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WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

Women's Life Cycle and Ageing

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Women's Life Cycle and Ageing

EDITORIAL

As a contribution to the International Year of Older Persons 1999, this issue of INSTRAW News considers the topic of ageing but from the wider perspective of women's life cycle. Such an approach allows us to better examine the issue of gender inequality, which we know to exist in all aspects of life and in varying degrees throughout a woman's life cycle. Therefore, there is a need not only to understand the problems older women face but, more importantly, how these problems are a result of inequalities derived from earlier stages of their life cycle and how they now result in specific gender discrimination in old age.

Beginning with the issue of gender inequalities, the first article, "Contradictions, Paradoxes and Ideologies of Ageing for Women: Not a Gender-Neutral Issue" (pp 3-9) shows us different aspects of discrimination faced by older women in particular, and women as they age in general. This article also discusses aspects of menopause and depression in women, which leads one to conclude that these phenomena are not universal, thereby being caused by hormonal problems, but are due to socio-cultural changes taking place at different stages of a woman's life. There may be regional differences as discussed in the next article, "Women Trapped in a Web of Hierarchy: Life Cycle of a Woman in India" (pp 10-17). The author reveals how the later stages of a woman's life in India can be a time in which they can be relatively better off than they were at younger stages of life.

New and emerging technological changes taking place worldwide may help to reverse some of the discriminatory factors faced by older women and allow them to continue active lives in a new information society as is discussed in the next article "The Emerging Seasons of Our Lives" (pp 18-26). In the new information society, home-based computerized work is acceptable. Therefore, the author argues that older persons and women in particular can continue to take part in the labour force well beyond the age limit that would have been acceptable in traditional forms of employment. This can be seen today but will become more significant with future generations.

Reviewing the younger stages of life, "Growing Up Female: Reflections on Children and Adolescent Girls North and South" (pp. 27-36) compares some of the trends that shape the lives of girls and adolescents as they grow up in different world regions. However, although some comparisons can be made, there emerge gaps in research and documentation which has largely considered children and adolescents as a homogenous ungendered category. New models of research and new categories of analysis are needed in order to make real improvements in these stages of the life cycle.

One example of emerging research on women's life cycle is provided in "From Petrona's Perspective: An Andean Life Cycle and a Lesson for Development" (pp37-44). This article examines the economic activities indigenous women of different age cohorts (20-60 years) in Ecuador. Also discussed are the impact of macro and micro-level factors on such activities and a discussion of the implications for policy. As an example of good practice in government policy, we present "Policy on the Elderly and Elderly Women in the Netherlands" (pp 45-50) which describes the Dutch policy for older women and resulting projects which have helped older women in the Netherlands to continue to be active in shaping the society that, in turn, shapes their lives.

Through these articles, our consideration of women's life cycle goes around several times. This is a reflection of the life cycle as it truly is: no beginning, no end, just a continuum. It is because of this continuum, that all stages of the life cycle are inter-related and equally important for research. INSTRAW is committed to furthering research on the social, economic, and cultural factors that affect the lives of older persons since only through a better understanding can we truly strive Toward a Society for All Ages.

Message from the Director

The Director has generously conceded this message corner to highlight some of INSTRAW's pioneering work on the situation of older persons, particularly older women. This work was done at a time when the issue had not yet received worldwide attention as it has now since 1999 has been designated as International Year of Older Persons.

Given the almost universal trend that women generally have a longer life expectancy than men and the fact that gender biases faced by women at younger ages make them more vulnerable at later stages with no or limited social security, the need for sex-disaggregated data on older persons is essential. The concepts and methods applied in most data collection systems did not provide sufficient information to carry out a more complete analysis of the status and problems of older persons. Moreover, the invisibility in statistics of older women whose problems are further aggravated by socio-economic and legal inequalities made it even more difficult for policy makers to address problems and needs specific to older women.

To address this issue, INSTRAW organized a Consultative Meeting on "Improving Concepts and Methods for Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Elderly Women" (28-30 May 1991, New York). This meeting was held in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and sought to identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing statistics and indicators in reflecting the problems and issues specific to older women. The meeting also provided guidelines for the revision of a technical report for developing a new conceptual framework for collecting and analyzing data on older women.

This report, *The Situation of Elderly Women: Available Statistics and Indicators*, was jointly published a few years later in 1993 by INSTRAW and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat. It focuses on older women's position in family formation and households; on measuring older women's performance in the regular education system; on their economic activity and labour force participation; and on older women's need for and sources of economic and social support. The report also provides a set of indicators and identifies data needs on the situation of older women.

Some of the issues examined in the report continue to be areas in which there is a need for further analysis and understanding. One such issue is migration and households and the position held by older women. INSTRAW is examining this issue further through one of its research programmes for the current biennium. Within the programme on Temporary Labour Migration of Women, research will examine how the absence of the principal woman of the household due to migration affects gender structures within the household and the role of the older woman (see section on INSTRAW Highlights for updates on activities in this programme).

Contradictions, Paradoxes and Ideologies of Ageing for Women:

Not a Gender-Neutral Issue

by Pauline B. Bart[1]

Now that I am fifty-six
Come and celebrate
with me.
What happens to song
and sex
Now that I am fifty-six.
They dance, but
differently.
Death and distance
in the mix;
Now that I am fifty-six
Come and celebrate
with me

Muriel Rukeyser[2]

I have been working on an analysis of women and ageing since my coerced retirement, noting the disparity between what I had read about the alleged joys of ageing and retirement and my own experience. I wrote "But You're Retired: The Loneliness of the Long Distance Sociologist"[3] because of my distress at the loss of identity I experienced at UCLA when I returned to Los Angeles after retirement.

In this article, I will first discuss the polemic context of the issue, including the Western (North), especially US bias. I must apologize for limiting my analysis to the geographic areas which I know well or have documentation about. I am not universalizing what I write. Next, I will present the findings of my cross-cultural study of women in middle age and menopause. Third, my findings concerning depressed middle-aged women in six mental hospitals will be presented, and fourth the commodification of menopause, turning a normal event in a woman's life into a disease -a disease that can enrich the pharmaceutical companies.

I will discuss the unrealistic Western beauty standards -unlined face, firm breasts and buttocks, slender body and blond hair. Plastic surgery to erase signs of ageing has sharply increased, and gray hair is unacceptable for professional women, albeit "distinguished" for men. Both Zoe Moss[4] and Susan Sontag[5] wrote about the double standard of ageing.

Author's note: It is a great honour to have been asked to write a paper for your [INSTRAW's] international journal, and I am particularly pleased that I can share some research I have conducted, as part of an extensive study of depression in middle-aged women. [Bart, Pauline B., *Depression in Middle Age Women: Some Socio-cultural Factors*, dissertation, UCLA, 1967, available Disser-tation Abstracts, Ann Arbor, MI.]

It is no accident that the ideal type of female beauty is found primarily in Anglo-Saxon and Nordic women, who are tall and slender, unlike most women living in the South, or around the Mediterranean or in Central and Eastern Europe. Generally the average woman puts on weight as she ages, but the "anorexic" look is still the standard by which many women judge ourselves. "Blondes have more fun" is a slogan selling hair dye, or as they say "hair colouring".

Unrealistic optimism about the pleasures of ageing is a reflection of American denial of existential pain (American Jews from Eastern Europe, who express their pain in humour, and African-Americans who express it in the Blues are the exceptions). In an encyclopedia of ageing, after the American authors presented the optimistic view of the changes of ageing, they

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[1]Center for Research on Women, UCLA, Los Angeles, California.

[2] "Rondel", Muriel Rukeyser, from *Breaking Open*. New York: Random House, 1973, p.18.

[3] *SWS Network News*, June, XV, 2, 1998)

4 Moss, Zoe, "It Hurts to Be Alive and Obsolete, or The Aging Woman". In *Sisterhood is Powerful*, Robin Morgan (ed.) New York: Random House, 1970, pp 170-175.

[5] Sontag, Susan, "The Double Standard of Aging" in *Saturday Review/World*, obtained from *No Longer Young: The Older Woman in America, Proceedings of the 26th Annual Conference on Aging*. The University of Michigan/Wayne State University: The Institute of Gerontology, 1975.

added that "An alternative view can be found in the works of Helen Deutsch, Simone de Beauvoir, and Pauline Bart." Note that two of these authors are European, and I was raised by parents who came from Europe after World War I when they were eighteen. None of us held to the obligatory optimism in the United States *Weltaunschung.*

Europeans, such as Yugoslavian poet Charles Simic (who noted that, "vileness and stupidity have a rosy future"[6]), see a bleak present and an even worse future. A European Jewish proverb says "It is better for a man (sic) not to have lived at all, but not one Jew in ten thousand has such good fortune". There are many societies which see what happens as God's will or fate, and who do not see the future as a wonderful opportunity to do all the things one couldn't earlier in life.

An example of the US official optimism about ageing is shown in the latest issue of *Get Up and Go,* a free newspaper for seniors. Besides containing articles about health plans and hospitals, it also has a feature on skydiving and one about a solo sailor who circumnavigated the world, as if mature adults can aspire to such extreme sports, even if they have the funds. Ageing women, in particular, do not have such funds.

Depression In Middle-Aged Women: Sociocultural Factors (also known as Portnoy's Mother's Complaint)

I started my dissertation on depression in middle-aged women partly because I was intrigued by an article comparing mental illness in ageing Chinese with mental illness in ageing Americans. Chinese (in the 1960s) were much less likely than Americans to be hospitalized at that life-cycle stage, although they had a high rate of hospitalization for young people. Another reason I studied that topic was because my mother became severely depressed when she was fifty; she was hospitalized, received electro-shock treatment, and was diagnosed with "Involutional Melancholia". That diagnosis, now eliminated from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual), was thought to be caused by menopause, specifically the turning inward (involution) of the ovaries. I set out to learn what was associated with depression in middle-aged women, suspecting that sociocultural factors were part of the causal nexus.[7]

The Cross-Cultural Studies

First, in order to learn if middle-aged women were depressed everywhere, I used the Human Resource Area Files (HRAF), becoming the Margaret Mead of the menopause, since her investigation of adolescence among the Samoans was an attempt to learn whether the *Sturm und Drang* characterizing North American adolescence was biological.

I examined 30 societies using the HRAF files, and read the ethnographies of six societies, three where the woman's status went up, and three where their status went down. The societies chosen included "classical" ethnographies, as well as cultures that had been studied by anthropologists who were concerned with psychological variables. I chose societies from each of the world areas HRAF had categorized.

I originally wanted to learn the relationship between depression in mid-life and menopause. But when I looked for the category "menopause", unsurprisingly the data were scarce, available for only five out of thirty societies, those studied by women anthropologists. Psychiatric data were also scarce. Therefore I used the relative status of women -whether their status and power went up or down in middle age- as a proxy for presence of depression in mid-life/menopause, assuming that a rise in status with its concomitant privileges, would make the woman feel better than a decline in status/ situation.

A major finding of the study was the fallacy of speaking of women's status as static, as is usually done. In fact, women's status rises and falls during the life cycle, which is why I used a ferris wheel metaphor in the title of an article I published.[8] There is a

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[6] Simic, Charles, *Paris Review.)*

[7] Many researchers hide the fact that their topic relates to a problem in their lives. Since I am demystifying the world for women, I do not.

[8] Bart, Pauline B. "Why Women's Status Changes in Middle Age: The Turns of the Social Ferris Wheel". *Sociological Symposium*, I, 13, Fall 1969, pp 1-18.

favoured stage in the life cycle for each culture. If young women have more power or deference, then women past menopause in that society have low status/power and vice versa. But their power is high or low related to other women, not men. In fact in some societies women have both power and deference but only with respect to other women. They may have more deference but *NOT* more power over men (e.g. traditional Chinese). In fact, women are considered in the literature to have high status when their status is *EQUAL* to that of men. And when their status is high, it is usually because they have power over *OTHER WOMEN*, for example the traditional Chinese and Indian mother-in-laws.

One index for higher status after menopause was more freedom, especially from taboos. Because the women were no longer considered sexual they could no longer be a threat to the family's honour, and could come and go and even speak with men who were not their kin. Nor were women after menopause able to defile with their blood, a common taboo.

Other indicators of higher status/power were more respect, special privileges such as taking mass first, having first access to certain foods, spinning cotton (Ashanti), and generally having more influence. For women whose lives were severely restricted before menopause, simply not having restrictions was an improvement, as if one spent one's life banging one's head against the wall. When you could stop, your life improved.

Seventeen cultures registered higher status for women in mid-life and in only two cultures did they have less power and influence. An institutionalized grandmother role was strongly associated with an increase in status; the two cultures without such a role were cultures where the women's status went down. This positive association also held for the institutionalized mother-in-law role.

In four cultures older women participated in government, by definition a role that gives women more power. Indeed among the Lovedu of Africa, ruled by a queen who had the power to bring rain, older women had the highest status.

They had sexual access to young men, an unusual pattern for women, in contrast to men. In many societies, including North America and Western Europe, men have access to younger women, sometimes known as "trophy wives" displayed in order to demonstrate the men's achievements. In polygamous countries men can choose young wives and concubines, easing their transition into mid-life. Sexual access to the category considered most desirable in a culture is an indicator of power and control.

Patrilocal residence is associated with women's higher status in mid-life. In matrilocal and matrilineal cultures women generally have more power and prestige because of the isolation of their spouses and the support of their kin. But the greatest *CHANGE* in status at mid-life occurred in patrilocal cultures where the young bride, who was dominated by her mother-in-law, becomes a mother-in-law herself. Those women who were subordinated by their mothers-in-law, but whose children now had neolocal residence, e.g. in urban India and China, paid the cost but didn't have the benefits. Needless to say, residential categories are more complex than used in this analysis, especially with rapid social change.

In societies which have a slow rate of change, older people are needed to pass on their information and skills, such as birthing babies, child care, healing herbs, and appropriate rituals. In contrast, in Western technologically-dominated societies, it is the **children** who know how to programme VCRs and are at ease with computers, particularly when compared with their mothers and grandmothers whose knowledge if any is limited to data entry and word processing. Children translate for parents, if the family has moved to another country. The older women's skills are generally irrelevant.

In summary, I could learn about menopause only in those five societies studied by women anthropologists. We do not know whether the omission by men is because they were not interested or because women would not speak to them about the topic. I think it is primarily because men did not consider that information important,

since they could have obtained some information, albeit partial, from their male informants.[9]

There also was little information in the studies about psychological depression. Therefore, I used women's rise or decline in status and power in mid-life as a rough index of their depression, on the assumption that people feel better when they have increased status and power. A change in their lives such as a decline in their status and power would logically depress the women, since powerless and hopeless feelings are components of depression. Indeed the women could not hope to change their situations since it was age-related.

I found that women's status changes during her life cycle, most often *INCREASING* after menopause or when ageing, but at the expense of younger women. Societies where that occurred were characterized by: (1) a slow rate of change, (2) emphasis on the extended family, (3) strong reciprocal parent-child relationship, (4) the importance of reproduction rather then sexual pleasure for women, (5) patrilocal residence, and (6) menstrual taboos. In contrast, the few societies where women's status declined were those in which younger women's sexual attractiveness and skill gave them power, the extended family was not living together and marital bonds were stronger than bonds with family of orientation. In fact among the Marquesans, women breastfeed for only a brief period so as not to harm the appearance of their breasts.

Being economically productive by itself did not bring high status. Most of the hard labour was done by older women. However in the highly-sexualized South Pacific societies, young, attractive, sexually skilled women were able to have more men working their fields, so that the economic productivity of the men was related to the women's higher status.

Western and Westernized societies most resemble the societies in which women's status declines as they age. There is a rapid rate of change, neolocal residence, emphasis on the sexual attractiveness of youth, and the husband-wife relationship takes precedence over extended-family relationships. In the cultures studied above, a woman's status usually went up in middle age, and she had institutionalized roles and a better life. That is in sharp contrast to the middle-aged women discussed below in my study of women in five hospitals, who had no institutionalized roles and who felt useless. If my assumptions are correct, the cross-cultural study shows that menopausal or mid-life depression is not universal, and is therefore unlikely to be simply a hormonal phenomenon.

Data from Hospital Records and Interviews

In order to learn about depression and what caused it in middle-aged women (between 40 and 65), I studied five mental hospitals, ranging from an upper-class private hospital through two public hospitals serving poor people. I looked at the records of women who were admitted to a psychiatric unit for the first time at the age of 40 to 59 years old (N=533). In addition, I interviewed twenty of these women at the UCLA neuro-psychiatric hospital and at a hospital subsidized by a Jewish charity. I conducted the study in Los Angeles, an area where there is little public transportation, such that the women could only visit their grandchildren or children infrequently, unless they had a car they could drive, or unless someone picked them up and brought them back. I compared women who were diagnosed as depressed with women who had other diagnoses, in order to test my hypotheses about the relationship between mid-life depression and loss of significant role, especially mother-child role.

I predicted that women whose identity came from being mothers, who had over-involved and over-protective relationships with their children, and who lost that role because one or more of their children had left home, would be depressed.

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[9] This finding makes us realize how important Women's Studies was since malestream (mainstream) studies centered on men and marginalized women (I use the past tense because at least in the United States, Women's Studies has generally been transformed into Gender Studies, and often is characterized by post modernism, high theory, and little concern with issues of concern to women as a class.

Since that usually occurred when the woman was middle-aged, depression in middle-aged women could be the result of the loss of self resulting from their role loss, especially if they had no other salient roles.

Since the hypothesis was confirmed by the data we can say that the physiological changes of menopause were not the major cause of "menopausal" depression; one of the most important causes was the sociocultural changes taking place at that stage in a woman's life. The parent-child role in the United States is non-reciprocal, which was reflected in the interviews where the mothers insisted that their children owed them nothing. Seeing their children and grandchildren was highly valued, but they did not want the children to see them out of obligation. One of the women reported that her children said they deliberately did not want to "sacrifice" for her, because they saw that her life of sacrifice left her with nothing.

These women were obsessive housekeepers, but there was no one for whom to cook and clean except their husbands and in many cases their husbands left them because of their illnesses, or they had been divorced for some time. They needed to "keep busy" and "be useful" but now found that difficult. Their depressions can be considered existential depressions because they had followed all the rules for being a good wife and mother; they had been sexually faithful, with standards of cleanliness so high that one could eat off their bathroom floors. But they still were left alone, feeling that no one cared about them. Their lives of sacrifice, with the implied promise that they would be rewarded at some point, were meaningless. One woman said that not only was she not loved, but she felt she was not even liked by her children. Her husband had always been cruel and had been constantly involved with other women, returning home just to have her wash his clothes. She, like most of the women, had a total hysterectomy several years before, in the hope it would make her feel better, and, like most of the women, had been given hormone replacement shots, to no avail, further supporting the hypothesis that the severe depression stemmed from sociocultural factors rather than the menopause *per se*.

