

# **Women in the global village: increasing demand for traditional communication patterns**

## **Chapter 5**

Lindner, Evelin Gerda (1999). Women in the global village: increasing demand for traditional communication patterns. In Breines, Ingeborg, Gierycz, Dorota, & Reardon, Betty (Ed.), *Towards a Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace*. Paris: UNESCO (89-98).

### **Editor's prologue**

**Lindner's argument is embedded in the fact of planetary unity. The earth seen as a single ecological system, as well as the social, economic and even political globalization of the human enterprise, renders obsolete the concept of 'inside' and 'outside' that characterizes both nationalistic and sexist chauvinism. This reality, because it widens the traditional female domestic sphere and narrows the traditional male public sphere, requires that a fresh look be taken at the public/private dichotomy which has separated the gender roles.**

**We suggest that this may also apply to the way we conceive of international relations. Some argue that the very notion of 'other,' which gives rise to alienation among human groups and identities on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity and nationality, among other factors, must be called into question. The biological facts of one human species, dependent on one single planet, are coming to take primacy over the separations imposed by emphasizing differences and specializing and proscribing social and economic roles.**

**Lindner suggests that human differences such as those manifest in different cultural approaches to conflict may in fact be helpful in constructing a culture of peace. Her example citing a combination of male and female conflict behaviour suggests to us that it would be useful to reflect more deeply on Smith's observations about grief and the emotional division of labour between men and women, indeed, on all psychological and social gender distinctions.**

The central hypothesis of this chapter is that globalization widens the traditional female domestic sphere and narrows the traditional male public sphere. This means that women's traditional role description of maintaining social cohesion 'inside' a group is increasingly in demand. The

'global village' can be seen as a single 'inside' sphere. Maintaining social cohesion means complex, relational, multilateral, foresighted, integrative and holistic strategies such as mediation, alternative dispute resolution and police deployment (e.g. peacekeeping forces) instead of traditional military combat. Subsidiarity, quality (and not quantity) of life, 'culture of peace' – all these are keywords, concepts which stem from traditional female role descriptions, showing how much the new strategies are, conceptually, female approaches. The traditional male role description of 'going out', fighting the enemy and conquering the unknown – being unidimensional, unilateral and more short-sighted – loses significance since it was only appropriate outside the 'village'. The world as a single 'global village' no longer provides an 'outside'. Men themselves, as travellers and explorers, were responsible for this development which now makes their specific traditional strategies in many ways inappropriate and dysfunctional.

In promoting a culture of peace, UNESCO has articulated a keyword describing a more contemporary conceptualisation of the behavioural and functional needs of the 'global village'. 'Culture of peace' is a multifaceted, creative combination of certain aspects of traditional 'male' and 'female' role strategies. The 'culture of peace' notion advocates on the social level what 'sustainable development' promotes on the ecological level. A better quality of life is projected as the likely result if a culture of peace is combined with sustainable development.

'Women should become more active in the public sphere.' How did such a demand enter modern Western thought? Just some hundreds of years ago such ideas were unthinkable for the majority of both men and women. What has happened? Was it that men in former times denied women their due participation, women being too weak to defend themselves? Are women stronger today? If yes, then why?

I propose to look at globalization as the central force in this context. I argue that globalization widens the traditional female domestic sphere and narrows the traditional male public sphere. In other words: Women do not necessarily have to fight for change, change is taking place along with globalization. Globalization is here defined as the growing world-wide communication network (telecommunication, air traffic, satellites, television) which furthers the perception of the world as 'One World'. The currently observable dark sides of globalization, such as 'neo-liberal' global economics and/or corporate capitalism, are here seen as short-term phenomena that are under long-term pressure from this 'One World' perception.

