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WOMEN'S RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND DUTIES: FROM DOMINATION TO PARTNERSHIP

L. R. Kurtz, PhD

Abstract:

The idea of women's rights as human rights can facilitate our identifying the causes, consequences, and potential remedies for the current quagmire in which we find themselves, but it needs some reformulation. To the traditional understandings of human rights, I add four conceptual tools: (1) Mahatma Gandhi's idea of the counterparts of rights and duties, (2) Eisler's concept of partnership (as opposed to dominator) societies, (3) Johan Galtung's expansion of our conception of violence to include its structural and cultural forms, and, finally, (4) the literature on nonviolence as a path to mobilization and transformation that resists existing social structures and builds new ones.

Keywords: women's rights; human rights; violence; nonviolence; partnership; domination; patriarchy; structural violence; cultural violence

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A first hurdle to be surmounted in creating a caring democracy is to address the twin crises of massive inequality and climate change. The current social system, now loosely organized through networks of relationships, power, and communication at the global level, is simply unsustainable. Inequality has already led to a veritable holocaust of human suffering in terms of malnutrition, as well as widespread structural, cultural, and direct violence; in short, a scandalous violation of human rights and a threat to all species as well as life on the planet itself. One core issue in this crisis, and a productive place to begin, is the rights of the half of humanity that is widely suppressed.

In addition to Riane Eisler's call (Eisler, 2017, in this issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies) for a new language, we can also build upon existing

frameworks by rethinking the concept of human rights that has had so much traction in prodemocracy mobilizing in recent decades. In this article, I hope to further a dialogue about ways in which the human rights and duties frame can facilitate identifying the causes, consequences of, and potential remedies for this current quagmire in which we find ourselves. Although the foundation of this article is sociological (my disciplinary home), I draw upon a variety of disciplines and studies that inform my thinking.

To the traditional understandings of human rights, I will add four conceptual tools: Mahatma Gandhi's idea of the counterparts of rights and duties, Eisler's concept of partnership (as opposed to dominator) societies, Johan Galtung's expansion of our conception of violence to include its structural and cultural forms, and, finally, the literature on nonviolence as a path to mobilization and transformation that resists existing social structures and builds new ones.

The idea of women's rights has been one of the more recent chapters in the development of human rights theory and action, and a crucial step in democratizing human culture; I will focus attention on this important area.

PREREQUISITES FOR A CARING DEMOCRACY

In order to consider how to create what Riane Eisler calls "a caring democracy," I suggest that we rethink the ubiquitous concept of human rights with a special emphasis on rights for the most vulnerable, especially women and girls as one of its cornerstones.

One of the most serious obstacles to a caring democracy is violence against women, which has become a major topic of discussion in the international community in recent years. As Dirks and Troshynski (2015, p. 84) note, "Worldwide, 30 percent of all ever-partnered women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partners. In some regions, however, this percentage increases to 38 percent (WHO, 2013; Devries et al., 2013; Stockl et al., 2013)." This kind of open physical violence

against women is one of the strongest indicators of the urgency of the situation and motivators to action. Widespread violence against women negatively affects women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase vulnerability to HIV. This violence not only affects women, of course, but ripples throughout their entire family networks in profound ways, and consequently has ramifications across generations and for the larger social system.

RETHINKING HUMAN RIGHTS

According to Mahatma Gandhi, human rights have their necessary corollary in human duties:

"The very right to live," Gandhi insists, "accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this one fundamental statement, perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of man and woman, and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed" (Gandhi, 1947, p. 137).

Gandhi wants to emphasize the duty of the recipient of rights, which is certainly appropriate, but he also points to the duty of those who grant and protect human rights. If people with power and privilege do not grant or protect rights, they will be denied. Sjoberg et al. (2001) insist that human rights are best defined as "social claims on individuals (or groups) against organized power as a means of enhancing human dignity" (Sjoberg, et al., p. 33). It is the reciprocity of rights and duties that is a necessary condition for the construction of a caring democracy.