The category of women with the highest ratio of depression to other diagnoses were housewives who had over-protective or over-involved relationships with their children and whose children were no longer at home, in contrast to women in the labour force who had those relationships. Though paid labour is characteristically alienating, the social interaction experienced by women who worked, the necessity to get out of bed in the morning, get dressed, and go somewhere, and the self-esteem that resulted from being paid, mitigated the depressive feelings. But for this activity, many women would not have left their beds the entire day, and would have spent those hours ruminating on their sad existences.

As we might expect, marriages did not furnish an area which could be expanded to reduce the loss of their maternal role. Their husbands, if present, were very involved in their own employment, since that is the age at which middle-class men reach the height of their careers, with positions that require total involvement. One husband visited his wife in the hospital to tell her he wanted a divorce. Another left his wife when her chronic back problems forced her to curtail the highly active life he apparently required.

Furthermore, according to the interviews, the women did not value their husbands as much as they valued their children, especially helping their children (discordant with North American ideology, but common in other parts of the world), and particularly devalued their sexual relationships with their husbands. They were not very interested in volunteer work just to "keep busy". Nor could they play cards because they wanted useful work.[10]

Ideologies of Ageing

When I published these findings, the hegemonic approach by US university

[10] I thought the Women's Movement would change all this, but my students tell me that many of their mothers and grandmothers are depressed. Some students brought their mothers to class to hear the lectures on this topic.

psychologists and other academics (e.g. Margaret Mead's idea of post-menopausal zest-I'm still waiting for mine) reflecting the yellow happy smiling face icon was that women would be delighted not to have to worry about contraception, and they would have time to explore their hobbies and develop new interests. Although middle-aged and older women were invisible in most advertising, they were omnipresent, tanned and smiling, in ads for travel, accompanied by tanned distinguished looking men.

This perspective ignored the fact that many women, more than men, are poor. Social security does not provide enough for them to live, especially because their work history, if any, has been erratic due to their responsibility to care for their families. They have age-related physical problems, such as hypertension and cataracts (with no universal health insurance), loneliness, difficulty finding sexual partners and friends, energy depletion, lack of transportation, and memory loss, particularly of recent events (I find I cannot remember proper nouns -who wrote what, which, as an academic, is particularly disconcerting). It is no accident that women such as these are not the kind of consumers advertisers who sponsor television shows want to feature. They have too little, if any, discretionary income to buy the advertised products.

In magazines and television programmes, older people are scolded for not "taking charge of their health" by exercising and losing weight, cutting down calories to the level that the Dutch called "starvation Winter" when they had to endure it in World War II. The magazines assume many meaningful activities are available which is simply not true. Generally the world they present is a fantasy, just as most media represent fantasies, and fantasies that are commercially profitable. If older women cannot follow the advice they probably blame themselves.

The Commodification of Menopause

In *The Menopause Industry* [11] Sandra Coney notes that the mid-life woman is sought after by the medical and pharmaceutical industries, working together, turning a natural life cycle event into an illness requiring medical help and drugs for survival. Recently, as the "Baby Boomers" are reaching mid life, providing a receptive market, the selling of "hormone replacement therapy" (HRT), has become big business. Drug companies push HRT in advertisements which will cure everything from hot flashes through mood disturbances and low energy. An ad in a medical journal showed a woman up at night with hot flashes. Her husband was up also. The ad, directed at physicians, urged the doctors to prescribe hormones to women "For the menopausal symptoms that bother HIM (emphasis added)". It is known that HRT has serious side effects, both cardiovascular (clots) and carcinogenic, as well as benefits preventing osteoporosis and cardiovascular problems. In spite of the many risks most physicians, aided and abetted by drug companies, still push HRT with the enthusiasm of illegal drug dealers standing on corners in poor neighbourhoods.

There are physicians in the Women's Health Movement, such as Susan Love [12], and women in the women's health movement, such as the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, two of whose members wrote "Ourselves growing Older" [13], that offer older women choices of natural (herbal) remedies, Asian remedies, and allopathic (standard Western) remedies. The Women's Health Movement suggests that women form what we used to call consciousness-raising groups to discuss their issues together, rather than focusing on individual solutions. They suggest political activities for better transportation and more low-cost housing. They speak of older women being subjected to both ageism and sexism." Women who find it spirituality inspiring refer to ageing women as "crones"—wise

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[11] Coney, Sandra, *The Menopause Industry: A Guide to Medicine's "Discovery" of the Mid-Life Woman*. North Melbourne, Asustralia: Spinifex Press, 1993.

[12] Love, Susan M., with Karen Lindsey, *Dr. Susan Love's Hormone Book: Making Informed Choices about Menopause*. New York: Random Hosue, 1997.

[13] Doress, Paula Brown and Diana Laskin Siegal and the Midlife and Older Women Book Project, *Ourselves, Growing Older*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987.

women. They hold croning ceremonies marking the transition from mother to crone, woman of age, wisdom and power. Thus women can celebrate rather than mourn their new life cycle stage.

We have seen in this paper that the way in which older women are treated varies with the social structure and values of the culture. We have learned how women who follow the traditional scripts of sacrificing their lives for their husbands and children are frequently left with a shell of a self and few resources when either the husband or the children leave since the child-parent relationship in the West is not reciprocal, and financially successful husbands not infrequently choose younger wives. We know about the double standard of ageing. We have learned that we must be intelligent aware consumers, so as not to be taken in by the cosmetic and menopause industries, and fight the internalization of unrealistic standards of beauty. Let us struggle together.

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WOMEN

Trapped in a Web of Hierarchy:

LIFE CYCLE OF A WOMAN IN INDIA

by Huma Ahmed-Ghosh[1]

The following article will deal with the evolving status of the South Asian woman in her life cycle from her birth to old age. The discussion will pertain to a more generalized interpretation of the region in terms of the prescribed norms and expectations of women through religion, custom, tradition and laws. While the following account may not subscribe to all women in India, it still continues to be the norm for most. Though the focus of this paper will be on India, it would not be far from the truth to extrapolate the discussion to other South Asian countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh where despite the differences in religious ideologies, the cultural expectations from women are similar. In fact, if one were allowed liberties with the text, it would not be surprising that the Asian region as a whole has similar constructs for women as India.

Research on status of women has grown tremendously in the last three decades. Despite this growing body of knowledge, there has not been any consensus on the definition of "status of women". What has emerged from a range of discussions is that (a) all definitions refer to gender inequality and (b) there are two broad distinctions in the definition of status of women -"status" derived from autonomy, power and control over resources, and "status" derived from prestige, respect and honour (Ahmed-Ghosh 1990).

Some scholars while dealing with women's status have been more concerned about women's autonomy in a patriarchal system. Control over resources, not just access to them and economic independence are seen as prime avenues to autonomy. Some of the most widely used indicators of female status are measures of women's labour force participation in economic production. It is widely believed that such participation enhances women's domestic autonomy by giving them an independent source of income. Yet, there is also literature suggesting that the extent to which women gain domestic power by working outside of the home depends heavily on the social context (Mason 1987).

Prestige in rural India, on the other hand, is an attribute which defines women's status in social contexts where women do not have any autonomy nor control over resources. Women are part of the system where they derive their position in the family and community through their male affines (Mandelbaum 1988; Vatuk 1982; Liddle and Joshi 1986; Wadley 1988).

Status of women is a multidimensional concept and can only be understood in partial terms given the indigenous socioeconomic context under study. Quinn (1977:183) has very aptly summed up the debate of the variables of status by stating that, "[i]t may be more accurate and more helpful to future research to treat women's status as a composite of many different variables, often causally independent of one another. Thus in any given society, their status may be very "low" in some domains of behaviour, approach

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equality with men's status in others, and even in some domains, surpass the status of men."

Quinn's approach allows for a more cogent picture of what the "total" concept of status involves vis-à-vis all the aspects of life for any single individual. In each country, the historical, political and economic conditions shape the social structure. The cultural expectations and the social position of women relative to men, therefore, differ from society to society and even from group to group within a particular society.

The position of women in Indian society is particularly complex because of the country's great religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Women's status in India varies considerably by socioeconomic class, region, and between urban and rural women. While middle and upper-class urban women tend to strive toward equality with men by adopting western values, rural women of all classes are still more tradition and caste-bound and aspire for higher social status by emulating Brahmanic role models. Differences in Life perceptions of the proper role for women which arise between women of various classes are thus further compounded by a hierarchy in social status based on the caste system (Bhasin 1971; Lebra et al. 1984; Liddle and Joshi 1986).

The caste system particularly among the Hindus, not only strengthens gender distinctions but is also instrumental in enforcing constraints on women. The constraints on women are reflected in the *purdah* (veiling) system, lack of physical mobility, the institution of *sati* (self-immolation of the wife on her husband's funeral pyre), and denial of participation in the workforce and decision making. The connection between gender and caste stratification is further accentuated in the preservation of women's sexual purity. Nur Yalman (1968) links the sexual purity of women with the purity of the caste, suggesting that female sexuality presents a threat because of the danger of a woman introducing impure or low caste blood into the lineage. Belief that men's honour rests in the behaviour and public image of their women is still prevalent in India and is the cause of direct control of men over women's sexual and marital behaviour. Veena Das (1976:35) further adds to Yalman's theory by stating that, "women were literally seen as points of entrance, 'gateways' to the caste system. If men of ritually low status were to get sexual access to women of higher caste, then not only the purity of the women but that of the entire group would be endangered. Since the main threat to the purity of the group came from female sexuality, it becomes vital to guard it."

Autonomy is a highly prized goal of women's movements in the West. However, in most traditional societies individual autonomy is not highly valued and the needs of the family are placed before those of the individual. This holds true in India, and is particularly so in the rural areas. This is because *izzat* (prestige) as an indicator of social status plays a vital role in women's lives. *Izzat* refers to how a person maintains the group's prestige and how he or she translates its values in actual behaviour. In a caste-ridden, closed community like the villages in India, the prestige of the group and family is very important. A family's *izzat* must be preserved at all costs and increased whenever possible. And as Pettigrew (1982:58-59) claims, "if the honour of a family's women is lost, so also is the family's entire public position".

At the same time it should be noted that a woman's *izzat* is tied to her status as a dependent of some male affine. As Dyson and Moore (1983) confirm, since all rural women are expected to marry, have children and ultimately become mothers-in-law, they will conform to the social norms which reward them socially. But such allegiance is based on their relationship to the male of the household. Her power even as an older woman is dependent on the power her husband wields in the family.

Thus as Dube (1997:1) emphasizes, "kinship systems are an important context within which gender relations are located, important to the allocation of resources, to the constitution of production relations, to the immediate context of women's lives and to sustaining a specific gender ideology". Indian society is largely based on the patrilocal, patrilineal kinship group, where the family is defined by the

extended household. As Jacobson (1992:2) explains, "guided by traditional concepts of proper feminine behaviour and aware that their actions are inextricably linked to family honour, prestige, and ultimately, material rewards, women typically carry out their expected roles as chaste daughters, and dutiful wives. These time honoured roles require of women much self-sacrifice, yet they help uphold the family structure so vital to the well-being of all members of the group".

While discussing the woman's life cycle in this paper I will confine my argument to the domestic domain, because though women were working and are working more and more outside of the home, their status was and is still dependent on the social expectations of their culture. It is derived from traditional norms as laid out by their religious ideology, caste system and class. In the following sections I will elaborate on the status of women during the various stages of her life cycle within the household as it is determined by the prevailing kinship patterns in rural north India.

Unmarried Girl

"In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent." *The Laws of Manu (1969:195).*

The status of a newborn is determined by its sex. Even today a boy's birth is celebrated with jubilation and a daughter's with disappointment. The intensity and degree of these reactions may vary among rural and urban, along class and caste lines, but there is a sense of disappointment when a daughter is born. This can get worse if there are more than two daughters born to a family where the subsequent daughters would definitely be relatively neglected. Such a cultural reaction is based in religious and cultural history where daughters are created to be married off and basically to perpetuate the next generation. Even in that situation, the dread of dowry payments at the time of marriage, prove to dampen enthusiasm at the time of the birth of a girl.

Though there do exist interesting dilemmas and contradictions about the need for daughters -once born! In rural India, it is the little girls who take care of younger siblings when the mother goes to work in the fields. From the tender age of 5-6 years old girls partake in household chores like fetching water, running to the stores, sweeping the house, etc. It is with the onset of puberty that her life undergoes a major transformation in terms of her gender. Suddenly her sexuality becomes her prized possession. Her family starts imposing restrictions on her mobility; she has to conform to a more restrictive dress code, preferably start covering her head when she steps out of the house and is in the presence of men older than her and those who are not part of her extended family.

If attending the village school she may be withdrawn from it by the time she is in her early teens, and confined more and more to the home. Schooling for young girls gets restricted for a number of reasons. For one, if a young girl wants to pursue higher education, she may have to leave the village, which would render her too independent and hence making it difficult for her parents to find a match for her. She could also become too 'choosy' about whom she may want to marry. The ultimate fear, of course, is that she may choose her own partner and disgrace the family. Another reason for curtailing her education, as has been found by Ahmed-Ghosh (1987), is that the more educated a woman is, the higher education levels she will seek in her marital partner; this becomes a problem for the woman's family (ironically) because the more educated the man, the higher dowry he demands. Thus, education for girls is not viewed as a necessity or as desirable. Of course, the situation is different for women in cities. But even there a college degree, in most cases, is seen as essential primarily to ensure an educated and well-earning groom, than for economic empowerment of women.

As the young girl attains puberty and is viewed as a sexual threat to the honour of her family, she has to seek permission from her mother or an older relative to go out of the house to visit friends. If she wants to go to the village fair or out of the village -she

will have to be chaperoned by an older male relative, preferably her brother. Once the young woman has entered puberty, an active search for a groom begins. In cities, this may not start till the girl is in her late teens or early twenties because among the middle classes a college degree is seen as essential to enhance her chances of finding a "good match". Her marriage will be arranged by her elders keeping in mind her welfare. In most cases, the most important variable in this decision will be caste. While most Indians in the village exercise caste endogamy, village exogamy is mandatory. This stricture too plays itself out when defining women's status, which once again alters drastically with the shift in residence. The woman does not have much say in the selection of her marriage partner, and in fact, should feign lack of interest in the whole situation as a symbol of her sense of modesty. In urban India, especially in larger cities, while some women are selecting their partners (in what is referred to as love marriages), rules of arranged marriages have slackened to the extent of allowing the couple to meet each other a few times (usually with a chaperone) before consenting to marry. But with the incidence of dowry rising, both in terms of the increase in quantity of dowry and the rise in abuse related to bringing in insufficient dowry, we find that her status is still intertwined with traditions which view her as a commodity to be traded.

In most cases marriage of a young woman though seen as an accomplishment for her family, is viewed by the young woman with some trepidation. She is nervous about who she is marrying, his family with whom she'll be living, and a totally alien environment in her new location. A location which will once again define her, her status, her relationships in accordance with a tradition predetermined for her.

Married Woman

"Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife." *The Laws of Manu* (1967:196).

As Dube (1997:34) explains, "the cultural emphasis is on marriage as the destiny of a girl. A daughter's transfer to another home upon marriage is inevitable." It is in marriage that the woman finds her rightful place in society and enters a stage in life for which she was being prepared. Marriage is almost a religious sacrament for her, and it is in her affinal home that she has to seek fulfillment.

A bride may be reminded by her parents that if she does not behave 'properly' in her new home, the notoriety will damage the marriage chances of her still unmarried sisters. Each woman's observance of her group's standards of appropriate behaviour affects the *izzat* of all in her affinal (marital) family. Should she violate those standards, the *izzat* of her natal family would be hurt as well. Conversely, the reputation of both families will be enhanced if her conduct is devoted and dutiful. *Izzat*, then, involves the much sought after qualities of prestige and status, rank and esteem, respect and self-respect. Mandelbaum (1988: 100-101), while discussing the status of women concludes, "[i]n sum, women are everywhere undervalued in relation to men; men have rights in women, which women do not have in men; concerns about prestige and honour are dominant forces in men's social behaviour; and a man's prestige is importantly dependent on the women closely related to him. Women's conduct is therefore, shaped by considerations of men's status."

The role of the mother-in-law in a young *bahu's* (daughter-in-law) life is dominant because in many cases the young man finds it more convenient to allow his mother to set standards for his wife's conduct and to bear the responsibility for constraining her activities. Besides conforming to a stricter moral code, a young *bahu* should be circumspect on talking to her mother-in-law and not address older women of the village unless spoken to. In the presence of others she should veil her face from her husband and refrain from talking or making any physical contact with him. Further, she should not leave the house or go out in the village without the permission of her husband's mother.

A married woman perceives her life as one of bondage, especially when she

enters into an extended family (Jacobson 1992). In fact a young *bahu* is expected to take over most of the housework from her mother-in-law and if older *bahus* exist in the household, the youngest will be burdened with the more unpleasant tasks. In most situations the *bahus* resent taking orders from their mothers-in-law and sometimes will talk back, but they soon realize that their status within the household is dependent on their mothers-in-law. In fact, and most importantly, the status of the entering bride within her affinal home is dependent on the status of her husband within the household. If her husband is the main provider, the members of his household will treat her with more tolerance and even with some respect, but if he himself is dependent on his parents, his wife will be relegated to all the menial tasks in the family. As Wadley (1992:162) reiterates, "here she is a *bahu* and is subordinate to all until either she has a child or a yet younger "wife" is added to the family. As a servant to her elders, locked into the strict *purdah*, and under tyranny of a mother-in-law, the woman sees her husband's home as a trying and often lonely and unhappy place".

Before children are born to a young woman she has no authority or status in the family. As a new member to her husband's patrilocal residence, she is the youngest outsider who has to establish her relationship with her new family through subservience, service and humility. She does not have a part to play in decision making, in issues pertaining to her and her husband's life or in the running of her household. Her mobility is further limited and she has to now conform to the veil more rigidly. She cannot roam the village because she is the daughter-in-law! As a *bahu* she is perceived a sexual threat to their household and its honour, therefore, strictures on her sexuality become tighter. In her sexual purity rests the honour of the family. As a "daughter" of the village, while modesty was still imposed on her in dress and mobility, she could be seen in public without being veiled. Since the preferred and often enforced form of marriage is village exogamy, men in her village are not seen as potential marriage partners. Such is not the case for married women. Married women or daughters-in-law are outsiders to the village and thus need to be veiled when they step out of the house. The potential for them to marry any male in their caste group from within the affinal village (if a wife decides to leave her husband) exists. Even within the home, the married woman has to observe the veil in front of men older than her husband or unrelated.