To explain my view, I should first describe how I define the traditional roles of men and women. To do this I rename the domestic sphere the 'inside sphere' and the public sphere the 'outside sphere'. Put succinctly, women are traditionally responsible for 'inside' maintenance (maintenance of the physical and social inside aspects), while men are

traditionally responsible for the ‘outside’ and for guarding the frontier between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, thus making the ‘inside’ a safe place. Women in their traditional role are expected to maintain a household, to wash and clean, to repair what is broken, to plan for long-term maintenance costs, to consider the interdependence of things for keeping a household going – all for the maintenance of a physical ‘inside’ sphere.

The same principle applies to the social ‘inside’ sphere: a woman is expected to care for the well-being of the people surrounding her, she is held responsible for the maintenance of emotional and social life, she is the one to create harmony and console the distressed, she is the one to heal and repair social cohesion. (In Western culture men are increasingly expected to take over some of the original female competence for emotions, but this ends often in bitter disappointment, since even today it is usually *she* who strives for emotional contact with her partner; *she* is the one to recognize a breakdown after having tried in vain for reconciliation; *she* finally thinks of divorce, while her husband neither understands her nor the final breakdown, and often until the very end believes that everything is fine.)

The man is expected to ‘go out’, to reach for the unknown, to be daring in conquering the unfamiliar; he is traditionally expected to risk his life in defending the ‘inside’ sphere. A German saying asserts: ‘*Der Mann geht hinaus in das feindliche Leben*’ (‘The man is to go out into hostile life’). Countless fairy tales tell the story of a hero facing a series of increasingly difficult tasks in far away universes in order to prepare himself to marry the princess and be the ruler and protector of his people (Campbell, 1949).

Those ‘male’ tasks necessarily require less holistic approaches than the ‘female’ tasks. They ask for the sword cutting through, the axe destroying the enemy, even if this means destroying a highly intricate network; they ask men to cover distances unidirectionally on a horse, on a ship, in an aeroplane or in a rocket; they ask men to open new horizons. This male action bore valuable short-term fruit, called modern technology, but created long-term problems since men in the beginning tended to overlook the fragile interdependence of all physical laws.

I am not an advocate of the view that women and men are irreconcilably different by nature, although there are undoubtedly hormonal differences between the two sexes. A woman can step into a male role and vice versa. When I talk about female or male roles, I refer to them as a set of culturally determined ‘recipes’ or ‘prescriptions’. I see it as a set of ‘do’s’ and ‘be’s’ which are assimilated from birth by every individual.<sup>1</sup>

Even more importantly, there should not be a positive versus negative bias. The two gender role ‘templates’ offer the tools for both construction and destruction. We can concede that there is nowadays an urgent need for the more ‘female’ holistic thinking, on the ecological and on the social level: respecting biological cycles and caring for social peace are notions which are currently gaining ever increasing importance. On the

other hand, one should not overlook the fact that unidirectional thinking can, for example, be an important tool for innovation: admittedly it can be destructive, but it can also be constructive. Furthermore, there is the cleaning aspect of the 'female' maintenance task. This cleaning aspect can be extremely destructive as long as it bases itself on the concept of a real 'outside' around it. Starting at the ecological level, cleaning can go too far, as can be seen, for example, when women wash clothes white with heavily polluting agents.<sup>2</sup> On the social level, this cleaning aspect even offers the conceptual framework for atrocities. One has just to think of ethnic cleansing. The German army was involved in ethnic cleansing during the Second World War, but tried to deny this involvement since for a soldier this is not 'male' enough. Soldiers can be proud of a war against an attacking enemy, and wear medals afterwards, but not of ethnic cleansing: killing defenceless people smacks of 'female' cleaning activity and thereby lack of bravery<sup>3</sup>. In an attempted justification, the killing of Jews in concentration camps was equated with having to eradicate 'dirt' or 'pests' like rats or weeds, something which the SS were persuaded to do as an unavoidable although 'mean' and not very honourable duty in order to save the German race (see for example Himmler's speeches).