Although responsibility for one's behavior is always individual, human agency is also shaped by structures and systems which limit how individuals perceive their options. There is, moreover, always a semantic tension between universalistic and particularistic understandings of what is moral and right (Jacobs & Kurtz 2013); while the rights of women are universally praised, they are also widely denied or abused. The international community, especially through United Nations declarations, has

highlighted the inherent rights of women in various declarations and documents, which evolved over time, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights through the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women to the rallying cry of the 1995 Beijing Conference, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights,” articulated in Hillary Clinton’s keynote address. It is no accident that it took 50 years from the 1945 “universal” declaration of human rights until women’s human rights were adequately acknowledged.

Rights declared are not always rights given, however, and it is not enough to have high-level statements from international bodies, even when they are ratified by national governments, often *pro forma* in order to sustain important political and economic alliances with other states. We must dig down to the cultural roots of women’s rights and the organized power it challenges, such as patriarchal culture and, sustaining that, what Riane Eisler calls dominator models of society (Eisler, 2011). As long as the basic premises of domination are embedded in the structures and cultures of societies, we can expect not only harm toward women, but a failure of an entire society or the human community to reach its full potential. Miriam Kurtz (2015) contends, in her chapter on “Gendering Vulnerability,” that “Systemic violence in patriarchal cultures and structures has inhibited women’s growth and development. A patriarchal system marginalizes women and separates them from power and natural resources, and that is where the process of gendering vulnerability begins” (p. 54).

The proverbial “Women and children first” adage shows the complexity of the vulnerability of women, and of children (another key human rights issues that goes beyond the scope of this article). The status of women is unique in that it cuts across all other social divides: class, race, ethnicity, religious tradition, nationality, and so forth. Women are more vulnerable within each category of the social hierarchy, although their status is almost always complicated by the intersectionality of various identity characteristics (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Collins, 2015). Protection also can

become a pretext for patriarchal domination by implying that the vulnerability of women requires that males defend women's "honor" in exchange for submission.

THE PATH TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS

The struggle for human rights has a long history, much of it in the ancient world. Although it is often associated with the Greeks in Western scholarship, it is also indebted to such contributions as Lao Tzu's *Tao te Ching*, the village panchayats of ancient South Asia, the Buddhist Council of 480 BCE, and the Buddhist *sangha* which valued the full participation of its members (see, e.g., Muhlberger 1998; Sharma 1968). In one famous ancient text, the *Maha-parinibbana Sutta*, the Buddha says that the Vaggians would prosper and not decline if they had frequent assemblies and refrained from abducting women and maidens and detaining them (*Maha-parinibbana Sutta*, 1998, Part One, Section 4).

Not only is the right of men's political participation to be guaranteed, but women and girls are not to be subjected to violence. Muhlberger (1998) claims that the Buddha saw the virtues necessary for a righteous and prosperous community, whether secular or monastic, as being much the same. Foremost among those virtues was the holding of "full and frequent assemblies." In this, the Buddha spoke not only for himself, and not only out of his personal view of justice and virtue. He based himself on what may be called the democratic tradition in ancient Indian politics -- democratic in that it argued for a wide rather than narrow distribution of political rights, and government by discussion rather than by command and submission, although women were still by custom excluded from political participation.

Nonetheless, unlike the Western originators of democracy - the Greeks, Enlightenment philosophers, and American founding fathers - who barred women from democratic participation (Eisler, 1987), the ancient Buddhists apparently advanced women's rights substantially. A summary of a 2007 International Congress on the Women's Role in the

Sangha concludes, “According to many of the Buddha’s statements, the flourishing of the Dharma depends on the existence of a fourfold assembly of disciples (*‘khor rnam-bzhi’i dge-’dun*), comprising” full monks, full nuns, laymen and lay women (Berzin, 2007). Unfortunately, many of those early gains for women’s rights in the ancient Buddhist community have been undermined by patriarchal practices and structures within the tradition.