An interesting insight into the status and role of women in Indian society is the shift in her relationship and status to her natal family. After her marriage, visits to the natal home are an occasion for happiness. Now that she is a 'married' daughter, she is received into her natal family with open arms. In her marriage, she has relieved her parents of their social obligations in society, religious obligations of the father (giving his daughter away, as a form of sacrifice to the gods), and is no longer an economic burden. Although it is accepted that a young married woman should spend frequent and lengthy periods of time with her parents during the first few years of marriage, her husband and his parents have the recognized right to control the timing and duration of such visits, and even to refuse them altogether if it is inconvenient for them to allow her to be absent, or if they are for any reason on bad terms with her family. A woman at this stage of life is not free to go home for a visit when she wishes. Once she is in her parent's home, she must wait for her husband or some other male-in-law to "bring her back" with him; she may not simply return to her husband's home on her own, but must wait to be "called for"(Vatuk 1981, Wadley 1992, Ahmed-Ghosh 1990). The provision of an escort for maintaining izzat is common, and a chaperone belonging to the appropriate family is a requirement. A woman can only visit her natal home if her brother or a male relative from her natal family comes to take her, and can only return to her affinal home when her husband or a male-in-law comes to bring her back. While this kind of chaperoning may be projected as protection, it is a "protection", in reality, of the prestige and honour of both her natal and affinal

families which is vested in her sexuality.

But as Wadley (1992:162) points out, "time spent in her father's home ideally at least one month a year, gives a woman joy, happiness, and a feeling of being loved and cherished -while she is again a daughter, not a wife, *purdah* restrictions are lifted, childhood friendships are reestablished, and freedom is gained from imprisonment in servile relationships with everyone above her".

Motherhood

"The teacher is ten times more venerable than the sub-teacher, the father a hundred times more than the teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than the father." *The Laws of Manu (1969:56-57).*

Through reproduction women can, in their affinal homes, enhance their social status. Women are seen as essential to the perpetuation of the family through the birth of sons (Dube 1997). In giving birth to a child, a woman knows she is contributing, as only she can do, to the well-being of her family. Further, having a son usually gives a young wife a boost in prestige. Childless couples are much pitied and a barren woman is an inauspicious guest at a wedding or any other ceremonies.

While a woman's salvation lies in her reproductive capacity, it can also be the domain of much anxiety because, if she gives birth to daughters only she would have to bear the consequences of it. In rural India (and among many families in urban India), women are seen as the ones determining the sex of the child. She is a cursed mother who produces only girls. Her husband will be much pitied and will be allowed to remarry to ensure the perpetuation of the male lineage. In extreme circumstance, the young mother will not be brought back from her natal home. Here it should be pointed out that a woman is always sent to her parent's home to deliver her children. It is traditionally her family's responsibility to bear the expenses of childbirth, baby products and gifts for not only the newborn but also for her husband and her in-laws. If her husband does not come to pick her up because she can only bear daughters, her family too will not look upon the situation very favourably because that will mean so many more mouths to feed. Her brothers may resent her presence in the household because she may then claim her share of her father's property.

But if she bears sons she will immediately experience an elevation in her status in both households, more so in her husband's family. She would, through the birth of a son, achieve the prime requirement of her, the perpetuation of her husband's lineage. She will be treated more favourably by her mother-in-law and the son will be visibly pampered by all. By giving birth to sons, the young mother herself earns a place of distinction within the affinal household. As the mother of a young son, she can negotiate privileges for herself and her children; as a mother of an adult son, she can look forward to reaping the 'benefits' of a mother-in-law when her son brings home a *bahu*.

Mother-in-law

"Until her death let her be patient (of hardships), self-controlled, and chaste, and strive (to fulfill) that most excellent duty which (is prescribed) for wives who have one husband only." *The Laws of Manu* (1967:196).

Much has been written about older women in terms of their status and prestige within the household. But here too, once again, her status in the life cycle is dependent on her relationship to her husband. As a mother-in-law whose husband is still the head of the household, her status definitely improves within the family. As Brown (1988:76) points out, "older women are expected to exert authority over specified kinsmen. These rights are socially recognized and institutionalized". Patrilocality, extended family residence, and loyalty to the affinal family all serve to consolidate the mother-in-law role.

As we have just discussed, at first she is in a position of servitude, separated from her own kinsmen, living under the authority of mother-in-law and treated as an outsider even by her husband. It is the birth of sons that raises her status. As the sons mature, she becomes the imposing and respected mother-in-law, with authority over her daughter-in-law and the power to exert strong influence upon and

through her grown sons. The latter are often more deeply attached to her than to their young wives (Roy, 1975).

Wadley (1988:7) confirms that, "she is the highest status female in a new joint family, composed of sons, sons' wives and grandchildren. It is as senior female of a joint family that the Hindu woman attains her greatest power, authority and autonomy". In fact, one can also see a more egalitarian relationship between the older woman and her husband, as he becomes more dependent on her for the maintenance of the household and his sons for the maintenance of the "outside".

Once women's sexuality can have no consequences, women are often regarded as asexual. Beyond childbearing, a woman can no longer bring dishonour upon her family. She is socially defined as beyond the period of sexual desirability and therefore this freedom no longer poses a threat to the honour of her husband and her family. At this stage of her life, it is morally considered proper for her to withdraw from sexual life and this is reflected in the spatial distinctions maintained by the older couple. The husband will usually sleep in a separate room, and the mother-in-law with her grandchildren. An interesting feature here is that with modernization one can see that changes have occurred in the spatial arrangements of rural homes. Today, unlike fifteen to twenty years ago, young married couples are given a room of their own. But with the older generation, such sexual barriers have not broken down and it will not be unusual for the mother-in-law to sleep with her grandchildren and older daughters-in-law.

Such freedom from sexual constraints and physical confinements result in the mother-in-law becoming a "public" figure! She is now free to roam the village and will be frequently found socializing with other older women in the market place or on the street corners. She does not have to observe veiling anymore though she is still required to keep her head covered. An older woman can now even run for village elections, travel out of the village to visit family or attend fairs without a chaperone. She can act as a midwife and since she is now privy to all the village gossip, intervene as an active matchmaker.

The mother-in-law can also start delegating duties to her daughters- in-law and relax more. She can have as little interest in the house as she wants to and can still keep the reputation of the household and family intact by maintaining a strict control over the incoming daughters-in-law by ensuring that they run the household efficiently and maintain the decorum that is expected of them. The mother-in-law is able to tighten her control over the household and establish her power over the family members by being totally in control of the household budget. She can make purchases without consulting her husband, budget household expenses on her own, she has the authority to allocate funds for gift-giving, and the power to decide what her daughters-in-law can purchase. She becomes the repository of the family assets and her sons deliver their incomes to her.

But as time goes on, and she becomes older, she has to negotiate with her daughters-in-law to retain her power and autonomy. She becomes frail, maybe afflicted by sickness, and ultimately widowed. Widowhood brings with it a total transformation to her status in her household. All the hard work, penance, patience and subservience that she underwent as a young *bahu* to earn the privileges of a mother-in-law start slipping away, now she is economically dependent on her sons. This translates to a social dependency on her daughters-in-law. Now her oldest son is the head of the household and his wife is the mother-in-law!

She has to gradually transfer the legitimate powers of managing the household to her daughters-in-law. While she is free to spend her time as she likes, she is becoming more and more dependent on her children, grandchildren and extended family for her subsistence. Women of this age group usually turn to religion and spend a great deal of time praying, tending to rituals and taking care of young children.

In India, a woman's status in her life cycle clearly reflects her position within the traditional kinship system. In urban India, where

formal kinship structured households have broken down, relationships and familial expectations are still based on the principles of traditional kinship patterns. Within this system a woman's standing in the family and in society is defined in its entirety by her relationship to a man, (be it her father, husband, or son) in an attempt to maintain and uphold the structure, reputation and prestige of the household.

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The Emerging Seasons of Our Lives

by Rae Lesser Blumberg[1]

Introduction

As I complete this article, the United States' "first man in space", John Glenn, age 77, is orbiting the earth, demolishing stereotypes about age-appropriate behaviour and expanding the frontiers (literally) for people of the "Third Age". Beyond that, he is a living illustration of how changing technology is helping to demolish the "lockstep life". This is a life that follows the age-defined social conventions of one's gender, class, race/ethnicity, locality and larger society -the notion that for every activity, "there is a season". "Lockstep lives" have circumscribed the possibilities open to most humans -especially women- in most societies through most of history.

But now, to paraphrase American rock singer Bob Dylan, "the times [of our lives] they are a-changing". It's taking not only the public but also social science some time to adapt to the greater flexibility of our lives that is emerging today, most strongly in the developed society of the United States of America. Only two decades ago, social scientists working with a "life course perspective" had such a "lockstep life" view that one of their key concepts was "on-time" vs. "off-time" events. An on-time event would be going to the university from around 18 to, say 22-24 years of age. An off-time event would be a woman having her first baby after age 30 or returning to school in her 50s. Off-time events were seen as likely to produce lowered morale or other mental health problems.[2] (Neugarten and Hagestad 1976; Perun and Bielby 1980: Daniels and Weingarten 1982; Fallo-Mitchell and Ryff 1982; Cohler and Boxer, n.d.).

This article will examine how technology -including the new age of information and bioengineering technology that is evolving farthest and fastest in the US- is loosening the bonds of the lockstep life. In a nutshell, the generally rigid lockstep of the life course in the major types of societies that have existed in our planet's history is being broken. Time is stretching out and becoming more flexible for a number of activities that previously were tied to very definite phases of the life cycle. Both women and men are benefiting, but women may be gaining more than men may. Women's achievements are being liberated from the biological clock, and even the biological clock is becoming more manipulatable. (For example, a post-menopausal woman can now have the fertilized egg of a younger woman implanted in her uterus and carry and bear the resultant baby; men, for their part, now have Viagra.) Not surprisingly, the benefits of this alteration of the human time line are differentially distributed not only by gender and age, but also depending on one's social class, race/ethnicity, rural-urban residence and country.

For many adults (again, especially women, whose lives were more circumscribed by the biological factors of youthful looks and fertility), the changes are liberating. Children's status also may rise due to age-scrambling technological advances. Today, for example, computer-literate boys and girls often serve as guides to the new age for their parents. Just as

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[2] Daniels and Weingarten find that some off-time events may work out positively, e.g., some men and women who become parents after young adulthood may be able to give their children more economic and even time resources (since they are more advanced in their careers) than younger parents.

children of immigrants to the US at the turn of the century soon surpassed their parents in knowledge of English and the perplexing new culture, boys and girls in many societies today help parents get onto the Internet, get their computers to work properly, and get their VCRs to record a television programme for later viewing. Anecdotal evidence indicates that while most parents don't find their children's greater information technology skills threatening they may feel threatened by the ever-accelerating rate of technological change that is accompanying the birth of a new type of society.

First, let us "name the baby" of the new type of society and place it in the sequence of the "historical mainline" of our human evolutionary history. Then, let us consider the changes that are coming about and how these may differentially affect the life course of women and men in the U.S., where the transition is most advanced. Finally, let us briefly speculate on what sort of climate the various seasons of women's lives are likely to have as we enter a new millennium.

Naming the new age: information society or information/biogenetic society?

Alvin Toffler, in *Powershift* (1990), argues that we are entering an age where information is the most important source of power. To take one example, the sun never sets on the world's currently volatile financial markets -there are some markets in operation around the clock. What is being traded in those trillions of dollars' worth of transactions, however, is not (immediately) currency or financial instruments, rather, it is information, sent by computer, about them.

At the same time, another aspect of the information society is on the verge of creating a revolution in our biological destiny. With competing public and private efforts accelerating the rate at which the mapping is being carried out, we are only a very few years away from completing the map of the human genome. This is our biological inheritance, the myriad building blocks of our genetic heritage. Not only are we identifying our genes, we are finding out more and more about what each one does and how we can modify our genes and/or their impacts.[3] Needless to say, our knowledge of the genes of creatures less complex than ourselves is also exploding at an accelerating pace.

It is not yet clear if history will add this bioengineering revolution to the title of our new age, but there is no question that the "information society" represents the newest way that humans make a living from this planet. How we make a living from the planet can be referred to as the "techno-economic base" (Blumberg 1978, 1998). Astoundingly, there have been only four other "mainline" techno-economic bases or types of societies in our species' entire evolutionary history: foraging (hunting and gathering), horticultural, agrarian and industrial. (These types of societies also are discussed in my article in the previous issue of *INSTRAW News*, No. 28. Additionally, other, ecologically specialized techno-economic bases, such as herding societies, sometimes have rewritten the destiny of the mainline types of societies -e.g., the periodic invasion of mounted pastoralists, such as those of Genghis Khan -but have never been practiced by as many people as the mainline bases.)

Perhaps the most important legacy of each transition in the techno-economic base has been a generally thorough shift not only in technology and economy, but also in social and cultural patterns including the family system, the nature of gender stratification, the level and nature of socio-economic stratification, the political system, the religious system, the legal system -and the gender-differentiated phases of the life course. Let us briefly review that history.

The major types of societies in human evolutionary history

Hunting-gathering, or foraging societies - For most of the nearly five million years that hominids have walked the earth on two legs, including most of the last hundred thousand or so years that we have been modern

[3] November 5, 1998 marked a long-awaited breakthrough: scientists have isolated human embryonic stem cells -a primitive kind of cell that can grow into every kind of human tissue including muscle, bone and brain. This offers hope for people with many diseases (Weiss 1998).

homo sapiens sapiens, foraging is how we made our living. To do so, most foragers were nomadic for part or all of the year, and all known foragers spread the risks and ups and downs of the food quest by sharing. Nomadism and sharing meant that their few possessions were not concentrated in only a few hands: foragers had low socio-economic inequality.[4] They also tended to have low gender inequality: from my perspective, the most important reason is that men and women typically had equal control over the means (bows and arrows; digging sticks) as well as the fruits of production (Blumberg 1984, 1991, 1998). And since gathering, done predominantly by women, generally provided about 60-80 per cent of the food supply except at Arctic latitudes, women were equal or primary producers in most foraging groups".

Actually, most hunters and gatherers valued all phases of the life course: the old for their "institutional memory" including how the group survived previous tough times; the young for their future help in old age and in continuing the group, and productive age adults for providing subsistence for all. Concerning such adults, Lee's sophisticated economic analysis of the Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert in Namibia (1968, 1969) supported the view of foragers as the world's most leisured people (Sahlins 1968; Lee and DeVore 1968). Lee found that the work week varied from 12 to 19 hours and most work was done by the 65 per cent of the group who were of prime productive age (they supported the children and those over 60). Thus, child labour was not needed and childhood was a long and happy stage. Furthermore, few groups were under the survival pressure that forced some Eskimo groups to abandon some elders during hard times.

Finally, their nomadic way of life influenced fertility patterns: children tended to be spaced 4-5 years apart and average family size was low -the result of nursing children to age four, a body fat ratio low enough (due to a low fat diet and much walking) to inhibit conception, and sometimes, use of infanticide, abortion and/or plants with contraceptive properties; see references in Blumberg 1978). With their few babies so obviously the group's future, women of reproductive age were valued for and not burdened by fertility.

Horticultural societies - In a remarkably short time span of roughly 10,000 years beginning some 15,000-18,000 years ago, cultivation emerged on most of the world's major land masses, barring Australia which had no suitable cultigens that could be easily domesticated[5] People became "semi-sedentary" and began to accumulate possessions and have more children, more closely spaced, than foragers. Population began to explode. As horticulturalists expanded in population and territory, foragers began to be pushed to the geographic margins of the earth.

The pyramid of power began to emerge. The position of women vs. men in that emerging pyramid depended on the prevailing kinship and property system: where women got to control the fruits of their farming and were surrounded by other female relatives, they enjoyed much more equality than when they did not. In general, horticulture (based on the hoe or digging stick) is the most feminized techno-economic base as "woman the gatherer" morphs into "woman the farmer" and further eclipses the subsistence contribution of "man the hunter". Also, horticultural societies have the greatest variation in the level of male-female equality/ inequality.

With respect to life course variables, their society's level of gender stratification seems to be a critical element of how women and men are valued in their post-productive

[4] There are a few foraging groups in the world today still living taditionally, but I've used the past tense. The sad fact is that most of the hunters and gatherers described by ethnographers in the last two centuries have been partly or wholly pushed out of their traditional way of life.

[5] The most important precipitating cause seems to be population pressure. Foraging fertility apparently was slightly above replacement. Over time, people spread out globally, settling in higher densities in lush habitats, and in lower densities in marginal habitats. Cohen (1975) argues that by ca. 15,000-20,000 years ago, people had spread out to fairly equal pressure on local carrying capacity around the earth (this level of pressure was probably greatly below upper limits on carrying capacity).

years. But even in highly patriarchal horticultural societies, the importance of the labour and well-being of girls and women of productive age was and is valued. The birth of girls tends to be welcomed, even in patrilocal horticultural groups where the bride goes to farm her husband's kin group's lands. In fact, his family usually pays her family a "bride price" -i.e., the opposite of dowry.

Today, much of sub-Saharan Africa remains horticultural (often because it has tropical soils too thin to take the plow) and women raise up to 70 per cent of the locally grown food (Saito and Weidemann 1990). They generally have a good deal of economic autonomy, even in the most prevalent type of society -patrilineal/ patrilocal ones where men control the political economy and kinship system. In those societies, polygyny (one man, many wives) remains prevalent, since every extra wife brings extra resources to the husband and a sharing of domestic/wifely tasks for the wives. Women tend to gain in freedom as they age; where the kinship and property system favour them, as it did among the Iroquois of North America during the colonial era, middle aged women also can become quite powerful.

Agrarian societies - Agrarian societies emerged following the invention of the plow (in the Middle East 5-6,000 years ago) and spread along the Eurasian land mass and North Africa wherever soils were deep enough to take the plow. These societies have the most bipolar situation vis-a-vis gender stratification: On the one hand, a small minority of Southeast Asian irrigated rice cultivators keep a kinship/property system favourable to women and maintain considerable gender equality at the micro level (in the family and sometimes the community). On the other hand, patriarchy often reaches extreme levels among the two other kinds of agrarian societies (the overwhelming majority): (1) irrigated rice societies with patri-oriented kin/ property systems (e.g., Bangladesh, southern China, southern India, Japan, Korea,) and the (2) rainfed (dry) agrarian societies (e.g., northern China, Europe, northern India, in the Middle East).

But there is one big difference between the patriarchal irrigated rice vs. rainfed societies that is crucial for a gendered look at the life course: women's labour in crop production is critically needed for rice but is usually marginal for the much less labour- intensive rainfed agricultural crops. Where women are crucially important producers in their prime labour force years, even highly patriarchal societies assure their well-being: footbinding, for example, never was practiced by peasants in the irrigated rice regions of China because it would have compromised female productivity; in contrast, girls were subjected to crippling footbinding among peasants in the male-dominated rainfed farming systems of northern China.

Child labour (for both girls and boys) tends to be more prevalent than among horticultural peoples and, indeed, is quite important in helping their peasant parents make the year's rent or keeping their landless parents (barely) alive. Looking to the far end of the life course, women typically gain in freedom and power as they age. The Chinese mother-in-law finally getting to tyrannize her daughters-in-law and reduce her own workload is an example of the turning of the "social ferris wheel" (Bart 1969, n.d.) with respect to the life cycle.