Space prohibits the discussion of further examples, but the instances cited should shed sufficient light on the unusual use of the 'female' and 'male' categorization in this text. They should also make clear that it is not an antagonism between 'female' and 'male' strategies which is advocated here, but the complementary combination and integration of the constructive sides in both. In other words, that I do not believe that women can simply be described as the powerless and thereby inherently 'good' creatures and that 'all problems [will] cease when the powerless achieve power' (Ashford, 1993, p. 253).

If we accept that globalization causes the 'inside' to widen, and that women traditionally are responsible for 'inside' spheres, then this means that the woman's sphere of responsibility has grown and is still growing, creating an ever-increasing demand for traditional female services: negotiation instead of military attack, mediation instead of dictatorial order, social maintenance through an intricate network of courts, lawyers and police instead of a unidirectional system of sheer military force. Management courses today try to train managers to understand the importance of 'soft' human factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, co-operation abilities, and creative problem-solving. Well-balanced 'female-type' co-operation is advocated today on all levels, from small companies to the United Nations, while the army-like 'male' hierarchical order is considered out-of-date as, for example, is the Wild-West-pioneering-style. Traditional female role characteristics are gaining ground on a global scale.

Here I would like to point out that, of course, the view presented here is exaggerated, in order to make the conceptual categories clearer.

Though men usually were the warriors and explorers, and not women, men did not only conquer the unknown as warriors, explorers or discoverers: they were farmers too and cared for the maintenance of cycles and networks as women did. Trade especially combines ‘male’ and ‘female’ role patterns, since in the first place it requires going out into the unknown to find new products and clients, but after having established new trade connections it subsequently requires their maintenance. Those examples show the complexity of reality and how it is simplified here. The intention of my presentation is to stress the deep structural differences between traditional ‘male’ and ‘female’ role patterns.

If we were to go along with the hypothesis of this chapter that the domestic sphere has widened through globalization, giving women greater significance, then we should ask how women are to put their domestic strategies into action on the international level.

I would like to describe the modern structure of conflict resolution (which, in my view, has to be aimed at in a modern ‘global village’) by means of an example from Egypt, where I lived and worked for seven years. Two men in the streets of Cairo have a car accident. They get out of their cars, shout, scream and leap at each other’s throats. Some ten to twenty young strong men appear from all corners, roughly half taking the side of each man involved in the dispute. Each ‘party’ grabs ‘its’ fighter and stops him hurting his opponent, but allows him to continue to scream, shout and express his anger. The peacemakers take the expressed anger seriously, they talk to the quarrellers with respect, they try to analyse the cause of the fight, they propose solutions and facilitate arrangements. After about ten to fifteen minutes the fight is over and everybody goes on his way. (Any international traveller can observe the high level of social control that makes Cairo a place of amazingly low criminality compared with other such large cities.)

What is combined in this approach to conflict is ‘female’ talking, understanding, empathy, perspective-taking and healing on one side, and the ‘male’ potential for overpowering, coercion, force, violence and aggression on the other. ‘Male’ strength and well-dosed counter-aggression are required to hold the fighters. ‘Female’ awareness of the cohesion of the social fabric is needed to take the fighters seriously. To combine the ‘male’ aspect of force with ‘female’ empathy could be described as *the* modern recipe of conflict resolution. The old ‘male’ strategy of hitting, of destructive force, is no longer appropriate in an interdependent modern ‘global village’, while the ‘male’ ability to use restraining force continues to be an important tool, though in a more steady and long-standing application and combined with empathy and respect. This means both that men are to use more of the traditional ‘female’ role characteristics and that women are to become more ‘visible’. In former times, visibility was connected to the man guarding the frontiers of the ‘outside,’ just as clothes

protect and hide the 'inside' from 'outside' viewers. With the disappearance of an 'outside' this notion loses significance, giving the opportunity to women and men alike to be both 'inside' and visible.<sup>4</sup>

UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme urges precisely the strengthening of the 'female' aspect in conflict resolution efforts.<sup>5</sup> Space does not allow me to give a detailed description of every facet of this 'female' contribution. The list is a long one: using multi-track, 'track II' and citizen-based diplomacy;<sup>6</sup> installing early warning institutions; rethinking the notion of state sovereignty; setting up projects to better study and understand the history of potential conflict areas, collect this information and make it available to decision makers; using psychology not only on a micro-level, but also on a macro-level, taking identity as a bridge;<sup>7</sup> keeping communication going with warring parties; talking behind the scenes; including more than just the warlords in peace negotiations; developing conflict-resolution teams with less hierarchy and more creativity; setting up mediation teams; installing 'truth commissions';<sup>8</sup> allowing warring parties to feel the world community's care, respect and concern; taking opponents in a conflict out of their usual environment;<sup>9</sup> taking the adversaries' personal feelings and emotions seriously; recognizing the importance of human dignity;<sup>10</sup> introducing sustainable long-term approaches on the social and ecological level;<sup>11</sup> progressing from spending aid-money after a disaster to allocating resources to prevent it; and so on. All these rather 'female' efforts must be combined with a certain amount of 'male' coercion if necessary. The term 'social control' expresses the combination of both aspects. On the national level, police and prisons represent some of the coercive aspects (more effective if the average citizen does not carry weapons), while institutions like lawyers, courts and rehabilitation programmes have the potential to fulfil the role of social caring and healing.

The culture of peace is a multifaceted, creative combination of certain aspects of traditional 'male' and 'female' role strategies. At this historical point of an emerging, increasingly interdependent 'global village', traditionally 'female' strategies of caring and healing are more needed and must be integrated on the international level.

As mentioned above, the notion of a 'culture of peace' advocates on the social level what 'sustainable development' promotes on the ecological level. In both cases, the aim is to achieve a better quality of life and the challenge is the long-term maintenance of interdependent systems. In order to tackle this challenge traditional female role descriptions concerning maintenance must be elevated from the private to the public sphere and used there by both men and women.

## Bibliography

- ASHFORD, P. 1994. Ideology, Identity, and the Nature of Pro-Environmental Action. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, No. 14, pp. 253-6.
- BRUNDTLAND, G. H. 1992. From the Global Jungle to the Global Village. *Socialist Affairs*, No. 4, pp. 14-17.
- CAMPBELL, J. 1949. *The Hero with the Thousand Faces*. NY: Bollingen.
- KELLY, R. M.; WILLIAMS, L. M.; FISHER, K. 1994. Women and Politics: An Assessment of Its Role Within the Discipline of Political Science. *Woman and Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 4.
- LARROW, M. F.; WIENER, M. 1992. Stereotypes and Desirability Ratings for Female and Male Roles. In Joan C. Chrisler and Doris Howard (eds.), *New Directions in Feminist Psychology. Practice, Theory, and Research*. New York: Springer.
- MCLUHAN, M.; QUENTIN, F. 1986. *War and Peace in the Global Village*. New York: Bantam Books.
- PLUMSWOOD, V. 1993. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London/New York: Routledge.
- SHIRER, W. L. 1976. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. London: Pan Books.
- TAJFEL, H. 1984. Intergroup Relations, Social Myths, and Social Justice in Social Psychology. In H. TAJFEL (ed.), *The Social Dimension*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- UNESCO. 1994. *Final Report over the First Consultative Meeting of the Culture of Peace Programme*, Paris, 27-29 September.
- UNGER, R. (ed.). 1989. *Representations: Social Constructions of Gender*. Amityville, N.Y.: Baywood.
- UNGER, R.; CRAWFORD, M. 1992. *Women and Gender: A Feminist Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- WALLENSTEEN, P.; AXELL, K. 1994. Conflict Resolution and the End of the Cold War, 1989-93. *Journal of Peace Research* (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute), Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 333-49.