Women’s rights were still marginalized in the modern human rights movement, a major project of the 20th century, especially in the aftermath of a devastating World War. Millions had had their rights ruthlessly violated; the United Nations was formed, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was affirmed, thanks in no small part to the powerful contributions of Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the drafting of the declaration and pushed for its adoption (Sears, 2008; Glendon, 2001).

In the ensuing decades, an infrastructure and culture of human rights was developed in the international community (Ratner, 2009), with the institutionalization of formal structures such as the United Nations and its agencies, and the development of a transnational justice system designed (at least in theory) to protect the rights of citizens, such as the international Tribunals and the International Criminal Court. Article 68 of the UN Charter required the creation of a human rights commission; in 1947, the new Commission drafted new international instruments early in its history, although at first it decided it had no power to investigate human rights violations, a position gradually modified (Renteln, 2008).

Moreover, in an effort to combine traditional concepts of justice that were focused on reconciliation rather than retribution, a number of nation states experimented with processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the Gacaca courts in Rwanda, the Truth and Justice Commission in Mauritius, and the Historical Clarification Commission in Guatemala (Hayner, 2010).

The earlier UN efforts to advance human rights paid little if any explicit attention to gender issues, except for the first international prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender in the UN Charter and the creation of the UN Committee on the Status of Women in 1946 after many internal debates (Stephens, 2008). More than thirty years later, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was implemented, with ratifying states agreeing to embody gender equality in legislation and protect women's equality in political and public health, etc. (Stephens, 2008). Other key UN documents are the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, which called on people to "promote gender equality and empower women" (United Nations, 2000), and Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which called for the protection of women and girls during armed conflict and encouraged women's participation in peace and security efforts (United Nations, 2000).

The culmination of many efforts over the years in the United Nations and many sectors of transnational civil society was the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Attended by thousands of women and men from around the world, it signaled substantial progress in women's rights that reverberated throughout the world. The Beijing Conference empowered women with an international agenda and commitment to enhance their rights, mobilizing people in civil society, and providing leverage for bringing about change in national state structures. The Platform for Action declared:

The full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all women is essential for the empowerment of women. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. (United Nations, 1995).

The major concerns of the 1995 conference, which remain just as relevant two decades later, were listed as follows, providing a current agenda for reflection and action:

- The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
 - Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training
 - Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services
 - Violence against women
 - The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation
 - Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources
 - Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels
 - Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women
 - Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women
 - Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media
 - Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment
 - Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child.
- (United Nations, 1995)

This articulation of rights for women was widely celebrated, but only implemented where those in power - usually men - saw it as their duty to do so, or were forced to make changes by the mobilization of women and their allies in civil society. What the Beijing Platform was calling for was nothing less than a rethinking of the model of society that we should construct, and a move from male domination to partnership between men and women working together.

PARTNERSHIP VERSUS DOMINATOR SOCIETIES

Many readers of this journal are already familiar with Riane Eisler's distinction between dominator and partnership models of society. The dominator model of social organization is one of top-down rankings: man over man, man over woman, race over race, religion over religion, and man over nature. As Eisler notes, starting with the first dominator societies in prehistory, it is "a social system in which male dominance, male violence, and a generally hierarchic and authoritarian social structure was the norm" (Eisler, 1988, p. 45). Moreover, the "way they characteristically acquired material wealth was not by developing technologies of production, but through ever more effective technologies of destruction (p. 45). Whereas the dominator model is based on ranking one gender over another, the partnership model, which also goes back to prehistory, is based on linking. Though there are hierarchies, they are not hierarchies of domination but rather hierarchies of actualization in which power is used to empower rather than disempower. Eisler uses the metaphors of the chalice, which gives and nurtures, to symbolize the partnership society, and for the dominator model, the blade, a symbol of the power to dominate and destroy.