In general, young females in rainfed agrarian societies are at the bottom of the

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After that, local population pressure or other scarcity factors might have pushed people to begin some rudimentary cultivation (all human groups apparently long knew that seed sprout into plants: adapting their yearly schedule to the availability of resources was the basis for hunters and gatherers' survival strategy). Some cultigens are genetically plastic, i.e., they mutate easily. These are the ones that people in different regions selectively began to plant - and improve- until they had created today's basic staples: grains such as wheat, rice corn and quinoa, and roots/tubers such as potatoes, cassava, yams and taro. Australia had no such genetically plastic plants so the Aborigines remained foragers for 40-60,000 years. A competing theory - based mostly on the Americas- is that recently arrived migrant hunters turned to cultivation when they exterminated most large mammals around 11,000 years ago. It has been rendered problematic by two forms of data: 1) new evidence that human settlement in the New World began many thousands of years before that date, and 2) evidence that many of Australia's large animals also died out at around the same time, after 30,000-50,000 years of Aboriginal habitation. Because of the narrow time frame (ca. 18-8,000 years ago) in which cultivation emerged in so many regions, some speculate that climate changes at the end of the last Ice Age also might have increased pressures on humans that led them to develop cultivation.

gender/life course pecking order. Their families pay to unload them (dowry) and their intense drudgery of housework, childcare, small animal husbandry, kitchen gardens, and providing water, firewood and fodder is lumped together as "housework" and seen as non-productive.

In most agrarian societies, the stages of the life cycle were rigid indeed, especially for women, whose lives were defined by their reproductive cycle. Few women escaped the depredations of a life of high fertility and low valuation. This was the era where men's biological advantage of one-third to one-half more upper body strength probably was most important. The prevalence of warfare peaked in agrarian societies, where its conduct and principal weapons greatly favoured brute strength. Even the key technological tool of subsistence, the plow, depended on strength. So men's upper body muscle power made them predominant in plowing and helped reinforce their overall power.[6]

A number of the patriarchal rainfed groups and some of the patriarchal irrigated ones developed empires and became the "historical mainline", as well as the low point of rights and freedoms for the common person (Lenski 1966; Blumberg 1998). All extant industrial societies emerged from patriarchal/agrarian ones - with their ideologies and practices of female inferiority.

Industrial societies- The Industrial Revolution was in full swing by 1750 in England, born of the union of capitalism (which spread like wildfire in Europe starting in the mid-15th century) and technology.[7] By 1800 -less than 200 years ago- England became the world's first society to gain more of its livelihood from secondary activities (manufacturing) than from primary activities- i.e., those drawing resources directly from the earth's surface (hunting, gathering, fishing, herding, farming) or subsurface (mining).

Early industrialization in Europe was notorious for recruiting even young children, as well as able-bodied adults of both genders, and using them up quickly under horribly harsh conditions. This was largely because industrial capitalism there emerged under conditions of labour surplus (Moore 1966, Goldstone 1983). But although early industrialization brought young women into the paid labour force, their lives remained rigidly bound to the re-productive cycle. Industrial capitalism led to a new turning of what Bart terms the "social ferris wheel" (1969, n.d.), and it put poor post-menopausal women in a much lower position than their counterparts in patriarchal agrarian societies even though the overall level of patriarchy in industrial societies was in (slow) decline. This was because in early industrial capitalism, few older women were hired, there was no "social safety net" and the familial one was often ripped.

Women's plight worsened as the early labour union movement became a "men's movement" (Huber 1991). In order to consolidate their power and raise their wages, male workers attempted to "protect" women and children from hazardous jobs -i.e., remove them as a potential source of low wage competition. As industrialization (and, for England and a few other European countries, colonialism) increased the size of the economic pie, men were able to increase their slice, partly at the expense of women and children.

But as industrialization evolved further during the course of the 20th century, men's upper body strength advantage also became less important. Rather, more and more industrial processes required "nimble fingers" (women and

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[6] But class/caste/ethnicity also affected how kindly or cruelly time dealt with a man or woman. A class of "expendables" (Lenski 1966) was found at the bottom of the heap in the cities of all the world's mainstream agrarian societies (Lenski, Nolan and Lenski 1995).

There, men working as coolies -human beasts of burden- soon became too broken down for the job. For them, and in general, for male and female "expendables", life was Hobbesian: "nasty, brutish and short."

[7] Assuming there is a demand for "widgets" (economists' term for a generic product), if you could invent a machine producing ten times the widgets per day as your competition, you could cut the price drastically and still make huge profits. Historically, woolen textiles -not widgets- were the lead industry of the Industrial Revolution and its history shows just such a spiral of competition, invention, price cuts and consequent expansion for the market. Today, it is computers and electronics that continually advance in technology and drop in prices.

children), not macho muscle. As the world economy became increasingly competitive and globalized after World War II, women's low wages, as well as nimble fingers, led them to more and more industrial jobs, while protected male labour enclaves began to crumble.

Gender and the life course in the information society

By the 1950s and 1960s, the US began moving into a new type of capitalist economy based on the twin pillars of information and globalization. The first point to notice as we move into the world's fifth major techno-economic base is that, perhaps for the first time in human history, women and men are equally likely to use the most important tool -and symbol- of the new society: the computer. They may use the computer at least partly for different tasks and/or occupations, but it is the same machine. Second, it is relevant that the computer requires no physical strength to operate. Even warfare is largely computerized today and there is no advantage in men "pushing the button" or entering the data and, in fact, the proportion of women in the military in the US has been going up apace. Third, as information gains in importance as a component of people's jobs, education stretches out over more and more of the childhood and young adult years. But in an information society marked by ever-accelerating technological change (due to the cumulative nature of knowledge), education is increasingly becoming a lifelong process.

Jobs, however, are becoming less and less likely to be held for life as the globalized competitive capitalist economy and the shift to an information society transform the US labour force. Both men and women are increasingly likely to work on contracts or other non-permanent arrangements and, if their job involves computers, both are increasingly able to work from home (or other non-office settings). In short, the (mostly male) pattern of spending one's working life working for one firm and a gold watch at retirement is being eroded.

Age becomes a major variable in such a society. In part, this is due to the predilection of employers to hire the youngest available workers (no longer always the cheapest) because they are the most current vis-à-vis the ever-accelerating explosion of information/computer society knowledge. In actuality, despite the advantage of the young in the most up-to-date technology, computers are as easily used by older as younger workers and some kinds of synthesis actually can be done better by mature workers. In addition, with the "birth dearth" of recent years (discussed below), there may not be enough of those young people to fill the expanding number of information economy slots.

Native-born American women are opting for fertility slightly below replacement level...

Meanwhile, advances in health care and practices, increasingly driven by the biogenetic revolution, are multiplying the number of older people while con-currently increasing the burden on those young workers. According to Samuelson (1998), as the baby boom generation (1946-64) approaches 60, they will further redefine ageing in terms of their own vitality and relevance. With life expectancy at 76 and climbing, the old assumptions -and actuarial tables- on which U.S. Social Security programmes were based are eroding. If the boomers decide to work longer, or combine leisure and work in short-term assignments, they will ease the labour crunch, as well as the dependency burden on the young: "In 1997, there were about five Americans between 20 and 64 for every American 65 and over; by 2030, that ratio is projected to fall below 3 to 1" (Samuelson 1998:A25). If Social Security is not to be bankrupted, more people over 65 must remain in the labour force. The increase in longevity -in good health-that has become so pronounced in the advanced industrial capitalist countries is beginning to be

matched by an easing of retirement. Fewer and fewer occupations automatically retire their incumbents at a given calendar age.

Moreover, the information society has changed the occupational distribution to women's general advantage. The two categories of jobs that have grown most explosively in the now ending 20th century have been clerical and service jobs. Virtually all of the clerical jobs and many of the service jobs also have been information-based. And these have been disproportionately women's jobs throughout this century (vs. the much higher prevalence of men as clerks and "typewriters" in the late 19th century). In turn, the explosion of clerical and service job slots has resulted in more and more women being pulled into the formal, paid labour force. (In the formal labour force, whether you want to work is less important than the existence of a job slot, as anyone who has searched for work during a recession has learned. This is why in Third World countries with insufficient urban formal sector jobs to go around, people -especially women, who have less access to those scarce formal sector jobs- create their own, in a burgeoning informal economy. The down-side of women's disproportionate concentration in the informal sector is that it rarely offers either benefits or high earnings.)

By the early 1970s, there were convincing data showing that when the economy was expanding, and as it evolved toward an information society, it pulled in successive groups of women previously seen as unsuitable for the paid labour force (Oppenheimer 1973). Originally, among native-born white women around the turn of the century, the great majority of the economically active were young and single. As the economy expanded in the 1920s, married women without small children began to be recruited. After a retreat during the Depression of the 1930s, women's labour made a stronger-than-ever comeback during the heyday of Rosie the Riveter in World War II. Rosie's young children were cared for in company day-care centres in the large defense industry plants. But Rosie was laid off and the day-care centres closed at the end of the war. Even so, the economy kept creating more clerical and service jobs as it moved into a post-industrial phase during the economically expansionist period from World War II until the recession caused by the first oil shock (1974). And by the 1960s, mothers of young children became the fastest growing category of female labour force entrants (Oppenheimer 1973). Now, in the US, roughly three-quarters of women in the "prime labour force years" (18-64) are in the labour force. And this includes well over half of the mothers of infants one-year-old or less. In other words, there has been a growing convergence of male and female occupational patterns, with women increasingly likely to enter -and stay in- the labour force during child-rearing years.

Conclusions: women's life course, the information society and the future

There have been many effects of this changed labour force participation pattern of women and these are becoming increasingly pronounced as the United States, followed by the rest of the world, moves farther and farther into the uncharted territory of the information/biogenetic age.

First, women earn income. In my general theory of gender stratification (see, *inter alia*, Blumberg 1978, 1984, 1991, 1998), of the many factors I posit as influencing gender stratification, I propose that the primary one tends to be relative control of economic resources by women vs. men at various "nested" levels ranging from the couple to the state. In the typical patriarchal agrarian society, the property system was heavily-to-exclusively weighted toward the male side. Even when women earn 60 cents or, as in the US today, 72 cents for every dollar earned by men, it transforms their lives and bargaining power, beginning at the micro level of society. Women with income under their control are more self-confident and have more "voice and vote" in household decisions ranging from fertility to children's well-being to property acquisition, allocation and alienation. And women do not have to enter a heterosexual marriage under unfavourable terms in order to survive, as has been the case in the recent patriarchal agrarian and industrial society past. Moreover,

since the costs of children rise and the benefits fall as women's income rises and compulsory school attendance laws and a changed economy wipe out the practice and need for children's labour, women have less and less incentive to bear them. With better contraceptive options, largely involving female-controlled "means of intervention" women can realize their preferences, especially where their income gives them more say in such matters. So women have fewer children and they have them later in the life course. The age of marriage and the proportion of cohabiting (vs. legally married) couples have risen apace since the 1970s, and so has the age of first birth. Both stretched out educational careers and economic/career considerations weigh in a woman's fertility decisions when she has the freedom to make those decisions. Native-born American women are opting for fertility slightly below replacement level (2.1 children per woman). And spacing between births also tends to be wider than it was in the peak years of the US "baby boom" (1946-64).

On the one hand, women's fertility patterns are coming to resemble those of our foraging ancestors -wide birth spacing and small average family size (Whiting 1968; Birdsell 1968; Kolata 1974; Draper 1975). On the other hand, these fertility patterns interfere less and less with an information society occupation -especially now that many computer-using workers spend at least a part of their work week working out of their home.

With women's continued and growing labour force importance into the middle years -and later- of the life course, women's middle years are being redefined. Despite continuing socialization focusing on their looks and weight, women who reach "a certain age" retain many more life options even if their looks fade (Fuchs 1978). The combination of new knowledge and technologies have created products that preserve those looks in women with the inclination and money (minimal for mass-market alpha and beta hydroxy skin treatments, more for plastic surgery, two interventions that can -temporarily- slow or turn back the clock).

One of the traditional mass-market women's magazines in the US, *The Ladies Home Journal*, has just launched (fall 1998) a new, fairly traditional magazine, *More*. It is aimed at women over 40 (a growing segment of the population as the baby boom generation ages). Perhaps the least traditional aspect of the content of that magazine is its insistence that women's longevity gains have essentially "stretched the middle years", adding some twenty years to this phase of the life cycle and redefining what women in their 40s and 50s are supposed to look like, and what they are supposed to do. Exercise, sports and sex are seen as (still) important components of these "stretched middle years".

What will women do in those stretched out years? Advances in reproductive technology -an expansion of the biogenetic face of the new techno-economic base-could expand a woman's options vis-à-vis the timing of fertility, allowing, as noted above, even post- menopausal births. Advances in women's public roles, including the slowly rising proportion of women in political office, offer another option.[8] "Re-entry schooling" is a third option, and one increasingly driven by the ever-faster-changing knowledge requirements of the information society. But the chances are that women will use that time to focus more firmly on work and careers, thereby further narrowing the economic and power gap between non-elite women and men, and laying the basis for a future narrowing of the power gap at the top of our pyramid of political economy.

Concomitantly, the knowledge/biogenetic breakthroughs of the life and health care sciences are increasing the options of women and men of the "Third Age." Women continue to outlive men by about seven years in advanced industrial/post-industrial societies. They are more likely to remain economically and sexually active than in the last couple of centuries, and they are lucky enough to live in

[8] The November 1998 elections in the United Stated saw the proportion of women remain at 9 per cent in the Senate and rise slightly from 10.6 per cent to 12.9 per cent in the House of Representatives.

countries with a social safety net (e.g., Social Security old age benefits) when they do retire. Well-maintained information and computer skills have a longer "shelf life" than hard manual labour. The stretching of the middle years is already extending to later life, with those over 85 the fastest growing segment of the US population. Increasing proportions of those 85+ also remain healthy (despite an age-related risk for Alzheimer's). With further progress toward health/longevity and an information society, complete retirement from the labour force may become rare until well into what we currently think of as old age.

This rosy picture does not currently include large proportions of the earth's population. The wear and tear of a hard life of privation -especially one compounded by the weight of gender, racial/ethnic, caste and class discrimination -preclude stretched middle years or a healthy 85+ phase for most. But there is little question that globalization and the consequent spread of the emerging information techno-economic base are all but irreversible (short of nuclear war or other major catastrophe). So the softening and loosening of the constraints of the straight jacket of the "lockstep life cycle" that is occurring most visibly in the United States hold open the promise of a blurring and softening of gender as well as age inequalities for more and more people as the next century dawns.

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GROWING UP FEMALE:
Reflections on Children and Adolescent Girls
North and South

by Cristina S. Blanc[1]

Introduction

Girl children and adolescents represent at least half of all children and adolescents in the world, with the partial exception of parts of South and East Asia where female newborns have been discriminated against early on in life through benign neglect, or other pre-selective practices. According to the most plausible UN demographic projections, "children" (i.e., children and adolescents, age 0 to 18, according to the definition adopted by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)) will for a few more decades at least, represent a particularly high proportion of the population of all ages around the world. This generalization needs some qualifications however. While the populations of industrialized countries especially in the West are rapidly ageing, especially after 1980, thus producing fewer "children", the developing countries and their immigrant populations are still giving birth to a large number of youngsters and have ahead of them decades of predominantly young populations.

The breakdown of these diverging rates of growth and relative representations around the world show a projected global increase of 30.6 per cent for both genders in the 15-19 age groups between 1985 and 2020. Much of this increase within the developing world is expected to occur outside Asia (where the average increase for that age group is projected to only 8 per cent), and especially in Africa. But even within Asia there are considerable variations. Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan are expected to see their population in that age group approximately double between 1980 and 2010 while in India it is expected to grow by one third and in Sri Lanka only by about 12 per cent. All of the Southeast Asian countries have projected increases of 30 to 50 per cent except for the Philippines (even higher), Thailand (substantially lower) and Singapore (with an expected decline of 26 per cent). In East Asia, only Korea has an expected increase of 15 per cent while the other countries can expect declines. There is thus considerable variation by countries according to their demographic history (Xenos 1990, Blanc et al. 1994).

For children ages 0 to 14, the developing countries are again the major contributors, with Africa leading the way for ages 0 to 4 and the Asia region, especially South Asia, for ages 5 to 14 (Blanc et al. 1994). These projections, made by the UN in 1980 and again in 1990, are interestingly not broken down by gender.

How are these millions of young persons growing up female just now in industrialized and developing countries, both north and south? What current globalizing trends impact on them? And most importantly how does gender affect these millions of growing children around the world? The picture varies somewhat from country to country, region to region, and needs to be analyzed in much greater detail.

Glaring Gaps in Research and Documentation

First of all it is important to recognize that what we know about "children" is

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constrained by what and whom gets studied and how research questions are framed. While many important issues need and deserve research attention, only certain topics become translated into research questions. These topics are often bound by disciplinary as well as national/international concerns and are an integral part of ongoing conversations within these domains. As new issues come to the analyst's attention, the available documentation is thus often fragmentary and imperfect. This is certainly the case for the gendered categories of growing girls and boys.

Historically, research on children and adolescents of both genders (0 to 18), has been the domain of psychologists, child developmentalists and educationists, and has been characterized by predominantly western definitions of problems and western-defined standards of well-being, since the predominance of their research was until recently done on western "children". Only recently have these disciplines started branching overseas and progressively acknowledging the importance of cultural, historical and societal contexts in determining the perceptions, practices and policies that affect youngsters as they grow up in different parts of the world. Psychological research has, over the years, emphasized scientific experimentation and comparative quantitative analysis, irrespective of cultural contexts. It based its hypotheses on assumptions dictated by theories emerging from the study of Western children and searched for global develop mental truths.

This was in part due to the fact that psychology as a science focused on the individual child as an abstract, monolithic, ungendered, isolated unit that grew through largely internally-determined developmental stages (Freud, Piaget). It did not acknowledge the importance of the diverse societal contexts and relationships that inform and shape children's lives, in constant interaction with their internal development. And it has only recently gendered the "child" (Gilligan 1982, 1992). Thus, much more needs to be learned to fully explore the complexities of gendered children's lives and understand them at greater depth, with their multiple subjective representations and world views. Multidisciplinary research on children and childhood is now progressively including anthropologists, sociologists and historians and is thus in the process of developing new facets of analysis, that include gender (Blanc 1999).

Psychologically it is crucial to recognize that there are different moments of any child's development. By not sufficiently recognizing the role of age in the growing child's capabilities, anthropologists and even sociologists run the risk of substituting one monolithic category with another. But it is also crucial to realize that we still have an enormous amount to learn about variations in children's developmental processes across time and space, and that these variations include age -and gender- factor as well as the varying concepts of what constitutes childhood and adulthood in those different contexts.

An updated working definition of child development emphasizes that development for most children: i) is multidimensional, including physical, mental or broadly cognitive, emotional and social dimensions (the ability to relate to others); ii) is integral, in the sense that these different dimensions are closely interrelated and affect each other; iii) occurs in interaction, on the basis of initiatives taken by both the child and the social environment; and iv) is somewhat patterned, with at times considerable variations by culture or individual.

In all cases children, both girls and boys, progressively adapt to, and master (as well as transform) their surroundings (Myers 1992), and achieve over time as full and responsible adulthoods as they can. Their resilience to traumatic experiences throughout this process is often remarkable (Lerner 1991, Collins 1991, Blanc et al. 1994:321).