---

**Peace talks –peace tasks** (questions for discussion and exploration put forward by the editors, on page 97):

Lindner's approach is both psycho-cultural and ecological, and thus is an example of the kind of feminine thinking that many feminists insist must complement the masculine thinking that currently dominates policy-making on issues of peace and security and perpetuates a patriarchal political culture. Her emphasis is on life and relationships. This emphasis opens several potentially productive lines of inquiry in the formulation of a Women's Agenda of a Culture of Peace.

1. All cultures have archetypal heroes. As Lindner reminds us, we have inherited an image of the hero as the conquering, physically powerful, brave male, pitted against forces of evil embodied in an enemy. Enemies inhabit Lindner's outside, and given her assertion that there no longer exists this separation between inside and outside, we must ask whether the very notion of enemy is a functional one for a global, diverse society. What function have the concept and the various images of the enemy played in the perpetuation of war and the evolution of a culture of violence? How do such images figure in the popular culture of literature, the media, computer games and children's

- play? What reformulation of the notions of the stranger or foreigner and the antagonist or opponent would be more compatible with a culture of peace?
2. A number of authors have dealt with alternative notions and images of the hero, some of them actual historical figures, who conducted epic struggles non-violently, and hypothetical profiles of heroes of a very different sort to the ones conjured by Lindner, We need to develop a new roster of heroes for a culture of peace. For this we need both imagination and research into history which can uncover some of the experience of co-operation, non-violence and altruism which many believe is in fact what has been responsible for the survival of humankind and the continuation of the human experience. We know that much of this history has been made by women. How can we document it and integrate it into our agenda?
  3. As we are reminded, globalization has both its positive and negative sides. Identify some positive aspects of globalization. How might women take advantage of them, and by what strategies? One of the most damaging of the negative sides is the consequence for women of the globalization of capital. In what ways can we analyse these economic processes, using Lindner's form of thinking to find alternative routes to material progress and wealth that recognize the disappearance of the boundaries between inside and outside? We know that the world comprises one ecological system and we see, too, the emergence of one economic system. As we need to preserve the health of the ecological system, we need also to establish justice in the economic system, as was recommended by the Manila Expert Group Meeting on Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace (see Appendix 2 for the report). How can the 'widening' of women's traditional domestic sphere be managed so as to bring about this justice? How can we factor it into our Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace?
  4. Another difference between prototypical masculine and feminine thinking is the emphasis on the short term by the former and the long term by the latter. How has this affected the trends and developments such as globalization and some of the issues such as security and peacekeeping addressed by other authors in this collection? How might our agenda facilitate the bringing about of a more positive balance between the two? Can the partnership model be applied so as to maximize the benefits of the differences in constructive ways?

Evelin Lindner is a psychologist and doctor who has worked and studied in many different cultural contexts. She knows Asia and the Arab world especially well, having spent seven years working as a psychological counsellor in Cairo. She is currently affiliated to the University of Oslo, Institute of Psychology, carrying out a research project examining psychological factors responsible for the escalation of conflicts to war (data collection in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia).

---

<sup>1</sup> Tajfel (19984) said, 'it is not the difference which matters, but the distinction.'

Larrow and Wiener (1992, p. 239) contribute to the same subject: 'There has been much controversy over the use of the terms *stereotype* and *prejudice*. ... We would distinguish three terms: categorization, stereotypes, and prejudice. *Categorization* will be used when classification of a person into a category is based on the necessary defining attributes of class membership. *Stereotype* is the classification based on non-definitional attributes. Finally, *prejudice* is classified when social

---

evaluation is explicitly included with the stereotype. In the field of sex/gender research, we would like to make a distinction between using the term sex to refer to categorization of males and females based on biological attributes, such as chromosomes, genitals, reproductive functions, and so on, and *gender* to refer to stereotypes of women and men based on non-biological attributes such as clothes, hairstyle, behaviours, and the like. Most of our beliefs about men and women are based on gender stereotypes.’ Unger and Crawford (1992, p. 619) formulate it succinctly: ‘When sex is not present, people need to invent it. They use sex as a cue even when more useful sources of information are available.’ The authors look for alternative explanations and name inequality through power difference as often explaining more of observable differences than sex or gender differences. I would agree concerning the necessity of alternative explanations, but would be careful with the power argument, as long as the power argument is simply used as men having the power and women being the suppressed ones. I would take into account the distribution of tasks of different urgency leading to a power difference.