These two different kinds of power are similar to a distinction that emerges in other analyses of power, especially by Gandhian and feminist social theorists with alternative views of power (Bell, 2008; Arendt, 1972; Carroll, 1972; Collins, 1991; Starhawk, 2002). On the one hand, *power over* "focuses on power as domination, generally maintained through authority, force, or coercion;" on the other, "power to ... focuses on power as 'empowerment', ability and competence" (Bell, 2008, p. 1703). Consequently, power in the dominator model is a zero-sum "quantity to be possessed by some at the expense of others. ... This sets up a whole series of either/or dichotomous categories around which traditional theories of power are organized (e.g., the ruler and the ruled, the powerful and the powerless...). Empowerment theories, on the other hand, which characterizes power in the partnership model, "emphasize power relationships based on the assumption that the availability of power (as ability, competence, energy) is unlimited and that ... power is potentially exercised by all people involved in an

interaction, and an increase of power on one side does not necessarily lead to a lessening of power on the other” (Bell, p. 1704).

Arendt (1972) suggests that power is the ability of people to act in concert, distinguishing it from violence, which destroys community. Although violence is conventionally considered a source of power (see, e.g., Mills, 1959; Weber, 1978), she insists,

Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course its end is the disappearance of power. This implies that it is not correct to say that the opposite of violence is nonviolence: to speak of nonviolent power is actually redundant. Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it. (Arendt, 1970, p. 56).

Those who resort to violence are simply demonstrating their powerlessness or an attempt to assert power that is not apparent, which may be at the root of violence against women: it might well be perpetrated by men who feel they do not have power they wish they had (Kurtz, 2015, p. 568). Arendt is, of course, referring to the use of direct violence against women, whereas much of the violence they suffer is cultural and structural, especially in the form of discriminatory practices and cultural themes. Moreover, power has multiple sources - it does not just grow out of the barrel of a gun as Mao would have it, nor does it come only from the state, powerful corporations, or ideologies. As Michel Foucault (1990) famously put it, “*Le pouvoir est partout*,” power is everywhere (p. 93).

Systematic discrimination has hampered not only women’s opportunities, but societies as a whole. Even by narrow measures such as the GDP of an economy, numerous studies show that the empowerment of women “produces macroeconomic gains” (Elborgh-Woytek, et al., 2013; Loko & Diouf, 2009; Dollar & Gatti, 1999). Moreover, “GDP per

capita losses attributable to gender gaps in the labor market have been estimated at up to 27 percent in certain regions (Cuberes & Teignier, 2012). Based on International Labor Organization (ILO) data, Aguirre and others (2012) estimate that of the 865 million women worldwide who have the potential to contribute more fully to their national economies, 812 million live in emerging and developing nations. It is just as likely that the empowerment of women would benefit other spheres of human life as well.

In a quantitative comparison of the effects of the CEDAW, Cole (2013) explored changes since it entered into effect in 1981, in various indicators of women's political rights (political participation, the right to vote, etc.), economic rights (such as equal pay for equal work and equality in hiring and promotions), and social rights (e.g., freedom from nonconsensual sterilization and rights to receive equal inheritance, enter into marriage, and receive an education). Using two-stage least squares regression models, he concluded that the Convention's effectiveness varied across categories of rights. CEDAW had a strong positive effect on women's political rights, no effect on economic rights, and a partially negative effect on social rights. Some rights, it would seem, are simply easier to implement than others. Extending suffrage rights to women is easier than ensuring that men and women receive equal pay for equal work. Social rights, particularly those pertaining to the role of women in families, may be the most refractory of all. Here, the primary obstacle is not lack of sufficient economic resources, but rather the presence of entrenched cultural opposition. For economic rights, implementation is a matter of capacity; for social rights, it is a matter of will. (Cole, 2013, p. 247)

RETHINKING VIOLENCE: THE VIOLENCE DIAMOND

The struggle for women's rights has often been focused on preventing violence against women, for good reason, as it is so widespread and damaging. Galtung's (1990) reformulation of how we think about violence is crucial to a rethinking of human rights,

however. To his classic triangle of direct, cultural, and structural violence, we add violence against the environment, ecoviolence (see Figure 1; Kurtz & Kurtz 2015).