All around the world, at different ages, the physical, mental, emotional and social development of children and adolescents emphasizes first their primary interaction, even dependency, with immediate caretakers (often their mothers, fathers or relatives, including siblings) and progressively shifts its focus to a broader

context of social relationships (and geographical range) that increasingly shapes their mental, emotional and social development. As these shifts towards greater interaction occur, first around age 3 (away from primary dependence on a caretaker for food and movement), then again at ages 6-7 (a quasi-universally recognized shift towards conscientization and greater responsibility), and with puberty (a shifting timing), the effects of this broader societal context on the child also increase (even though they are always present).

Until recently research studies treated children and most adolescents as a largely homogeneous ungendered category. And when they did recognize gender, they did not sufficiently probe on how it interplayed with issues of race, social class, culture and sexuality in constructing personal and group identities. Thus they did not sufficiently recognize that societal barriers often create more difficult hurdles for girls than for boys and that these hurdles could be worse, in different national contexts, for girls or boys of a certain colour, of low socio-economic status, with disabilities, not heterosexual, or with other significant distinctions with respect to the valuations of the society in which they grow up.

Pre-Puberty Girl Children, 0 to 10-12

The lives of growing girls and boys diverge in significant ways in most cultures as they are exposed to increasingly sexed definitions of what is, or is not, culturally appropriate in terms of social roles and behaviours. This occurs through exposure to particular micro-contexts as well as through their interaction with society. These influences may begin even before their birth because of their parents and caretakers' perceptions of what their future roles will be. Northern Indian fathers, for example, are known to play with their girl children with great affection by singing them local children songs that wish they were never born.

With puberty, however, usually 9 to 12 for girls (a shifting boundary, age-wise), and higher for boys, the life-style differences between girls and boys become sharper in most social contexts around the world, as girls are trained into their social reproductive as well as productive duties and responsibilities. This process entails some increased differentiation in the way each gender is treated, that is just starting to be analyzed in different parts of the world for the particular age groups. Here are some of the observations that emerged from detailed surveys of time allocation as well as personal interviews with children, adolescents and their parents in twenty-one cities around the world.

Restricted Freedom of Movements and Activities for Girls: A Few Comparative Trends

Progressively, especially after puberty, societal and cultural constraints often restrict the physical movements of girls, as opposed to boys, in the developing countries examined by the study, and attempt to limit their social exposure by constraining their bodies (and sexualities), covering them with veils, enclosing them for protection into a more domestic courtyard as opposed to a more public sphere, and regulating their contacts with boys in general and even with the boy often already intended to become their formal spouse. There were considerable variations in the ways and the extent in which these controls were exercised but they were present in even more female-centered social systems. They often continued well into adulthood when older women suddenly became freer and more powerful than ever before, after they had completed their societal reproductive tasks.

Socio-economic contexts were interwoven with culture in determining the kinds of constraints undergone by young girls and female adolescents in developing countries. Reproductive and productive tasks are often at odds with each other, forcing adolescent girls and women out of the home or into wage labour despite the cultural and societal practices that limit their movements. In Delhi, India, for example, pre-puberty girls from poor neighbourhoods would help collect rags when still small, following parents or siblings around town, but would be confined to a more domestic domain later on, at best becoming part-time domestic helpers in

nearby settlements after puberty. In some cases they were even sent home to their provincial towns or rural villages after puberty to ensure their safety for marriage (Mehta 1992).

In the cities of the Philippines or Kenya many young girls are found with boys earning a living in the streets for their impoverished households. With adolescence however Philippine girls are submitted to greater controls by their parents and provided with adult female companions whenever possible while adolescent boys are left freer to roam around with their male friends and make a nuisance of themselves. Furthermore throughout Southeast Asia, young boys are allotted pocket money for entertainment expenses, while girls are not viewed as requiring it. This was repeatedly noted by the girls in the surveys that we administered in the Philippines and is characteristic of Thailand and Malaysia as well (Szanton Blanc, 1989).

Kenyan adolescent girls were until the early 1990s severely punished by schools if they got pregnant. They would be immediately expelled thus losing any chance to continue their education even after delivery. This was the government and private schools response to a rapidly rising number of pregnant teenagers during the 1980s. An also rising and by now severe AIDS epidemics has further complicated the picture. Since the early 1990s, Kenyan adolescent girls are not punished by their schools with permanent expulsion any more, thanks to the successful brokerage of large national non-governmental organizations who proved to government and school officials that there were better strategies at hand. But they are now submitted to life-threatening risks, together with their offspring (Lyons 1998).

Homeless street children predominantly in their middle years or older whom we counted and interviewed in the 21 cities of the project included fewer girls in all countries. Those girls often encountered severe sexual exploitation if they remained in the streets. In Brazil during the first two decades of intensified presence of street children (timed with the increased economic chaos and the fall of the authoritarian government), the post-puberty girls in the streets dressed and cut their hair like boys to avoid some of those problems (Rizzini et al. 1992).

In all countries, middle class families can afford to be more protective of all their children from younger ages and to provide them with more constant, often paid, adult supervision. But the generalization still holds: the bulk of pre-puberty girls grow up in the developing world freer to roam around town with relatives or friends in their younger years, and becomes more home or neighbourhood-bound after puberty.

In contrast, the young girls who grow up, even poor, in industrialized and urbanized worlds, tend to be restricted in their movements by other overwhelming parental concerns for safety and survival such as their parents' perceptions of the dangers created by traffic and interpersonal violence in the streets (Rouse 1992, Blanc et al. 1994). In some cases their movements are limited by urban planning and corporate growth (Chin 1998). Thus the shift from pre-puberty freedom to post-puberty restrictions tend to be less marked. In contrast to developing world populations, many limitations to movements and activity are progressively lifted as the children (both boys and girls) grow older, allowing pre-adolescents and adolescents to roam a lot freer between school and home, playgrounds and/or work, since it is assumed that they would know what to do if attacked and can by then manoeuvre traffic. The difference between girls and boys is less marked by puberty though there are considerable differences within the United States or Europe due to different cultural/ethnic and immigrant backgrounds. The independent use of public transportation by both girls and boys from their late middle years onward frees valuable parents' time at all socio-economic levels as soon as people feel that the growing children can defend themselves against city dangers (see the case of Italian city girls in Blanc et al. 1996).

These general tendencies are con-

tinuously transformed by changing local circumstances. Personal violence is increasing in the cities of the South, causing responsible parents to become more cautious, if they are at all able to protect their children from danger. The definition of dangerous versus less dangerous domains for "children" continues to shift. The ability of poor parents to protect their children and adolescents while struggling to earn a living is also changing, often diminishing.

Other important areas where researchers have noted significant gender differences are related to the "children's" exposure to dangerous work, and to the potentials for severe sexual exploitation, mostly but not exclusively of girl children, both within and outside the home. The prostitutes, mail-order brides and entertainers hired, tricked into work or kidnapped for that purpose in developing countries the world over are becoming increasingly younger, often pre-adolescent. Young age is at a premium nowadays and more parents in need appear willing to sell their children for a profit than ever before (O'Grady 1992, Davidson et al. 1996, Swartele 1996). The identification of domestic violence on girls and of sexual abuse on very young domestic helpers and on daughters within the home has also increased. The Internet, sex tourism, and profitable children organ sales are increasing the stakes. We need to become much more vigilant about these new areas of problems for young children the world over.

Adolescent Girls: A New Category of Analysis

In contrast to the limited research on gendered children 0 to 12, multidisciplinary research on adolescent girls (usually defined by western child psychologists as ranging from early adolescence (about 13 to 15 years of age) to adolescence (about 15 to 18 years of age)) started in the late 1980s-early 1990s. By 1980, demographers had: i) projected that the world population would see increasing and/or persisting large percentages of youth from 1980 to 2010; ii) realized that a large percentage of these populations would be single and possibly fertile because of a shift towards later marriage (Smith 1980); iii) evidenced some unexpected increases in teenage pregnancy; and iv) progressively shifted their family planning focus from stopping births in women in their late thirties and early forties who had already produced children (their first focus), to spacing births among younger women, and more recently to addressing, more preventively, unmarried youth, who had not been a major target of family planning efforts in the past (Xenos 1990). Each of these foci included family planning education and access to contraceptives wherever possible.

The first systematic reviews of existing demographic literature on adolescent fertility came out in the middle 1980s (Isaacs 1984, Isaacs and Cook 1984, Liskin 1985, Senderowitz and Paxman 1985) and recognized the paucity of qualitative information about the processes involved. The AIDS scare increased the attention on adolescent sexuality issues (Karel and Robey 1988). Seminal reports on girls were published in the United States in the early 1990s (Schultz 1991, AAUW 1991). Successful advocacy campaigns were initiated, such as the "Take your Daughter to Work Day" (1992) by the MS Foundation. The focus of discussion on girls' sexuality at the UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994) lists a number of research studies developed during the 1990s and advocates the need for additional research in the future. For the first time, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, a whole section of the document was dedicated to girls thanks to the insistence of the delegates of the West African Preparatory Regional Meetings during the last Prep-com in New York (Blanc Szanton 1996). This section became a full-fledged chapter of the final document for the Meeting and received much attention in Beijing. The African Government women delegates I talked to informally during the Beijing Conference emphasized how, on this issue, even the male officials in their delegation readily agreed, and obviously this was not true of all the issues they were jointly considering.

The argument for attending more preventively to the education and job opportunities of future

young women and mothers rather than purely focusing on improving the situation of current mothers, already handicapped with respect to the changing job market, is a powerful one and was repeated during the conference as well as included in the Beijing Platform for Action. **More knowledge, attention and resources need to be focused on the current young generation, all the way into their younger years in order to ensure long-term impact.**

In the developing world, research on adolescent girls was started largely by psychologists or local demographers in the middle 1990s. It is progressively focusing on a larger number of issues that include sexuality, agency and subjectivities as evidenced by recent reports written on the AIDS epidemics among children and adolescents (Phillips 1998) and by the reports presented during the International Conference on Adolescent Sexuality that took place in Stockholm (1996).

We are thus faced with a new and important research topic that needs to be further developed for the beginning of the 21st century. Beyond questions revolving around risks and negative trends, researchers need to also document the good news -such as the girls' strengths, their wisdom, their hopes, their often amazing accomplishments, and the important work that is being done with and for them by grassroot organizations and communities.

Some Comparative Trends - Growing up Female in the Developing World

Growing up female in developing and middle income countries of Asia, Latin America or the Middle East presents enormous challenges nowadays. Globalizing trends and processes have been transforming countries' economies, modifying with the end of the Cold War their political positions, and creating greater levels of economic uncertainty about employment, inflation, devaluation of local currencies, or possibilities of labour migration. Mothers and daughters alike have realized that they face uncertain economic futures. At the same time the gender challenges they confront within their own cultures have only begun to be addressed and have for the most part only very partially been overcome.

A recent survey by the Network on the Girl Child that developed during and after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing has analyzed the responses of a detailed questionnaire it had sent to 1,000 inter- national and national NGOs worldwide to ascertain the level of government commitments and follow-up actions after Beijing on behalf of girl children in the areas of education, health, negative traditional practices, protection against violence and economic exploitation. The 248 international and national NGOs that responded from Asia and the Pacific (88), Sub-Saharan Africa (50), Latin America and the Caribbean (40), the Middle East (6, none from North Africa), as well as the 64 from Europe, CEE/CIS, the Baltic States and North America, represented primarily women's, but also children's, religious and human rights organizations, intergovernmental agencies and governments.

This acknowledgedly uneven sample illustrated, however, some concrete international trends with regard to girl children. Those surveyed in developing and middle income countries reported that beyond broad public declarations of good will, the majority of actions taken by governments fall into the categories of new laws and policies, appointments of new ministers (though rarely women), the creation of new commissions or departments within ministries, and workshops, seminars and conferences to address the situation of girls. Specific commitments were reported in specific countries (1998:6). But in general the NGOs reported a large gap between legislation and enforcement or between awareness-raising and actual concrete strategies, and judged the improvements and commitments reported as generally "modest", even "miniscule" and reaching the well-to-do more than the most needy grassroot populations. The NGOs in particular expressed a great sense of isolation and a need for more networks and exchanges on this topic.

Education was the area that most respondents considered of greatest progress, although it is too early to see these obser-

vations reflected in statistics. But they saw the progress taking place almost exclusively in primary education, through compulsory and in some cases cost-free, primary enrollment and better facilities for girls at primary level (Bangladesh, Malawi, Pakistan, Turkey and Uganda, in particular, but also Burkina Faso, Ghana and India). These improvements are occurring in countries and regions of the world where they are particularly needed, given the current regional trends in education 1990-1995 reported by UNICEF. But they remain spotty, at best.

Not enough was done by governments, according to many respondents, in lowering the drop-out rates of young girls because of marriage, work, pregnancy, or the poor quality of education, with the partial exception of Zambia. This was already very evident for countries such as Brazil, India, Kenya and Philippines as shown in previous publications (Blanc et al. 1994, 1996). It is an issue that is now being picked up by NGOs in many countries, because they are witnessing the disruptions that problematic educational policies create in local neighbourhoods.

Violence was cited repeatedly as a major problem, and in many countries as the most serious problem, especially in the Asia and Pacific region, in Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean where it was reported as the most serious problem. Some progress in this area was identified only in Latin American countries, mostly as awareness-raising, for example in Argentina. Reports from Africa, Asia and the Middle East mentioned that violence was still a taboo subject in many of their countries, not being even acknowledged publicly as a problem.

Some actions were being taken by governments in this area in Philippines, South Africa and Vietnam, but not necessarily in all the countries where sexual violence against girls was reported as particularly high such as Chile, Malaysia or the United States.

Health and nutrition were reported by NGOs in the survey to show progress, even though recent statistical studies show few nutritional discrepancies by gender. NGOs in Asia and Africa pointed repeatedly to unequal food allocation discriminating against girls. This was also raised as an issue among ethnic minorities in New Zealand, immigrant populations in Europe and in its relationship to poverty (1998:8).

Negative cultural attitudes and practices including early marriage, female genital mutilation, infanticide and adolescent pregnancy, emerged as highly critical in all regions but especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where they were reported as the most serious problem. This is not surprising given that childbearing among teenage girls (15-19 years of age) has been known to be quite high in that region during the 1980s and early 1990s (1998:13). Domestic violence against girls and women is widespread in Africa, some say even increasing, and is difficult to tackle.

Growing up female in developing countries presents enormous challenges nowadays...

The gender biases of economic exploitation were often mentioned in all regions. The declining sex-ratio of females to males in some countries (South Asia, East Asia, Latin America), the high rate of teenage pregnancy, adolescent maternal mortality, infanticide, early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation, and the high rate of girls who drop out of school for domestic labour were mentioned as indicators of the low status of girls. What emerged in all the reports was the systematic way in which adolescent girls, especially, are denied control over their own lives. "Restricted in mobility and opportunity, they are without access to information and many services, and left with minimal capacity to make critical choices and decisions for themselves. They leave school against their will, are forced to work in unskilled and unpaid jobs, marry without being consulted, have children according to the needs and desires of others, and are largely powerless to protect themselves

from exploitation, abuse or HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases" (1998:9).

That these forms of discrimination become worse with poverty is not surprising. But they seem to hit young girls first, since young girls combine youth (and thus lack of authority) with female gender (usually commanding lower status) and there is a generalized belief in many cultures that children are in a sense "owned" by their parents, and not in control of their destiny.

Comparative Trends: Growing up female in the industrialized world

In the United States, several large-scale studies suggest a mixed picture of struggle and progress for United States early adolescent and adolescent girls. On the one hand, discussions with girls in school and with youth activist groups reveal that collectively girls have at times exercised a transformative influence on the conditions of their urban neighbourhoods, on their communities and on their own sense of strength and possibility (Pastor, McCormick and Fine 1996). They do continuously resist, speak out and struggle to create the terms of their own develop-ment. In girl-centred magazines, they discuss the sexism that they encounter. Through peer education programmes and community organizing, they advocate for improvements in local conditions (each other, neighbourhoods, families, schools). In supportive schools they continue to push boundaries and affect change.

However, because girls are multi-dimensional individuals who grow up in different environmental contexts, they do also require the commitment of supportive adults who will be sensitive to the complexities of their lives, recognize through careful research and personal contacts the areas of their lives (schools, neighbourhoods, programmes) or the categories of girls that encounter the most marginalization for a variety of reasons (sexual preference, poverty, race, migration history, early pregnancy and parenting), and provide through policy changes, presence, opportunities and advocacy the most helpful support to their ongoing efforts.

Certain general trends in the United States are encouraging, such as gains in girls' academic achievement levels, increased condom use, broadened athletic opportunities and declining teen pregnancy and birth rates, after the increases of the 1980s.

But there seem to be many challenges and some awesome obstacles to the United States girls' healthy physical, psychological and social development. Statistics show growing adolescent girls' victimization, growing young girls' rates of depression, still high (though declining) teenage pregnancy and birth rates (Chart 1), unhealthy body imaging that leads to bulimia, overweight, and other health problems, the growing incidence of HIV/AIDS and other STDs and the increased use of cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs among female teenagers. These are still all causes of alarm and need to be carefully analyzed against the critical variables of economic exploitation/poverty, lack or loss of access (with the changing health, labour, educational and welfare system in the United States), marginalization of certain populations, social stereotyping, and an increased culture of interpersonal violence, including sexual violence, mentioned above.

Changes in health and welfare systems, as well as changing labour conditions, have recently characterized many industrialized countries, including Europe and the United States. Some of the trends noted here have thus emerged among adolescent girls in industrialized countries outside the United States, in Europe or North America (Blanc et al. 1994). Other specific patterns characterize industrialized countries such as Japan (Blanc Szanton 1998).

Conclusion

Funds for research on "children" have generally been much more available in the United States and Northern Europe than in the developing world. Changing trends in the United States are closely monitored statistically (Child Trends Fact Sheets 1996, 1997; the Children's Defense Fund Reports 1996, 1998). Still a recent comprehensive survey of the research available on girl

CHART 1

CURRENT TEENAGE PREGNANCY RATES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES
NUMBER OF BIRTHS PER 1,000 WOMEN AGED 15-19
1990-1995

COUNTRY	FERTILITY RATE	COUNTRY	FERTILITY RATE	COUNTRY	FERTILITY RATE
Japan	4	Norway	19	Estonia	34
Switzerland	5	Israel	20	Latvia	35
Netherlands	7	Australia	21	New Zealand	35
France	9	Greece	22	Russian Federation	37
Italy	9	Austria	23	Maldives	38
Belgium	10	Portugal	25	Hungary	41
Denmark	10	Canada	27	Romania	41
Malta	12	Belarus	28	TFYR Macedonia	41
Spain	12	Poland	28	Ukraine	43
Finland	13	Iceland	29	Yugoslavia	43
Germany	13	Slovenia	30	Slovakia	44
Luxembourg	13	Croatia	32	Czech Repulbic	46
Sweden	13	Lithuania	32	Bulgaria	59
Albania	14	Bosnia Herzegovina	33	United States	64
Ireland	16	United Kingdom	33		

(United Nations Population Division, World Population Revision, 1994.)

children has concluded that much more needs to be researched and analyzed in the United States (Phillips 1998).