<sup>2</sup> Ashford (1994, p. 253): ‘Chapter 1 on Feminism and Ecofeminism, rebuts the simplistic view that all problems will cease when the powerless achieve power. Women are not to be conceived as “angels in the ecosystem”, feminist closeness to nature is an uncomplimentary stereotype. But nature and the feminine can combine with subsistence lifestyles and the culturally or geographically colonized in an “alliance of the oppressed.” All are “backgrounded” by the pervasive “master model.” Yet both “deep ecology” and forms of feminism endorse that model, seeking either integration with the master principle, or replacement of one dominant form by another.’ ‘Women as well as men must “learn to throw off the master identity embodied in the Western construction of the human”.’

<sup>3</sup> The involvement of parts of the German army in atrocities was documented in an exhibition organized by the Institut für Sozialforschung (Hamburg) in 1996, more than fifty years after the war, and met violent reactions of denial, especially in southern Germany (see the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 10, 3 March 1997, p. 54).

There exist many sources pointing in the same direction. Here an example from Shirer (1976, p. 794), concerning the German attack on Poland at the beginning of the Second World War. General Halder writes in his diary: ‘Army insists that “housecleaning” be deferred until Army has withdrawn and the country has been turned over to civil administration.’ Shirer comments: ‘This brief diary entry by the Chief of the Army General Staff provides a key to the understanding of the morals of the German generals. They were not going to seriously oppose the “housecleaning” - that is, the wiping out of the Polish Jews, intelligentsia, clergy and nobility. They were merely going to ask that it be “deferred” until they got out of Poland....’

<sup>4</sup> Kelly et al. (1994) make an assessment of women's visibility in politics as activists, researchers, and political thinkers and find that in 1994 women's visibility is still limited.

<sup>5</sup> The following paragraph outlines the background of UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme: ‘The end of the Cold War has enabled the United Nations to begin realizing the potential for which it was created nearly fifty years ago, that is, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.’ In *An Agenda for Peace*, published in 1994, the Secretary-General outlines the challenges faced by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies in the areas of: ‘preventive diplomacy, which seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out; peacemaking and peace-keeping, which are required to halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained, and post-conflict peace-building – to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.’ (*Final Report over the First Consultative Meeting of the Culture of Peace Programme*, Paris, 27-29 September 1994.)

<sup>6</sup> See the efforts of individuals such as the former American President Jimmy Carter, or the Norwegians helping behind the scene in the Israel-Palestine peace process.

<sup>7</sup> The Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO), for example, has taken up national identity as a major new field of interest, thereby incorporating social psychology into peace research (source: Dan Smith, director of the institute).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Ethiopia, where reconciliation within a society can be reached through ‘truth commissions’ if other ways, such as tribunals, would be too disrupting.

<sup>9</sup> See the Norwegian approach in the Israel-Palestine Oslo agreement.

<sup>10</sup> Whatever has been learned on a micro-level in therapeutic contexts about conflict and conflict resolution, from confession to forgiveness, also applies to the community-level.

---

<sup>11</sup> Brundtland (1992, p. 17), a woman and a very active Scandinavian politician, writes: 'We must not be blinded by the immediate. We must all take a longer-term view. We need to expand and share knowledge and we must get many more people engaged in the overriding issues of our time. We will have to rely on the gift of information technology for spreading knowledge and for developing those common perspectives and attitudes which our human predicament now requires.' This is a woman advocating a combination of traditionally 'female' long-term thinking being promoted by 'male' technology.