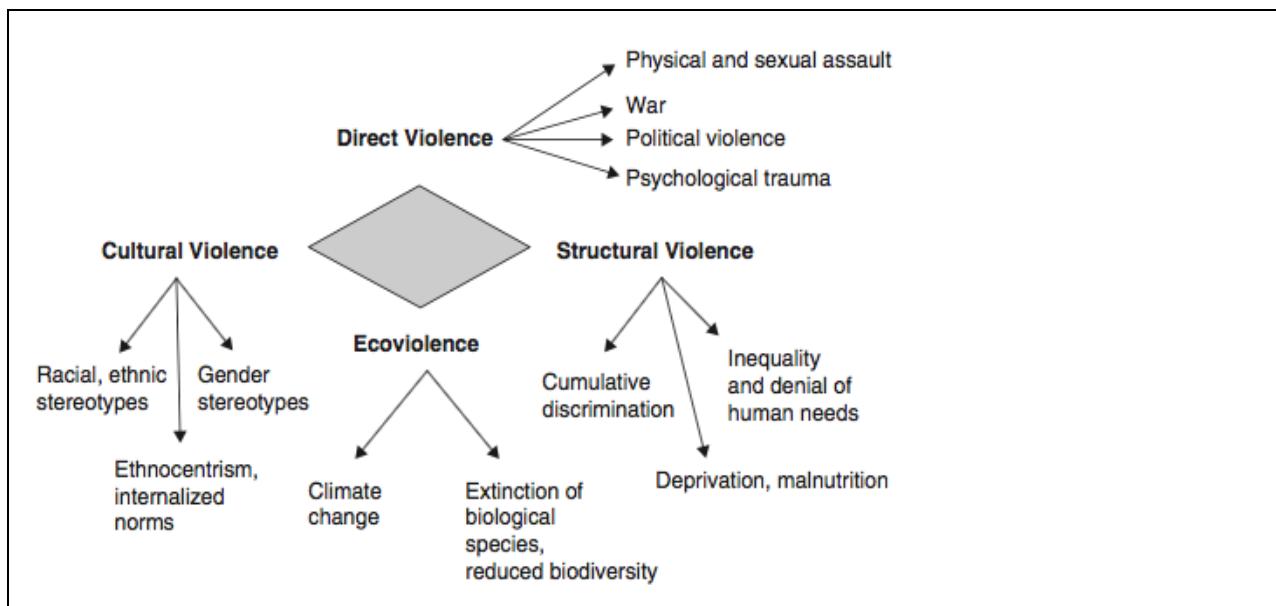


Figure 1. The Violence Diamond. Source: Kurtz & Kurtz (2015: 2); Galtung (1990)

In addition to the direct physical violence such as assault, war, family violence, and political violence that usually comes to mind when we speak of violence, Galtung contended that structural violence is just as significant, that is, the harm caused by social structures, hierarchies, maldistribution of resources to meet human needs, and so forth. Maas Weigert (2008) defines structural violence as “preventable harm or damage to persons (and by extension to things) where there is no actor committing the violence or where it is not practical to search for the actor(s); such violence emerges from the unequal distribution of power and resources or, in other words, is said to be built into the structure(s)” (p. 2005). Perhaps the most obvious example of structural violence is the high rate of child deaths from malnutrition and related causes, which UNICEF estimates to be more than 3 million per year. Every 2 years, more children die of this form of structural violence than the 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazis in the Holocaust (Rummel, 1992; UNICEF, 2017).

LISTEN, ANALYZE, AND MOBILIZE¹

Power concedes nothing and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to, and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue until they are resisted...The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. Douglass (1999, p. 367).

Women's rights as human rights will not be embedded in daily life or human institutions until there is an effective resistance to all kinds of violence to which they are subjected. There is no single solution, and everyone wishing to be involved can choose the kind of actions that most fit their skills, statuses, and personal inclination. There is plenty to do in every sphere of society, from the family to civil society, the state, the economy, and the emerging global social order, because women's rights are violated in all spheres.