The problem is compounded in developing and middle-income countries where there has been little research altogether and the focus during the last decade has been predominantly male street children (well worthy of attention). **These gaps in our knowledge and documentation of a growing young generation need to be brought to the urgent attention of researchers, planners and analysts around the world.**

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From Petrona's Perspective:
An Andean Life Cycle and A Lesson for Development

by Andrea M. Allen[1]

Much has been written about the effect of planned and unplanned development on the lives of Andean women, the effects of migration and women's triple role in production, reproduction and community. A number of researchers have posited sets of variables or models that can be used to explain the participation of women in the Andean economy (or other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean) and its impact on their lives (e.g. Collins 1986, Blumberg 1984, 1991, Safa 1995, among others). For the most part, these models hold in common several key variables, on both macro and micro levels, which have been shown to affect women's status. On the macro level, two sets of factors can be shown to affect the status of women and men, often quite differently: (1) state policy, especially that relating to the provision of educational resources and other state services; and (2) access to productive resources. On the micro level, two additional sets of factors have been found important in affecting the relative economic status of women: (1) the structure of the household, including life cycle, number of contributors and social networks; and (2) gender ideology concerning the preferred roles of men and women and their respective importance, among other variables.[2]

While a number of these models emphasize the predominant impact of macro level factors that fall outside the control of the majority of indigenous women, there is a growing effort to "avoid the victimization perspective" and to "view women as economic agents who have successfully resisted or adapted development processes to their own ends...and to express the diversity of women in developing countries" (Hamilton in press: 27; see for example de Groot 1991; Blumberg 1995a and 1995b).

This article will seek to contribute to this latter perspective by examining the interaction among such micro and macro level variables in one Ecuadorian indigenous community, consisting of approximately 500 inhabitants and located in the central sierra region of the country.

The focus will be on the economic strategies of women between the ages of 20 to approximately 60 years of age, representing one portion of the life cycle of indigenous, Ecuadorian women and, for that matter, one segment in the life cycle of their families. Results show that these women's activities most often include subsistence agriculture labour, housework and childcare, among other activities, all of which are undervalued by the market and thus tempting researchers to consider these women's work as devalued when compared to that of men.

However, once we give sufficient weight to the micro level, we will find that we arrive at quite a different conclusion. When these women's economic activities are viewed in relation to the changes that occur throughout their life cycles and the changes in the activities of other household members and others in their social networks, and when these are taken into consideration along with the predominant gender ideologies, a very different pattern begins to emerge. We can then see that a significant quantity of social capital can be accumulated through the way in which these activities are accomplished, i.e., in cooperation with family, kin and

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[1] Regional Adviser, DevTech Systems, Inc.

[2] Thus drawing primarily from Safa (1995) but adapting it to the Andean situation and integrating parts of other models, especially Blumberg (1984).

community members. And this social capital can be invaluable in a variety of ways, especially in an environment in which labour is in far greater supply than capital for all members of the community and where men must migrate for extended periods to find work. All this occurs with the goal, shared by most women and men, to live in one's one community of birth (or as near as possible).

In the end, it is the women who maintain the household's place in the community organization and in the centre of various kin and other social networks while the migrating men have left the community. And this contribution is often highly valued.

These findings are compared with those from similar communities in Ecuador and elsewhere in the Andean region.

The collective result will provide us with a more comprehensive understanding of the choices that these women make during this critical period of their lives, and, in addition, it will suggest strong implications for the formulation of future development policy.

Life Cycle: An Example from Petrona

We will begin with the experience of one indigenous woman called "Petrona". In the telling of her life history Petrona talks about times past, about the work of her grandparents compared to that of she and her husband today:

> *Before, they worked on the hacienda. They worked with hoes sent by the overseers, by the señores of the hacienda. They worked with the plough and oxen. Now, they work with tractor. Before it was more difficult. So we went on to actually buy the haciendas of the señores. That's how it is today.*

Even though much of her work is still done by hand and hoe, Petrona has seen many changes, even in her short 37 years of age. Her mother and her grandmother have seen many more.

Petrona was born in 1953, in the same community where she lives today and where she has worked in agriculture, full time, since graduating from the third grade (see Table 1).

At 17 years of age, she married Juan, from a nearby community. Petrona's father died soon after, and she left her job at the hacienda to claim her inheritance (slightly less than 1/2 hectare) and work exclusively on what was now her own field. Her husband, near this same time, began to seek construction work in one of several cities on a seasonal basis, returning at least once a month to the community and, if possible, for an extended period at Carnival and the harvest.

Petrona and her husband maintained this strategy for seven years, until her husband was able to save enough money from his wages to buy an additional tract of land in their community and return to work it. Some twelve years and three children later, at the time of our interviews, the couple continued to work their own land, with Petrona maintaining responsibility for most of the subsistence agricultural activities and household domestic chores, while Juan has taken on more of the tasks related to cash cropping, including the purchase and use of inputs and marketing activities. While both participate in community activities, Petrona has taken on additional responsibilities related to the Women's Association of a secondary level agricultural organization.

How representative is the experience of Petrona and her husband in comparison to other residents of their community and province? It is quite similar, at least in the life cycles of their age cohort, as a later section will reveal. For the time being we will hold Petrona's example in mind as we trace the effects of the four sets of factors in our model described above. We will come to understand how the life cycle of Petrona and her cohorts is nested within these factors, affected by them and how these factors in turn can affect their own destinies and the lives of subsequent generations.

History, Politics and Development: Macro Level Factors Affecting Petrona's Life and Others

History and the politics of development have wielded clear and important impacts on Petrona, her family and friends. We will discuss these in the form of changes in state policies and access to productive resources, the two sets

TABLE 1
Life History Summaries for Petrona and Juan

YEAR	PETRONA	JUAN
1950		
1951		Born
1952		
1953	Born	
1954		
1955		
1956		
1957		Entered primary school
1958		
1959	Entered primary school	
1960		
1961		
1962	Left school to work for parents and in hacienda	
1963		Left school to work for parents and in hacienda
1964		
1965		
1966		
1967		
1968		
1969		
1970	Married	Married
1971		Left community to work seasonally as a construction worker in Pallatanga, Quito, Baños
1972	Left work at hacienda to work own land (inheritance from parents)	
1973		
1974		
1975		
1976		
1977		
1978	Began to work additional land acquired by husband. First daugher is born	Bought land and returned to the community to work these lands
1979		
1980		
1981		
1982		
1983		
1984		
1985		
1986	Second daughter is born	
1987		
1988	First son is born	
1989		
1990		

of factors that represent the most macro levels of analysis in this model. The following discussion is limited to the most relevant variables for our case, although the situation is indeed more complex. (For more information see Allen 1990 and 1993.)

State Policy - Education and agriculture are the two areas of state policy of greatest relevance to our case study. Educational policy has traditionally fallen almost completely under the domain of the national government. Historically, rural areas have received little attention in terms of providing education or other services. In the more recent past, national governments along with various political parties have vied for votes through a competitive provision of public infrastructure. Development policy, it seems, emphasized the construction of primary school buildings over attention to teaching and curriculum content. Only recently have new approaches been considered, including those aimed toward the decentralization of decision making, curriculum reform and adult literacy.

In Petrona's community, this means that her parents and other older inhabitants had no opportunity to go to school, either because, for the oldest, there was no school in reasonable walking distance or, later, when one was finally constructed, their labour contribution could not be spared by their families. Eventually, students were able to go to school in a

neighbouring community, located thirty minutes away on foot. The mean level of education for the men in our sample was a little over three years, while that of the women was closer to one year. Though these means are low for both males and females, it is clear that the men have significantly higher levels of education than the women do.

The elementary school is a relatively recent addition to the community (1980), so for Petrona's children at least, the opportunity to receive an education is much improved. Most parents now try to see that their children complete at least six grades, which they may now do right in their own communities. Yet, the same emphasis on the male's education over that of the female's noted for the household heads is also reflected in the levels of education of their children. Girls usually leave school after the sixth grade and begin to work in their parent's fields full time and, frequently, also begin to work as day labourers. Because their families' resources are limited, it may not be possible for all children to be sent to school. Thus, whether due to the man's traditional role as broker with the national culture or to national values acquired via migration, boys are more likely to go on to high school in communities and, sometimes, the university.

(Though extremely few individuals of either sex are able to do so.)

Now, concerning agricultural policy, we find that the agrarian sector as a whole has experienced profound changes in the last three decades. Yet, it is the sector of the economy that has reacted the slowest and benefited the least from the economic growth stimulated by the petroleum impulse; the increased demand for production as well as the demand for diversification due to the increased incomes of the middle and upper classes has had relatively little effect in stimulating growth in this sector (Chiriboga 1985:93-95; CEPAL 1978:973). This fact is particularly striking when one considers that, at least, 33.5 per cent of the country's economically active population worked in the agricultural sector, i.e., not counting non-remunerated family labour as "economically active" (INEC 1982; Chiriboga 1985).

Problems in the agrarian sector include limited access to land due to a tight land market dominated by a landed elite; inadequate attention on the part of the national government to the specific needs of subsistence production; lack of incentive for the production of basic foodstuffs for urban populations; an agricultural policy that favours the large-scale producers (especially in the areas of credit, technology and prices); unfair terms of exchange between the agricultural sector and the rest of the economy; and a decreasing capacity for food self-sufficiency for the country as a whole (Chiriboga 1985; Korovkin 1997).

The impact of this policy for our research community becomes clear when we consider that census figures dramatically underreport the number of economically active women in the population, especially as they relate to agriculture. Ninety-six per cent of the women we surveyed identified their primary occupation as that of farmer in her own fields, as did 68 per cent of the men.

Access to Resources

When we speak of access to productive resources for our own research community, as for most of indigenous Chimborazo, we must consider those four basic factors of production necessary to the agricultural enterprise: land, labour, capital and access to information concerning the use of the previous three. In addition, wage labour and migration must be addressed as well. Of these four basic factors, all but labour have strong ties with the national and international political economy. The high price and low availability of land has much to do with the country's unequal agrarian structure. Likewise, capital is scarce for those, like the indigenous farmers in Chimborazo, surviving on low-level positions of the socio-economic scale. And access to information concerning modern technology is slow to trickle down from the experiment station to the small-scale, indigenous farmer. While access to all these factors may be acquired, to some extent, through local sources, only labour will be seen as an exclusively locally provided input, and thus a factor subject to relatively high degrees of local level control

Residents of the research community, both women and men, expressed a preference for making a living in farming, and doing so on their own land. But when farming does not allow them to make an adequate living for themselves and their families, they will turn to wage labour as a source of income. In fact, a majority of families found it necessary to do so; 61 per cent of the households reported some form of wage labour income, either from male or female household heads, in the six-month time period before the survey was conducted.

Twenty-four per cent of the men and 18 per cent of the women reported work as an agricultural labourer as either their first or second occupations. This labour was highly seasonal, concentrated at peak periods in the agricultural cycle (although some households reported working throughout the entire year when possible), and accomplished on several of the small -to medium-size holdings in or near the community.

At the time of the survey, such labourers received between 300 and 500 sucres per six-hour day (in 1989 US$1=500 sucres). Such a wage was quite a bit lower than that received by other types of day labourers, such as those who work in construction, who received between 1000 and 1500 sucres per eight-hour day. But the former are able to avoid some of the extra costs of the latter, such as transportation and meals away from home, which would total at least 200 sucres/day. In addition, they are in closer proximity to their own fields and more easily able to attend them due to a more flexible work schedule than that of many other types of wage labour employment. However, if a household does not have access to enough land to warrant the opportunity cost of this convenience, seeking work in the city is the only other option.

Most migrants hope to save enough money to acquire a better standard of living for their families now, and eventually hope to invest in some land and/or animals in an effort to return to their own communities with a better chance of making a living on agriculture alone. As we will see below, members of Petrona's generation have had a real chance at achieving this, as the land reform was actually working for a period of time and land was effectively distributed to many communities and households during the 1960s and 1970s. The prognosis for their children, however, is not quite so optimistic.

Life Cycles Intertwined: Micro Level Factors and the Growth of Community

Household Structure - The community is composed of approximately 100 families, with an average number of six people per household, normally consisting of a nuclear family (76 per cent). While only 22 per cent of households consisted of extended families, almost all will become extended for at least some portion of the life of the household. Marriage patterns in both communities are predominantly endogamous. In general, the newly wed couple comes to live with the parents of the husband (patrilocal residence) until they can afford to construct their own house and thus establish the preferred neolocal residence. Yet this new residence will usually be in the vicinity of the parent's house, on the offspring's portion of the parent's land that was awarded upon his (or, in some cases, her) marriage. In addition, an elderly, widowed parent will usually come to live in the house of their oldest son.

The final factor to consider at the micro level is that of gender ideology.

Previously, we noted that 96 per cent of the women in this community identified their primary occupation as farmer on their own lands. These women surveyed were actually those identified as household heads or cohousehold heads (jefas de casa), and their ages tended toward the middle ranges with 86 per cent of the sample falling between ages 20 to 60. However, occupations differ significantly before and after this period, with young, unmarried women (solteras) almost exclusively involved in agricultural labour on

a wage or barter basis, and older, married or widowed women (abuelitas) tending to the livestock for the better part of the day.

It is important to emphasize that the household is not the only or necessarily the most important unit in Andean social organization; household strategies are incomplete in themselves; individual households must continually link with other households in order to carry out such strategies.

Guillet points to the "suprahousehold sphere of production" as a counterpart to the household, arising out of the household's production constraints (1976:102). Kin groups, social networks and community organizations are all ways to deal with such constraints. As locally controlled means of gaining access to land, labour, capital, technology and information, such ties are essential to survival in Chimborazo and are a vital force in shaping local strategies of development. Just as a diversified approach to agricultural production is a necessary component in indigenous communities that are only partially integrated into the market economy, the maintenance of "suprahousehold" relationships is necessary and just as critical to survival on the margins of the national economy.

Kin members may provide access to land for planting and labour for various activities requiring group effort, including certain agricultural activities or the construction of a house. Members of one's kin group may provide cash loans on relatively easy conditions, share tools and machinery, and cooperate in other ways to expand the access to resources of individual households. And, because marriage patterns are largely endogamous, the web of kinship ties is especially dense and close at hand.

The same types of exchange relationships created within kinship groups may also be extended to include fictive kin, neighbours or even non-community members. Such relationships have multiple expressions in the Andes and have been glossed under a variety of labels. Often referred to in the literature as **social networks**, such relationships are highly varied and processually oriented, lacking the more easily defined boundaries and long-term nature of a corporate group (Barnes 1968; Orlove and Custred 1980).

Membership in a community organization, in this case a *comuna*, has served at various points in recent history as an additional means to gain access to land (via the land reform) and to moderate the effects of unequal terms of trade (Allen 1993; Korovkin 1997). Currently, membership in community-level or secondary-level farmer and indigenous organizations can also help secure access to a variety of development resources as well (Lentz 1988; Allen 1993).

Petrona's community has been among the most fortunate in securing benefits from the agrarian reform. Many other communities in the province got a later start on acquiring lands through the agrarian reform due to their later formation as an officially recognized organization or else they simply did not have the nearby land available to make it worth their while to organize or have much success at the endeavour if they did. The reform had already begun to cool down when some communities finally organized in the early 1980s. The comparatively slower organization of the *cooperativa*, in one such community, and its lesser access to land has forced more individuals there into wage labour and kept others cautious in their adoption of new technologies. In turn, absence from the community affects some individuals' ability to maintain social networks, at least to an extent, further marginalizing them from community life and the ability to command an effective labour pool (Allen 1993). Whoever remains must then work with double effort to maintain those relationships.

Gender Ideology. The final factor to consider at the micro level is that of gender ideology. In the case of our research community we can observe at least the remnants of what has been identified in several Ecuadorian studies as a gender-egalitarian intra-household dynamic (Hamilton in press; Poeschel 1988; L. Belote and J. Belote 1988; Alberti 1986). In these cases, "...women continue, however precariously, to hold land and control productive processes equally with men, and to enjoy an equal measure of power and prestige within their

communities" (Hamilton in press:39). In the case of our community, this tendency is moderated by what at times is prolonged exposure to the mestizo world and its predominant macho ideology of male dominance.

Conclusions: Outcomes in the Life of Petrona Her Family and Her Friends

The impact of these multiple factors on the lives of women in Petrona's community are mixed. At the macro level, many aspects of the nation's educational and agricultural policies disadvantage both indigenous women and indigenous men; this is the striking point.

Because access to education beyond the sixth grade is both difficult and of little foreseeable use for these women's future employment (in their opinions) they or their parents choose work for wages or family after they complete primary school. At this time they begin to create their own web of exchanges, combining it with that of their parents, so that when they marry they bring much to the table in terms of economic resources, including the land they have or will inherit and the wages saved or items purchased with them. This contribution plays out through the marriage in terms of a relatively equal position in economic decision making, that is if this position is not damaged by development policy that cuts them out of new information.

To the extent that these policies do positively impact rural, indigenous communities, women's concerns are given little attention. For example, agricultural extension courses are almost always given in Spanish and held in mixed groups. Women, however, have a strong preference for using Quichua (and they will understand and participate much more in the process) and in meeting in groups of women only.

The implications for development policy are clear. The first objective must be to create more opportunities for indigenous populations across the board. Education policy placed in the hands of local communities (not local elites) along with income transfers can lead to the hiring of more committed teaching staff, who are more completely accountable to local boards, and to more appropriate curriculum for indigenous children. Agricultural policy must work to open the land market and to achieve parity in agricultural production, even of small producers. In addition, extension activities must more effectively involve rural women who are often the primary producers in the household, especially during this important period of their life cycles. And finally, policy and projects should target both women's and men's organizations in the process. Men's organizations may be more visible to the outsider because of their official or juridical definition for the community organization. However, a number of women's organizations do exist, both formally and informally, including those associated with various community level committees (mother's clubs, food committees, etc.), church groups and secondary-level agricultural associations.

As the previous discussion suggests, examination of macro-level factors alone, e.g., state policy and access to resources, may undervalue women's role in the agricultural economy. By taking into consideration the additional micro level factors of household structure and gender ideology, we can more accurately predict both: (1) just how these macro-level factors will affect the local level, and (2) how the local level, in turn, will react and interact with the macro-level impulse to produce actual development outcomes. In this case, the outcome in the case of women's status throughout their lives can indeed be positive or at least neutral, if such values are not negatively impacted by poorly directed policy, programme and project interventions in the agricultural sector.

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Policy on the Elderly & Elderly Women in The Netherlands

by Jaap Poleij and Hanneke Kraan[1]

Introduction

This article begins with a short summary of the general policy on the elderly in the Netherlands supplemented with some relevant figures. It then outlines Dutch Policy on Elderly Women followed by a more in-depth look at the Grey Your Own Way (Grijs op Eigen Wijs) promotion programme, a good example of the project-oriented approach to implementation in this field of policy.

