perceptions, and actions. These social constructions of gender as products of external discrimination, violence, and self-assumption transform vulnerable women. Women not only represent the highest number of those dead in disasters, but also must endure systematic rape, property loss, and other forms of violence. On the other hand, this extreme social vulnerability combined with greater psychological stability enables women to actively collaborate in disaster risk reduction and disaster management processes. Once empowered, women are able to work together in developing survival strategies and maintain their families, generate a dignified livelihood, and create an emotionally stable environment, aiding the development of their children and themselves.

8 Abbreviations

BC	Before Christ
CARE	Child Care Aware
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CENAPRED	Centro Nacional de Prevención de Desastres (National Centre for Disaster Prevention)
CEPAL	Consejo Económico y Político de AL (Economic and Political Council of Latin America)
CLAIP	Consejo Latinoamericano de Investigación para la Paz (Latin American Council for Peace Research)
CRED	Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters
CRIM	Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias (Regional Centre of Multidisciplinary Research)
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EOLSS	Encyclopaedia for Life Support System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEC	Global Environmental Change
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
GWP	Global Water Partnership
HIV-AIDS	Human Immune Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HS	Human Security
HUGE	Human, Gender and Environmental Security
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICG	International Crisis Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFRC/RCS	International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Society
IPRA	International Peace Research Association
IR	International Relations
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
LA	Latin America
MDG	Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly
MRF Chair	Munich Re Foundation's Chair on Social Vulnerability
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Brazil's Landless Rural Workers' Movement)
MunichRe	Munich Reinsurance Company
NCDHR	National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights

NGOs	Nongovernmental organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of UN
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
Oxfam	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PIR	Personal Integrity Rights
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SEDES0	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (Ministry of Social Development)
SEMARNAT	Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources)
SwissRe	Swiss Reinsurance
<i>UDRA</i>	<i>Urban Disaster Risk in Africa</i>
UMA	Unity of Management for Conservation of Wild Life
UN- GDP	United Nations Global Development Programme
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNAM	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNESCO	UN Education, Science, Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UN-IANGWE	United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
UNICAM	Universidad Campesina del Sur
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN-MDP	United Nations Millennium Development Programme
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSD	United Nations Statistic Division
UNU-EHS	University of United Nations University Institute for Environmental and Human Security
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Disaster Report
WHO	World Health Organization

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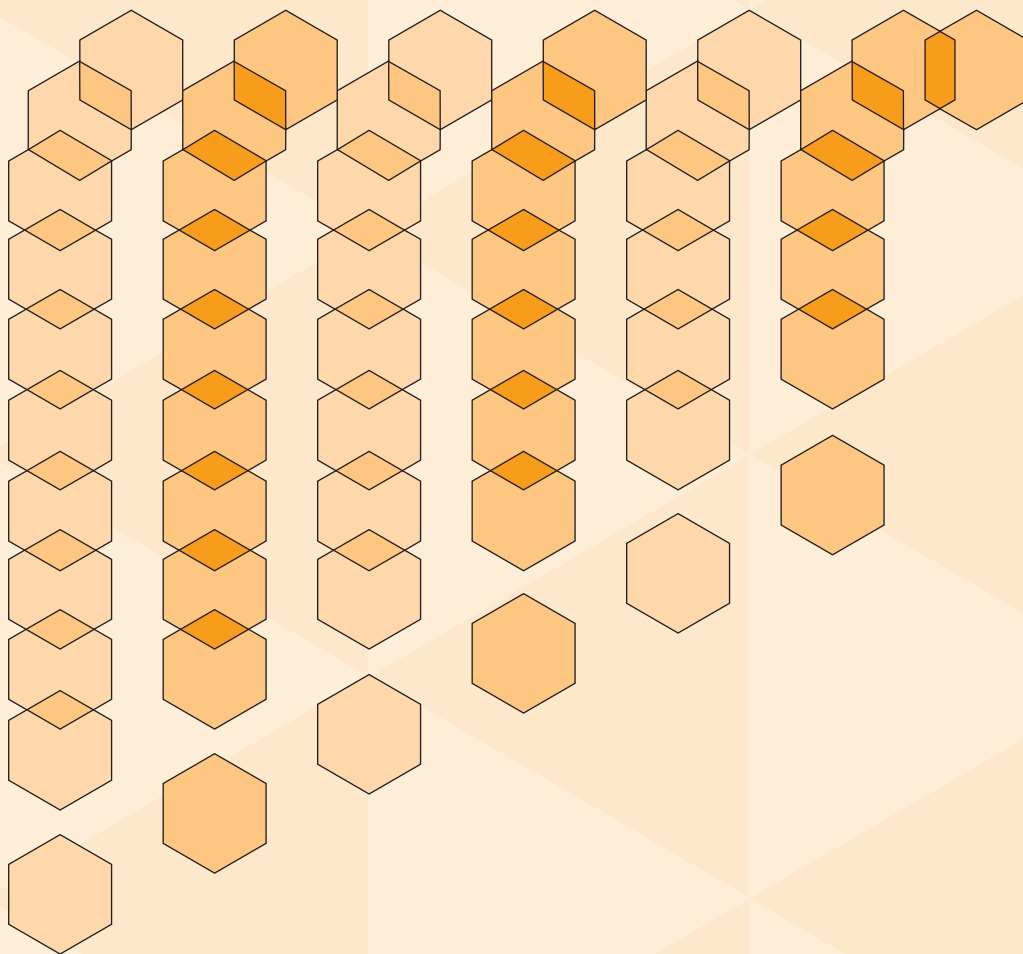
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