Riane Eisler suggest four types of resistance and details them in her chapter, "Preventing Violence against Women: Four Strategies":

1. *The human rights/social justice case.* Recognizing and changing traditions that violate women's human rights in both the public and private spheres
2. *The social and economic case.* Demonstrating that ending traditions of violence against women is foundational to building a more peaceful and equitable world for all
3. *The moral case.* Bringing together spiritual leaders to raise their voices against gender violence, especially since it has often been justified on "moral" grounds

¹ Portions of this section were written for the High Level Meeting on Happiness and Wellbeing organized by Bhutan at the United Nations, April, 2012, and were published on a website for the conference which has since been deleted. It was reproduced in *Ahimsa Nonviolence* (Kurtz 2016) and is revised here.

4. *The legal case.* Using international law to hold governments accountable when they fail to protect the female half of humanity from egregious and widespread violence. (Eisler, 2015).

If we invert our violence diamond, we can think about how not to construct violent societies, but instead construct nonviolent ones that not only protect human rights, but nurture and cultivate them (Mack & Kurtz, 2017). Direct nonviolence is direct action, sometimes called nonviolent civil resistance, in such forms as protest and persuasion (e.g., speeches, marches, demonstrations), noncooperation (e.g., strikes and boycotts), and nonviolent intervention (such as sit-ins). Structural nonviolence involves creating social systems based on justice for all, with equality of opportunity and peaceful societies that minimize the gap between individual and social interests and provide basic human needs for everyone. Cultural nonviolence is embedded in peace cultures, which have cultural narratives that promote values such as love, justice, equity, wellbeing, empathy, and respect for diversity. Eco-nonviolence is a system of sustainability based on a deep ecology and the efficient use of resources.

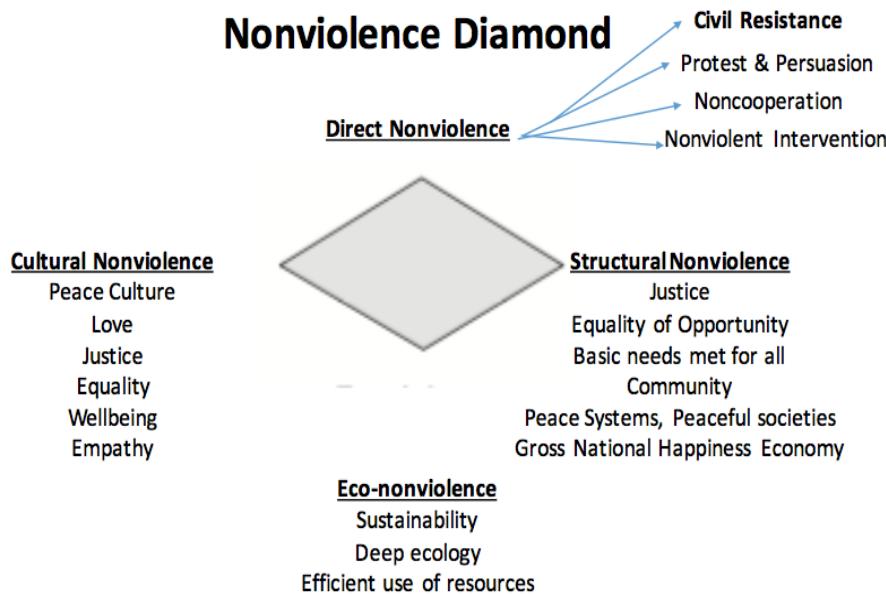


Figure 2. The Nonviolence Diamond. Source: Mack & Kurtz (2017)

Without the mobilization of civil society to transform our social systems to a partnership model and create a caring democracy, our words will be just another high-sounding proclamation. I like such declarations - they help us to aspire and map our higher ideals and give us leverage when the powerful resist justice. We can call them to account by pointing to the documents they signed. We now face a multifaceted crisis - economic, political, environmental, and spiritual - that requires us to resist and create.

To get the world we want, we have to listen, analyze, and mobilize a challenge to the existing paradigm. What are the genuine needs of the world's people? What are the pillars of support that hold up the existing system? How might we mobilize civil society to bring about its transformation? We can replace the dominator paradigm for social organization that permeates our global systems only by mobilizing people power and nurturing nonviolent forms of social organization, starting with the actualization of the partnership model in our daily lives and families as well as our global systems.