Policy on the Elderly in the Netherlands

The central focus of policy in the 1990s is the integration of the elderly into society, as they want more say in their lives. However, if they are to participate fully they require independence, a proper income, suitable housing, good health, good support services and scope for participation in work, education and society.

The Dutch government's policy on the elderly is coordinated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. The Department of Policy on the Elderly of this Ministry prepares, develops and implements that policy though certain important aspects of it fall to other departments within the Ministry, and indeed other ministries, which work together in the framework of the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee on Policy on the Elderly.

Policy on the Elderly is supplementary to general policy. The responsibility for implementing such policy has largely been delegated to provincial and local authorities and non-governmental organizations. Central government lays down the rules and parameters, creates the necessary conditions through planning and financing, monitors, advises and co-ordinates. Whereas most aspects of care for the elderly are a matter for the insurance companies and care services, issues such as housing, physical planning and welfare are the concern of the municipalities, provinces and housing corporations. The NGOs in this field usually operate in the form of a non-profit association or foundation.

Ageing - According to the Central Bureau of Statistics population forecasts the Dutch population will continue to grow until around the year 2035, when numbers will start to decline. The makeup of this population will change over the course of time. The most recent forecast suggests the percentage of young people will stabilize in due course whereas

TABLE 1
AGE DISTRIBUTION AS OF 1 JANUARY 1998 IN NUMBERS (MILLIONS) AND AS PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION

	55+	%	65+	%	75+	%
1998	3.6	23	2.1	13	0.9	6
2000	3.9	23	2.2	13	1.0	6
2010	4.7	28	2.5	15	1.1	7

(CBS, population forecast 1996\1997, medium-term projection)

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the percentage of older persons will continue to increase for a long time to come. Ageing of the population is set to continue for another forty years or so, when the trend will start to reverse. Up till the year 2005 the very old will account for a growing proportion of the elderly among the population. This will be followed by a period (of some twenty years) in which the lesser old will predominate.

Housing - The overwhelming majority of the elderly currently live in their own homes. The government seeks to enable them to do so as long as possible by:

- improving accessibility
- building adaptable housing
- installing lifts
- making full use of technological advances in such fields as domestic technology
- making residential areas safer

Health - **Preventive health:** Psycho-geriatric problems are an important area of focus in prevention policy for the elderly. When old people who live at home begin to show the first signs of dementia, the question of whether they can stay at home (if needs be with domiciliary care) or whether they need residential care depends largely on the ability of their partners or children to cope ith the situation. It is therefore crucial that informal care is backed up by various local institutions.

Care - The elderly are among the largest consumers of care services, including domiciliary care, specialist care and residential care, especially old people's homes [institutions] and nursing homes. At this moment 3.5 per cent of men over the age of 65 live in old people's homes (compared to 6.7 per cent at the beginning of the 1970s), and 8.2 per cent of women over age of 65 (compared to 10.6 per cent at the beginning of the 1970s).

Labour Participation - Work is almost universally a key means of integration into society and the income it provides offers great scope for independence. In the Netherlands, however, fewer than half of the 55-65 year olds work. Of those over 50, half live on an allowance of some kind. Some years ago it was decided, for both social and economic reasons, to encourage older people to continue working longer than in the past.

Educational Participation - Over half a million elderly people are actively involved in many different types of education, and this number is heavily increasing, particularly in the area of more creative and informal courses. Government policy encourages institutions of education and adult education to produce courses specifically geared to the elderly. A good example is 'higher education for the elderly'; an initiative set up by a network of universities.

Social Participation - Although the social involvement of the elderly in society is, of course, largely a matter of personal choice, obstacles exist which tend to reduce the older person's inclination to participate in fields such as politics, management, leisure, education and so on. Attempts are now being made to foster participation wherever possible and remove those obstacles restricting it. Such measures include promoting sport, eliminating unjust age-related distinctions, the creation of social networks and information campaigns.

Social Reappraisal of Age - In the 1990s, European countries are increasingly turning their thoughts to the ageing of their societies. The European Year of the Older Person and Solidarity between Generations (1993) proved valuable in increasing society's appreciation of old age and forging a stronger link between generations. There is increasing awareness that the ageing of the population within the European Union calls for cooperation in the form of information exchange and joint programmes. We hope that The International Year of Older Persons in 1999, will have the same impact. To quote the Dutch Secretary of State for the Elderly: "One society for all ages, all ages for one society".

The policy with reference to elderly women as part of the Policy on the Elderly

Within the policy on the elderly extra attention is being given to specific groups of elderly people who find themselves in a vulnerable or marginal position. This is particularly the case with (single) elderly women. A few facts follow:

- ageing among elderly women is greater than among elderly men: women live on average 6 years longer than men. By the year 2010, there will be more than 2.5 million

55+ women, of which 443,000 will be over 80. At such an advanced age the vast majority of these women will be single;
- the majority of 55+ women spent their lives raising children and managing a household;
- women who were single all their lives and provided for themselves, often had a tough life; they were disadvantaged in relation to men in terms of career opportunities, income (the lowest income category), education and living environment;
- a return to the job market is often difficult for elderly women due to lower levels of education or lack of experience;
- elderly women who have always worked or who seek to return to the job market are confronted with a double problem: working outside the home and (continuing to be) responsible for the work at home. Many women choose to work part-time to cope with this double burden. Other women stop working. Both routes have a negative influence on income and building up a pension;
- most women over fifty do not have their own job-related income. Many are largely or totally dependent on national pension arrangements;
- on average, elderly women find themselves in lower quality housing than elderly men and have relatively higher living expenses;
- elderly women have relatively little influence on factors that affect their social lives. Many of them have never had a chance to stand up for themselves;
- elderly women have a double negative image in society: they are old(er) and they are women. On top of that, black and migrant women have to deal with discrimination against their ethnic or cultural background.

These are reasons enough to develop a tailored policy for elderly women. One might say it is almost a case of integrating women's emancipation policy with the policy on the elderly. But in order to do this an analysis of all the subfields where there are differences in the position of (elderly) women and (elderly) men, and the mechanisms which form the basis of these differences is necessary.

This means that one must constantly ask what this means for the three conditions of full participation and integration of the elderly in society (the main objective of the policy on the elderly as stated at the beginning of the article).

1. An adequate income. One can think of the legal right to a pension plan for employees with flexible contracts (often women) and promoting re-entry to the employment process (important for women), as an additional counterweight to early retirement (especially important for men);

2. Suitable housing. It is important to take into account the specific housing needs of elderly women within the policy;

3. Good health. See following section on Grey Your Own Way.

Besides attention given to the position of elderly women in health care, the past few years have seen attention most notably given to the danger of their isolation, especially single women. Elderly women's limited participation in social and political organizations (compared to men), the heavy burden of care (caring for a chronically ill partner) and the specific position of non-native elderly women are relevant factors for consideration.

The following are examples of projects:

Strengthening Networks - The Elderly Women Contact Persons Project was aimed at preventing the isolation of elderly women. Different methods of approach were used for this:
- offering mediation for services that promote social contact
- stimulating participation in courses
- offering individualized learning opportunities
- using visitors

On the basis of the experiences gained, a handbook was produced for use in setting up other similar projects.

Strengthening the Position of Elderly Women in Decision-making Processes -
- a study book has been developed for elderly women, as preparation for participation in committees;
- a study book has been developed aimed at elderly women with experience in committees, in which they will be trained to

recruit and to make other elderly women interested in working on a committee (recruiting women, snowball effect);

Research has been carried out on images and image creation in relation to elderly women and men in the Netherlands.

Project 50+ Women - Taking care into your own hands. An informative programme on health problems for this group has been developed. A scenario has also been developed for organizing information meetings and training has been provided to 50+ women to organize these meetings.

Elderly Non-Native Women Project Intermediaries - Projects have been launched at five locations in the Netherlands with intermediaries -young non-native women who perform a bridging function between non-native elderly women and the unknown world around them. In this way an attempt is made to take these women out of their isolation.

Grey Your Own Way

Under the name Grey Your Own Way, the Policy on the Elderly management board subsidized a large national project during the 1995-1997 period, which placed attention in various ways on issues which women will have to deal with as they age. In three projects women worked together to increase the well-being and the aid and care for elderly women. An important conviction was that women have sufficient power and talent to improve their own personal and social position.

The basis for this project lies in the early 1990s. Two important advisory bodies (the Voorlopige Raad voor het Ouderenbeleid, or Temporary Council for Policy on the Elderly and the *Emancipatieraad*, or Emancipation Council) recommended the government create a specific policy for elderly women. The councils share the opinion that women's assistance can make a positive contribution to improving health care and assistance to elderly women. Women's assistance means consciously working to help women based on the concept that health problems and the way in which they are dealt with are connected with the social position of women. Women's assistance is based on the strength and self-determination of women. It is the job of the assistance service to inform and stimulate women in this endeavour.

On the basis of the advice from the Councils, the Policy on the Elderly management board organized two meetings (in 1990 and 1992) for the purpose of improving bottlenecks and listing the problems in regard to health care for and assistance to elderly women. Representatives of women's organizations, organizations for the elderly and associations for women's assistance took part.

The outcomes of these meetings were translated into real project plans and Grey Your Own Way was born! A project for and by elderly women, in which seventeen organizations participated in the preparatory stage. In executing the plan, five organizations worked together intensively; three national elderly associations, *Aletta, Centrum voor vrouwengezondheidszorg* (or the centre for women's health care), and Transact, the Dutch centre for sex-specific modernization of care and combating sexual violence. With soundboard groups and a guidance committee, active women from the target audience and from women's organizations have been involved in the various sub-projects. The Policy on the Elderly management board financed the project which cost NLG1.5 million.

The main goal of Grey Your Own Way was working on increasing the well-being and able-bodied capacities of elderly women for and by women. This was carried out using the following three methods:

- talking about it in groups of 60+ women
- providing clear and accessible information on health matters
- providing further training to employees in the home care service to give them better insight into the position and queries of elderly women

These three methods have been worked into three sub-projects

1. Sub-project Grey Your Own Way 60+ women's groups

The objective of the project was to develop and test a national (self-help) group service for and by 60+ women in a number of test provinces and to develop and test a national training and guidance process for experienced

counsellors. The project is directed at women in the third phase of their life (60-75 years); it is heterogeneous regarding life-phase characteristics such as marital status, the situation in which they live, organization membership and religious community, while homogeneous in terms of generation characteristics like pre-war socialization of women, training and (housewife) work experience.

The main goal of the 60+ women's group was to offer elderly women the opportunity to place attention on themselves and the position in which they find themselves. The women could share experiences with each other, support each other and become aware of their wishes, opportunities and strengths on the basis of their own views, inventiveness, and life experience. Developing a group-based service fitted in with women's customary coming together and exchanging life experiences. The groups were led by experienced women from the same age group who had taken special training, and had developed and worked out during the project prior to its evaluation and adaptation. It is now offered in several places in the Netherlands. During the project period eleven women's groups were active all over the country. There was so much interest that waiting lists had to be drawn up.

The conclusion of this sub-project is that there is a need for group-based services which offer the opportunity to share life experiences and reflect on the socialization process for women from the pre-war generation. Many women found this to be a positive experience. With this service for and by women, the value of experience was recognized as a requisite for this type of group work.

2. Sub-project accessibility of knowledge and information

In this sub-project a distinction was made between the target group of elderly women and the target group of intermediaries in the activities.

Elderly women - Many elderly women have a need for general information on the physical and psychological aspects of growing older; they want to know how to deal with health problems and are interested in information on preventive health. Therefore, it is important that information and knowledge on health and assistance services be easily accessible for elderly women. A number of important questions have been raised in this sub-project. Is the available information easily accessible? Is the information presented in an easy and pleasant manner? Does the information fit in with the elderly women's perception of the environment and are answers provided to important questions which they may pose?

A survey was held as part of the project and revealed that many elderly women do not know what information is available and where they can find it. As a result, the Wegwijzer Gezondheidsinformatie, or Handbook on Health Information, was produced, as a guide with addresses where women can find information on growing older and health matters. The handbook was structured in such a way that it can be adapted for local use. Included in the handbook is a checklist which women can use to judge for themselves whether the information available fits their needs and on which issues it needs improvement. Special attention was placed on elderly women in underprivileged situations. On the basis of an evaluation of a health course for lesser educated 50+ women, a number of conditions have been set forth which must be met to convey the health information which this group desires.

An important aspect of all activities in this sub-project is the need for diversity. There are many differences between women, based on geography, social-economics, ethnicity, lifestyles, etc. The manner in which information is made accessible may not be beneficial to everyone. For example, a homosexual woman may find it irritating that it is assumed that women of her age are married grandmothers. It is explicitly recommended that diversity in the way the information is available be maintained.

Intermediaries (doctors, social workers) - Research among intermediaries reveals that the need for information is diverse and extends

across all topics and levels; policy, (scientific) background studies, practical information such as protocols and project descriptions. Within the framework of the project research was carried out on how the information can be improved. This resulted in *Informatiewijzer, oudere vrouwen, zorg en welzijn*, or Information Guide, Elderly Women, Care and Welfare. The information guide provides a survey of the 25 national information and documentation sources. For each organization the reader receives a review of titles in the (specific) topics of the collection, lending conditions, costs etc.

In addition there is a *Literatuurlijst oudere vrouwen*, or Literature List on Elderly Women, a selection of informative material for elderly women in the fields of welfare, (health) care and living. The literature list has more than 200 titles. In addition to research, articles and notes there is also course and audiovisual material.

3. Sub-project Quality in Home Care

From the round table discussions that took place during the 1990 and 1992 meetings, the point was made that the quality of home care for elder women leaves a lot to be desired. The starting point for this project was that care services for elderly women will improve when those who need the care can use knowledge, understanding and views developed within women's assistance.

The aim of the project is to train home care social workers to deal with the complaints and problems of 70+ women, by schooling them in socialization and social position of elderly women and actualizing their own views on growing older and elderly women. For this purpose a training course entitled "Een goed begrip is het halve werk", or "A good understanding is half the work" for social workers in home care has been developed. The social workers learn how they can provide help in such a way that 70+ women remain independent and do not need to feel dependent on care services. Experienced specialists for 70+ women participate in this course.

In addition, it is important that older women have more influence in care. This is why regional groups have been organized where elderly women can give their opinion on the quality of home care, with the help of specially developed questionnaires. The answers have been collated and are offered to home care organizations.

What is special about the Grey Your Own Way project is the way that work was carried out on implementing the outputs (resulting sub-projects) developed during the project period. Adoption organizations were sought and found for all sub-projects. The managers of the adoption organization drew up agreements on how they will continue with Grey Your Own Way. The Policy on the Elderly management board at the Ministry of Health, Well-being and Sport will provide a small subsidy to maintain a national information and coordination point in 1998. This has also resulted in many follow-up activities being developed in 1998.

The authors of this article would venture the conclusion that, partly due to the Grey Your Own Way project, a real improvement has been made in the Netherlands in the care and well-being of elderly women.

News Corner

The General Assembly (47/5) adopted a resolution to observe the year 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons (IYOP). This is in recognition of humanity's demographic coming of age and the promise it holds for maturing attitudes and capabilities in social, economic, cultural and spiritual undertakings, not least for global peace and development in the next century. Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the 1999 International Year of Older Persons on 1 October –The International Day of Older Persons. Its observance will continue until 31 December 1999.

In a press briefing held at United Nations Headquarters on 28 September 1998, Mr. Alexandre Sidorenko, Officer-in-Charge of the Ageing Unit of the United Nations Programme on Ageing, said ageing was a much bigger issue than was generally thought. Globally, from 1950 to 1995, more than 20 years had been added to average life expectancy, with the figure being even larger for developing countries. Every month a million persons around the world crossed the threshold of 60 years –of which more than 80 per cent live in the developing world. In some developing countries, one out of every 14 people was past 60. He added that ageing might increasingly become a female issue, as, although women lived longer than men, they lived less healthy lives.

He said the challenge of those dramatic demographic changes –which he characterized as a new revolution for society- had to be considered both by individuals and society, and adjustments had to be made to create a society for all ages. One challenge of the International Year of Older Persons would be to think about how to support and ensure that those added years of life would be a time of fulfilment and contribution and not of misery and struggle with illness.

Also at the Headquarters press briefing, Ms Julia Tavares de Alvarez, Ambassador and Alternate Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations said that policies regarding ageing could not be formulated based on faulty perceptions of older people. To that end, the International Year of Older Persons would help the international community to focus less on counting and more on consciousness. Older people must be allowed and encourage to see themselves as actors in the drama of their lives and in the functioning of the new society. "We must all be aware that ability, not chronology, is the measure of what people can contribute to society", she added.

Donors Should Negotiate Debt Relief to Release Funds for Social Services, Brussels Meeting on Ageing Recommeds[1]

International donors should consider renegotiating the external debts of poor countries to release funds for social services for older persons, participants at the Technical Meeting on Population Ageing recommended. About 40 experts took part in the four-day meeting (6-9 October 1998) which was part of "ICPD+5", the review of the implementation of the outcome of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to be held next year. Organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the

[1] Information extracted from UNFPA Press Release POP/683 of 9 October 1998.

Population and Family Study Centre (CBGS), a Flemish Scientific Institute in Brussels, the meeting reviewed the experiences of developed countries in population ageing to identify practices that can be adopted by developing nations.

The meeting featured the presentation of some 20 technical papers on the following topics: The Process, Dimensions and Prospects of Ageing; Promotion and Maintenance of Health in Later Life; Support Systems for the Elderly; Special Needs; and the Economic and Social Policy Implications of an Older Society. The participants also made other recommendations, among them: evaluating economic reforms, such as structural adjustment policies, for their effects on vulnerable groups; removing barriers that prevent older persons from continuing to work; and ensuring the reproductive health of all people, especially women, throughout their life course because of its importance to the quality of life at older stages.

More information on the technical meeting on ageing can be found at:

AARP Postcard Campaign

The American Association of Retired Persons' (AARP) International Activities Office in New York and the United Nations Programme on Ageing recently collaborated on an international human rights postcard campaign in honour of the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the 1999 International Year of Older Persons. Older persons from around the world were asked to participate in this global campaign to raise awareness about the meaning of human rights for older persons and the importance of protecting those rights.

This project was initiated to celebrate the dual occurrences of the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the 1999 International Year of Older Persons both of which present a unique opportunity to consider the human rights of older persons in our society. Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes fundamental rights and freedoms for everyone, we know that the struggle for economic, social, and cultural rights can be a persistent reality in every corner of the world. Like all members of our society, older persons have the right to be free from the hardships of poverty and hunger, and to participate throughout life with dignity, independence, and safe and adequate access to all models of care.

Specially-made postcards corresponding to the UN Principles for Older Persons were mailed through project partners: Coalition 99, HelpAge International, the Geneva International Network on Ageing (GINA), the UN NGO Committee on Ageing/Vienna, the UN NGO Committee on Ageing/New York, the International Movement ATD Fourth World, and Regional Chapters of AARP. The photographs for the postcards were chosen to illustrate that, in a society for all ages, older persons have human rights the same as all other age groups. Samples of these postcards have been reproduced for this issue of *INSTRAW News*.

Individuals from over thirty countries have returned the postcards in their own handwriting and language, with responses that range from random thoughts and introspection to poetry and solemn essays. A geographically-balanced selection of the postcards will be published in a special booklet, mailed to all participants, and presented to the United Nations 37th Session of the Commission on Social Development in February, 1999.

Some sample responses follow:

Old is Gold. It doesn't ever rust. Use its potential for improvement in quality of life.

Saeed M., Pakistan

It is for the first time that I am writing to a citizen of a stranger country. I am alone in the world and am living in a house for old people from Bucharest. I am glad to send you my greetings with my wishes for health, many years and joy in your life.

Stancie S., Romania

Let us grow old together –with dignity and grace.

Mrs. Sharadha D., Sri Lanka

Even though I am old, if I work hard I can plant in my food garden. I will be able to eat from my garden,dress myself, sell my produce and live.

Gladys C., South Africa

I am the elder. Within my body lives many ages. I am the baby newly born, the young child at play, the teenager on her first date, the young wife and mother. I am the empty nester watching her chicks fly away. All that is me and more. Molded by life –I have been tested by trial. Creation of God, sculpted by life, perfećtion in completeness.

Ellen S., U.S.

Water is one of the most important things for us to live. We should always treasure it.

Miyoko F., Japan

As an 80 year old, lifelong learning is my joy. Being used as a resource, not treated as a burden, builds my energy – physical, mental & spiritual. Have a wonderful 1999.

Joan C., New Zealand

How glorious to be told that I, as an older person have the same human rights as all other people! But the rights of others are also within my steewardship, just as my rights are within theirs. This means, working together more and better!

No name, Germany

No matter what our race, age, sex, beliefs and ideologies, our supreme goal in life will always be: "HUMAN DIGNITY".

Ali Z., Israel

Everybody have their rights: right to respect, dignity and integrity. No one is more important than the other. If young and old can pool their energy and wisdom together, then we can build a world of peace, justice, love and mutual respect.

Sylvester L., Dominica, West Indies

www.unfpa.org/ICPD/ageing/age-agenda.htm.

International Symposium on Images of Older Women -"New Scripts – New Images"

The American Association for Retired Persons' (AARP) International Activities Office/New York, in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Public Information and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, will convene an international symposium on Images of Older Women in September of 1999 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Within the theme, *New Scripts – New Images*, the symposium will explore the long-term implications of media stereotypes of older women, and seek to create a dialogue with image makers, e.g., advertisers, journalists, photo-graphers, filmmakers, and marketing executives, on ways to better project images of older women and to encourage their recognition of the diversity of the ageing experience.

Worldwide, older women are living longer and in far greater numbers than

older men. Although they make up a growing statistical mass, the older female population consists of a rich and diverse variety of individuals, with a range of character traits the same as any other age group. Yet there is a rigid narrowness in the range of images of older women in the global media. Routine media misrepresentation is harmful to any sector of society, but especially to older women who suffer greater degrees of social, political and economic exclusions than older men. Moreover, as most older women do not live in isolation, the effects can be harmful to society as a whole since misrepresentations also impact family and community relationships.

Indeed, images of older women vary and are typically influenced by cultural and social norms. Society's perception of older women is also shaped, however, by the intricate web of images that filter through the media and into everyday life. When images mask older women's complexities and diversity, environments that negate their role as resourceful and productive contributors to society prevail.

The trends that shape the images of older women will have an even greater impact in the coming decades as the world witnesses a dramatic ageing of its population as record numbers of older women live into the high ages. This demographic boom is a historical precedent that will yield uncharted territory in nearly every aspect of society. It is crucial that images of older women reflect the totality of the life cycle if we are to move towards *a society for all ages*, with respect for all ages.

For more information about the Symposium, please contact: American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) International Activities Office/NY
919 Third Avenue
9th Floor
New York, NY 10022
Tel: (1 212) 407-3733
Fax: (1 212) 739-2277
E-mail: jesmith@aarp.org

International Institute on Ageing: Short-term International Training Courses

During 1999, several short-term training courses will be held at the International Institute on Ageing (INIA), United Nations-Malta, in collaboration with other UN entities such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Social Gerontology
16-26 February 1999

This course is geared towards providing a broad understanding of the gerontological issues in order to enable caregivers, who are engaged in providing delivery services to older persons, to acquire a better understanding of the whole spectrum of concepts, services and skills needed to provide adequately for the needs of older persons. Closing date for application:
30 November 1998.

Funding Ageing in Developing Countries
10-21 May 1999

The aim of this course is to give a broad understanding of the basic issues and logistics and by reviewing existing systems and issues to inspire and endow participants with the knowledge base and techniques to help to influence the formulation and application of new and appropriate policies to ensure adequate support and funding for the needs of a rapidly expanding elderly population, based on the economic and social realities in the developing countries. Closing date for applications:
5 March 1999.

Health Care for the Elderly
14-25 June 1999

This course is designed to help developing countries meet this challenge by offering an intensive training in the fundamentals of health care for the older person by reviewing current trends and evolving appropriate policies to begin to cope with the multi-faceted aspects involved: at the same time highlighting advances in key issues. It is designed to stimulate interest and awareness and to act as an introduction to continuing dialogue between participants and the Institute. Closing date for applications:
2 April 1999.

Demographic Aspects of Population Ageing and its Implications for Socio-Economic Development, Policies and Plans
15-26 November 1999

The training programme is geared towards:

1. Achieving a working knowledge of demographic concepts and techniques,

2. acquiring the methodological approaches, tools and techniques in demography adopted in assessing the conditions of the elderly at global, regional and country levels, and

3. gaining an ability to effectively convey information to policy makers. Closing date for applications: 6 September 1999.

For more information, please contact: International Institute on Ageing, 117 St. Paul Street, Valletta VLT 07, Malta.
Tel: (356) 243044/5/6,
Fax: (356) 230248,
E-mail: INIA@maltanet.net

Women, Ageing and Health: Achieving health across the life span

The World Health Organization (WHO) Ageing and Health Programme has recently published a study on Women, Ageing and Health which addresses the issue from a life-course perspective and goes beyond "health" in a narrow sense. As stated in the study, there are three considerations that impel the greater recognition of health of ageing women as a major concern:

- the numbers of ageing women are increasing worldwide;
- women's life course beyond 50 now extends for a significant period and is increasing; and
- there is a very significant scope for improving the health of ageing women.

Taking action to improve the health of ageing women is imperative if these women are to achieve an acceptable quality of life in the extended period of old age. With a view to the future returns from investing in health, the scope of this report encomasses the coming generation of older women (those now in their 50s and 60s) as well as those already in older age groups.

Among the topics explored in the study are: Life course and demographic transitions; Health priorities for ageing women; Determinants of older women's health; and Framework and strategies for action.
For more information, please contact:
Ageing and Health Programme
World Health Organization, 20 Avenue Appia,
CH-1211 Geneva 27,
Switzerland

PREVIOUS INSTRAW PUBLICATIONS ON AGEING

"Situation of Older Persons: Ageing in Transition with particular focus on older women in Latin America". Paper prepared by Ms Martha Dueñas Loza, former Acting Director of INSTRAW, as a contribution to Chapter Two of the *World Ageing Situation 1997.*

The Situation of Elderly Women: Available Statistics and Indicators. Joint publication of INSTRAW and the Statistics Division of the United Nations. Santo Domingo: INSTRAW: 1994.

Report of a Consultative Meeting on Improving Concepts and Methods for Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Elderly Women. New York, 28-30 May 1991. Organized by INSTRAW in collaboration with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat. Santo Domingo: 1992.

Tel: +41 22 791-34-04
Fax: +41 22 791-48-39

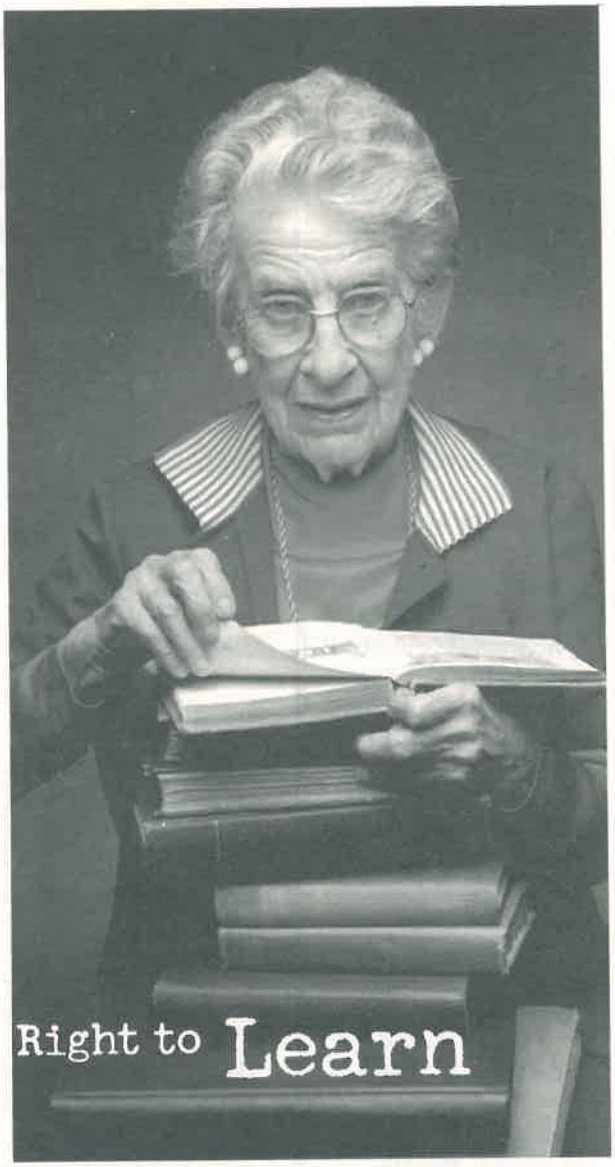
Third Age Women in Ecuador

The Ecuadorian Research and Training Institute for Women (IECAIM) has prepared a study on Third Age Women in Ecuador as a means to contribute towards meeting a need for research on older persons, particularly older women.

Based on interviews with women in several cities such as Quito and Guayaquil, the study reveals that 56.4 per cent of the women in the 60+ range, including many women over 80 years of age, are engaged in domestic tasks; while yet others 11.8 per cent are engaged in other activities of the informal economy.

The study further revealed that of those who were engaged in domestic tasks, 35.3 per cent worked 9-hour days while 11.8 per cent worked 12 or more hours per day.

By bringing to light facts such as these on the situation of women in Ecuador, IECAIM fulfills another objective of having prepared this study: to inform government policies in areas such as social security and health services.
For more information, please contact:
Instituto Ecuatoriano de Investigaciones y Capacitacion de la Mujer (IECAIM)
6 de Diciembre 2817 y República
Quito, Ecuador
Tel: 525-517/563-232
Fax: 563-232/561-483.



Women and Menopause Global Counselling Project

For 1999, Il Cenacolo is carrying out a special project on Women and Menopause which includes information and counselling (medical and psychological). The organization disseminates information about the clinical and biological aspects of menopause to help women perceive this period of life distinct from traditional views. Through counselling, women are shown how to utilize this information to empower themselves. Il Cenacolo utilizes a variety of means to disseminate information: on-line with Infowoman, television, radio, events and publications.

The International Association, Il Cenacolo, is an NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and its activities focus on women and youth.

For more information, please visit their website, www.ilcenacolo.org.

INSTRAW *Highlights*

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION ON WOMEN'S LIFE CYCLE AND AGEING

As a contribution to the International Year of Older Persons-1999, INSTRAW is preparing a publication which will look at various aspects of women's life cycle and ageing. In addition to an overview of UN initiatives on Ageing prepared by the International Institute on Ageing (INIA), United Nations-Malta, the publication contains numerous articles submitted by researchers from different parts of the world dealing with topics related to welfare and pension systems, identity, care giving and empowerment. The book will be published with the support of United Nations Publications.

PROGRAMME UPDATE

Research Coordination Meetings were recently held at INSTRAW Headquarters in relation to the Institute's two research programmes: Temporary Labour Migration of Women and Engendering the Political Agenda. The objective of the meetings was to agree upon the research questions, indicators, variables, sources and instruments to be used in carrying out the research.

Temporary Labour Migration of Women 8 November 1998

The Marga Institute, represented by Myrtle Perera, will carry out the research in Sri Lanka. During the meeting held with Ms Perera and members of the INSTRAW Research and Training Unit, the research design was expanded to include research, to the extent possible, in a receiving country. Also to be included in the sample are households that have men migrating in order to compare changes in gender roles with households where women migrate.

After an analysis of the field data in early 1999, an international meeting will be held in June 1999 in Sri Lanka in order to report on the research findings and resulting policy recommendations.

Meeting on Temporary Labour Migration of Women
From left to right: Tatjana Sikoska, Angeles Escrivá, Yakin Ertürk, Mrytle Perera, Liliana de García and Julia Tavares

Engendering the Political Agenda 11-12 November 1998

The Indian Institute of Management, represented by Ms Sangeetha Purushothaman; the Romanian Institute of Quality of Life, represented by Mr. Catalin Zamfir; and the Gender Research project of the Center for Applied Legal Studies, University of Witswaterstand, South Africa, represented by Ms Cathy Albertyn participated in the meeting along with members of INSTRAW Research and Training Unit. The participants paid careful attention to the selected research questions, variables and indicators in order to allow the particularities of country situations to be properly reflected while at the same time allowing for comparison between the countries.

Meeting on Engendering the Political Agenda
From left to right: Elena Zamfir, Yakin Ertürk, Lucero Quiroga, Denise Paiewonsky, Angeles Escrivá, Catherine Albertyn, Sangeetha Purushothaman, Catalin Zamfir and Tatjana Sikoska

National Training Seminar on Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development – Solomon Islands

In cooperation with the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) Distance Education Centre, INSTRAW conducted a training seminar on Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development from 24 to 28 August 1998.

Some thirty participants from various government departments, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions attended the seminar which was based on the Training Package "Women, Environmental Management and Sustainable Development" prepared by the Institute and the International Training Centre of the ILO.

This seminar represents phase I of a three-phase SICHE project that clearly reflects their commitment to making Solomon Islanders, both women and men, more knowledgeable about environmental management, sustainable development and utilization of renewable energy sources. Further training will be carried out by the Distance Education Centre to disseminate the information to all parts of the Solomon Islands. The report of the seminar, including the results of the working groups, will soon be available from INSTRAW.

INSTRAW Gender-Related Training Materials: A Global Electronic Database and Internet Networking Project

A proposal for an eighteen-month project to develop and implement a global electronic database and internet network on gender-related training materials has been prepared. Source material for this database will originate from collaborating institutions such as United Nations agencies; regional and global multilateral development organizations; bilateral

development cooperation agencies; intergovernmental organizations; and international NGOs.

The main purpose of the electronic database is to organize training material into a readily accessible resource base that provides useful and strategic links to institutions and individuals with expertise in gender training. It is designed to meet the pressing need for access to training materials and critical discussion, testing and adaptation of training methods currently being used or to be developed. It will also provide an interactive forum that is widely accessible, especially by southern countries. The proposal was presented to representatives of donor countries in a briefing held on 12 October 1998 at the UN Secretariat in New York. The proposal has since been revised according to the comments from the briefing and is now being circulated among potential donors.

INSTRAW 1999 AGENDA

The Institute has prepared an Agenda for 1999 as a tribute to women from all parts of the world who through their personal actions have contributed to the advancement of women.

The 126 page agenda (available in English only) begins with the month of March in order to place more emphasis on International Women's Day, eight March. It presents the year in both a monthly and weekly format in which all UN days are highlighted.

In the preparation of this Agenda, INSTRAW received the valuable collaboration of its focal points. All focal points were requested to nominate prominent women from their countries to be featured in our Agenda. Those countries that responded are: Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bulgaria, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, Indonesia, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. To promote networking, the agenda includes the complete list of INSTRAW's focal points and ample space for noting important numbers.

The Agenda has a sales price of US$10.00 (to cover printing and mailing costs) and can be purchased from INSTRAW Headquarters (see Order Form included with this issue) or the United Nations Bookstores in New York and Geneva.

NEW STAFF MEMBER

Ms Tatjana Sikoska has joined INSTRAW's staff as Social Affairs Officer in the Research and Training Unit. She holds a "Graduate Lawyer" degree from the Faculty of Law of the University of Cirilus and Methodus, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and a M.A. in Politics and Alternative Development Strategies from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, the Netherlands.

Prior to joining INSTRAW, Ms Sikoska was engaged as a consultant on different development issues in the Dominican Republic. Previously she had been working with the International Secretariat of the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly (hCa) in The Hague in the field of civil approaches to conflict resolution and conflict prevention. Immediately after finalizing her MA studies, she worked at

Tatjana Sikoska

the Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands as a research assistant in the areas of women and communications and the politics of social movements, during which time she became closely involved in gender and development issues.

INTERNS

INSTRAW reactivated its internship programme and has since benefited from several interns. During the summer months (June-August), two students -Vanessa Chirgwin and Meredith Damitz- from the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in California carried out internships at INSTRAW Headquarters in Santo Domingo. Both interns were assigned to the research programme on Engendering the Political Agenda and assisted by carrying out extensive bibliographic searches on the topic as a basis for the case studies being carried out in India, Romania and South Africa. Another intern, Angeles Escrivá, has been at INSTRAW Headquarters since August 1998. Her internship is sponsored by the Woman's Institute [Instituto de la Mujer], INSTRAW's focal point in Spain, and coordinated by the Institute of Political Studies for Africa and Latin America [Instituto de Estudios Políticos para Africa y América Latina - IEPALA].

Angeles Escrivá

Three interns,Ms Yoshi Bird from Wells College and Ms María Vizcaya from Long Island University and Ms Ai-Ju Huang from New York University assisted the Institute in the Liaison Office in New York. Ms Bird carried out research on the issue of migration. Ms Vizcaya attended the 42nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and assisted the INSTRAW Director by attending meetings held at the UN Secretariat. Ms Huang carried out research on the issue of trafficking in women. In addition all interns provided valuable assistance in the daily operations of the Liaison Office and in fulfilling various research requests from Headquarters.

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INSTRAW **news** is to report on the work of the Institute and, in doing this, to record research trends, disseminate training materials, and promote networking on women in development issues at a global level. The editorial policy of INSTRAW is to select events, news and items linked with its programmes and related activities in order to stimulate the exchange of ideas. INSTRAW News is published in English, French and Spanish, with a circulation of 4,200 distributed to governmental and non-governmental organizations, research centres, women's groups and individuals in over 120 countries.

Letters and comments of readers are most welcome. Please address all inquiries on distribution and changes of address to:

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