Fortunately, in recent decades, civil societies mobilized around the world to demand an end to the unjust concentration of power and resources. The Berlin Wall fell, the apartheid system in South Africa collapsed, and dictatorships the world over were brought down by nonviolent civil resistance within civil society, to everyone's surprise. This hopeful model for paradigm transformation comes from the women's suffrage movement of the 19th century and from Mahatma Gandhi, who challenged not only the colonial paradigm but also the way to fight existing powers and the paradigms they proffer (Kurtz, 2008).

Upon returning to India after years in South Africa, Gandhi was asked to join the Indian Independence Movement. Instead of jumping into action, he first traveled the country for a year, observing, talking with people, seeing how people lived, measuring the injustice, discovering their grievances and dreams. Next, he analyzed the situation, concluding that a few hundred thousand British troops could only control hundreds of millions of Indians because the Indians allowed them to do so. He took lessons from the

spiritual wisdom of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity, as well as his “experiments with Truth” in South Africa.

Gandhi’s strategic plan was symbolic and also practical, spiritual, and political: he inspired strategic actions that aimed at the heart of the British colonial system. His historic call for a cloth boycott, for example, undercut the power of the Empire that was built on the extraction of resources (like most empires) and the industrialization process, especially in textiles.

DEEP LISTENING

As Gandhi demonstrated a century ago, our first task is to develop systematic mechanisms for deep listening, not just to experts, politicians, elites, or corporate executives whose perspectives are already part of the global discourse, but to the people of the world in all of their diversity. I would start with the women, because of their vulnerability, unique status, and roles cutting across all other divisions in human society, and the powerful benefit to all that comes from empowering women. As a woman participating in a Pax Romana conference in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in 1998 explained to me, women are taught the skills needed not only to run a family but public institutions: they generally seek to distribute resources equitably among all members of the family and they balance the needs of the moment with the necessity to preserve some resources for the future.

Deep listening also involves exegesis - unpacking cultural frames and deep assumptions embedded in and sometimes hidden by figurations and poetics. By giving voice to the voiceless as the first step in the process we can ascertain the basic human needs and aspirations of the people whom the global system and its constituent parts are supposed to serve, sharpening our ability to empathize and expanding our knowledge base. This listening process is a necessary prerequisite for constructing the partnerships that would sustain a peaceful society. It would utilize the techniques and skills of the social

sciences in its myriad forms, including random sample surveys, focus groups, interviews, textual and narrative analyses, social accounting, and ethnographic observations of the many social and economic groupings on the planet. The wheel has already been invented, although not fully operationalized - much of this knowledge is already collected in encyclopedias such as UNESCO's *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems*. Those of us who produce, write, edit, and analyze knowledge often have no idea what life is like for the majority of earth's co-habitants, and we need to tune into their voices.

Listening to the people, and bringing women's voices into the mainstream of social, cultural, and political discourse, should also draw upon traditional cultural techniques developed for individual and collective expression and spiritual techniques for deep listening. These traditional techniques would ideally be combined with the latest technological tools for collecting and analyzing data - we might videotape personal and collective narratives about needs and aspirations, and use the Internet and computer databases, mapping techniques for qualitative and quantitative analysis of narratives, to bring together the cacophony of voices that are sometimes drowned out by monopolized media and powerful elites, so that our new economic paradigm genuinely meets our collective needs.

Listening to the world's women is imperative and complicated enough, but we must also listen to the non-human elements with which we share the planet: the sentient and non-sentient beings, the ecosystems, the animal, vegetable and mineral elements that constitute our common world and whose existence is now threatened by the course of human development under the old economic paradigm. Here the natural sciences are vital, especially when holistic understanding, often coming from spiritual traditions and understandings of deep ecology, are combined with the sometimes reductionist but enormously productive methods of modern experimental science.

Finally, the visions that diverse people bring to the human table can be compared and analyzed for their similarities and differences. Do common themes emerge? How can the diversity of our social as well as natural ecology be preserved as we move forward together? Efforts to develop common visions should not flatten the paradoxes and contradictions of human life - the variety of cultures that are as necessary to the social ecology of the planet as the millions of natural species that constitute our natural ecology.

Whether we look at specific empirical examples or long-term trends, it appears that responding to the grievances of women by empowering them has benefits for entire societies. The Global Gender Gap Report (Hausmann et al., 2010) finds that there is a strong correlation between a nation's score on the Human Development Index, on the one hand, and its performance in reducing the inequality of women. "While correlation does not prove causality," they conclude, "it is consistent with the theory and mounting evidence that empowering women means a more efficient use of a nation's human talent" (p. 30). Listening to the needs of women and responding to the gap do not happen automatically, however; change is brought about by strategic analysis of the causes of an inequality in order to mobilize against it.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS FOR NONVIOLENT CIVIL RESISTANCE

After listening, we are ready to undertake a strategic analysis of what we should do based on what we have heard; the goals of the analysis would be, first, to ascertain the causes and consequences of the violation of women's rights and, secondly, to look for windows of opportunity for a nonviolent civil resistance of the existing system as we try to construct a new one. This involves both direct nonviolence - the kind of nonviolent civil resistance formulated by Gandhi and Gene Sharp, but also the construction of peaceful systems based on partnerships at all levels. Following Sharp's (2003) systematization of Gandhian nonviolent direct action, we would analyze the pillars of

support that sustain the current social paradigm and the cultural and structural systems that reinforce it.

The fundamental principle is that there are multiple sources of power and that we can withdraw support from unjust systems, facilitate defections by people who make the system work, and bring about fundamental transformations. This is not just theory, but the power dynamics behind the subversion of the colonial system, the Tunisian revolution of 2011, the overthrow of dictatorships worldwide, and the dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa. The theory and practice of nonviolent civil resistance have been widely elaborated and documented, e.g. by the [International Center for Nonviolent Conflict \(n.d.\)](#) and the [Global Nonviolent Action Database \(n.d.\)](#). Although a system of patriarchy is even more complicated than a political dictatorship, the successful overthrow of those systems, which seem immutable before their downfall, is an instructive model. The enemy is never individuals, but a system, and the winner is everyone, including the perpetrators, because the system itself is unsustainable, so that it is in everyone's interest to transform it.

We would analyze how each pillar sustains the current system and where its vulnerabilities lie. Which sectors and key individuals are susceptible to transformation and defection as allies of an oppositional movement? What are the reciprocal, institutional, and symbolic mechanisms that prevent its transformation and how do they work? Like Simmel's (1972) "stranger," women are simultaneously near to and remote from the world's power systems. They know its secrets and its vulnerabilities. Their double consciousness, as W.E.B. DuBois puts it (DuBois, 1903; Dennis, 2003) as both insider and outsider leads to the insights needed for systemic social transformation.

EDUCATING AND MOBILIZING

Finally, we organize a movement to resist the old paradigm while constructing and implementing the new. The social movements literature is rich with data and analysis

about how resources are mobilized, political opportunities recognized and shaped, and messages framed to resonate widely (Benford & Snow, 2000). Moreover, Sharp (2003) provides a basic inventory of 198 categories of nonviolent action available to protest and persuade; engage in social, economic, political, and cultural noncooperation as well as nonviolent intervention to make the current system ungovernable; and open up a space for the creative development of a new system of economics that sustains and nurtures humans while protecting the ecosystem and our fellow inhabitants. Our mobilization strategy should recognize that different kinds of rationality along with the power of emotion and tradition are motivators for action and change, as Weber (1978) has observed.

We do not wait for governments or elites to do the work, although we insist on their responsiveness and service. Rather, we begin together, as a human community, framing the future and acting with resolve. We can march, think, dance, boycott, and sing our way to a new future in which partnerships are formed across gender, class, racial, national, and all other social boundaries.

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