

*Summer school: Socio-economic Tools for
Integrated Conservation Planning in
Multi-ethnic South Caucasus
3/6/2012*

GENDER

*Emilia Nercissians
Department of Anthropology
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Tehran*

AGENDA

- GENDER AND SOCIO-CULTURAL BEHAVIOR
- ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS
- POWER AND TYPES
- VIOLENCE
- CONCLUSION

Gender and Socio-Cultural Behavior

- ❑ "Gender" refers to the different roles that men and women play in society
- ❑ Also to the rights and responsibilities that come with these roles
- ❑ "Gender" differs from "sex", which refers to the biological and physical differences between men and women

Gender and Socio-Cultural Behavior

- Understanding gender provides:
 - ▶ insights into men's and women's behavioral relationship and division of labor.
 - ▶ These insights are crucial to communicate with and serving both men and women effectively.....**IF**

Gender Roles in Society

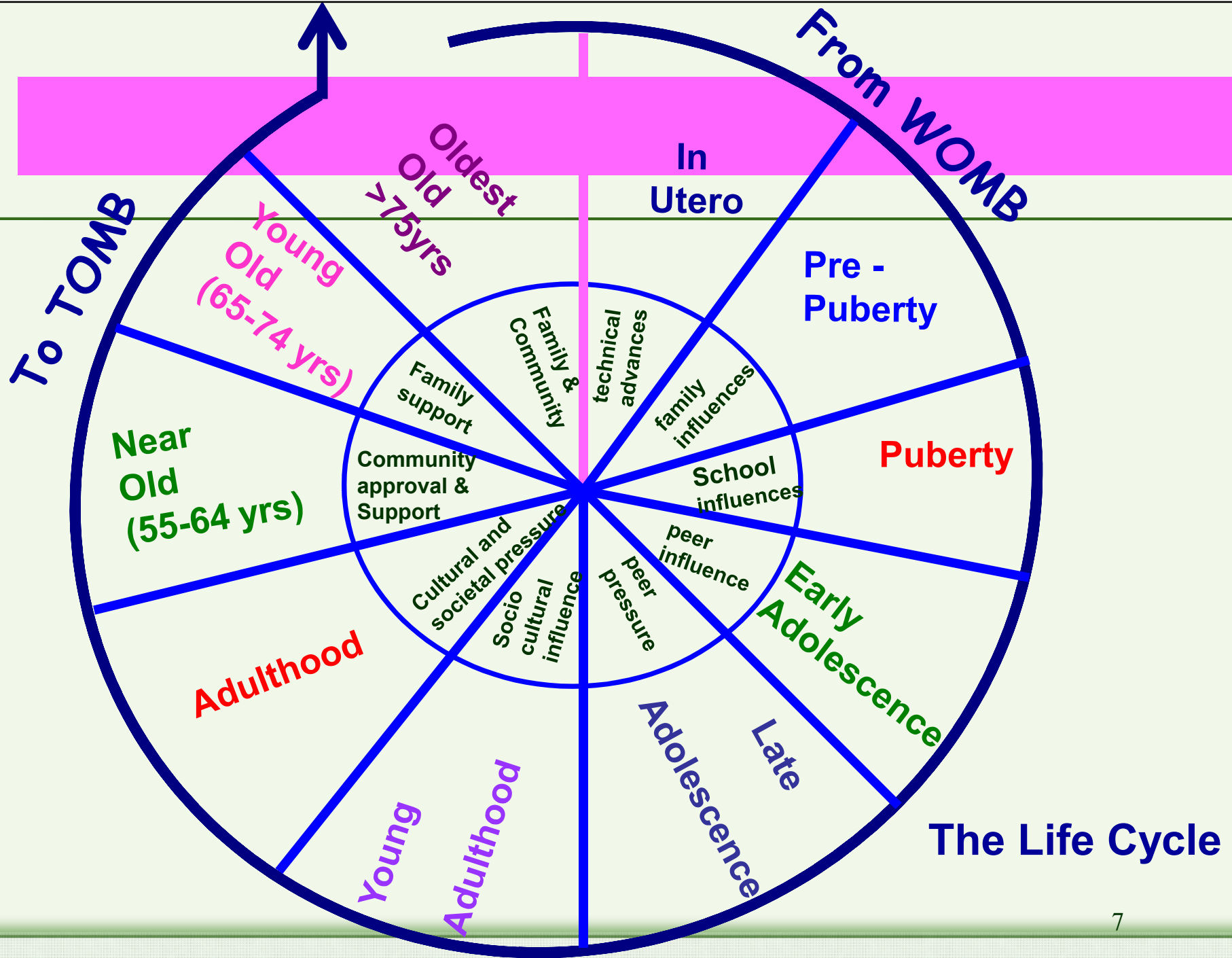
- Gender roles usually taken for granted reflected in:
 - ◆ family structures
 - ◆ household responsibilities
 - ◆ labour markets
 - ◆ schools
 - ◆ health care systems
 - ◆ laws
 - ◆ public policies
 - ◆ The influence of gender is similar in strength to religion, race, social status and wealth

Gender and Behaviour

- **Gender roles begin at birth and span a lifetime:**

very young boys and girls learn from their families and peers how they are expected to act

- ◆ around people of the same sex
- ◆ around people of the opposite sex





ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

RELIGION AS A CULTURAL SYSTEM



- **CULTURE:**
 - Historically transmitted patterns of meanings embedded in symbols through which knowledges that guide life are communicated, developed, perpetuated, and transformed.
- Different cultures interact and impact each other through continuously multiple flows.
- **RELIGION:**
 - A historically transmitted system of beliefs with meanings embedded in symbols through which knowledges about power, order, and truth that guide life are communicated, developed, perpetuated, and transformed.

CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALISM AND GENDER

- Grounded in scriptures from the Old and New Testaments that delineate gender roles, duties, and relations.
- **Men are the heads of households and religious and political leaders.**
- Women are to be in subjection to their husbands and other male members of their families and religious community.
- Some Christian fundamentalists practice polygamy.



MORMON (Since 1800's)

FUNDAMENTALISM AND GENDER



- Besides the Bible, Mormons have the Book of Mormon, a sacred text Joseph Smith translated from golden plates given to him by the angel Moroni in the late 1820s.
- Moroni's faith practices plural marriage in which a man's choice and number of wives is dictated by the holy spirit.
- They believe plural marriage is essential for achieving the highest degree of salvation in heaven.
- **Men are heads and leaders, and women are in subjection to them.**

JEWISH FUNDAMENTALISM AND GENDER



- Orthodox Judaism is the conservative branch of the Jewish faith.
- Jewish fundamentalist groups, such as the Haredim, have come to be associated with extreme Zionism.
- They adhere literally to the gender roles, duties, and relations as delineated in Jewish sacred texts.
- **Men are the heads of households and the religious and political leaders.**
- Women are to be in subjection to their husbands and other male members of their families and religious community.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND GENDER



- Grounded in passages from the Koran that delineate gender roles, duties, and relations.
- Men are the heads of households and religious and community leaders.
- **Women are to be in subjection to their husbands and other male members of their families and religious community.**
- Some Islamic fundamentalists practice polygamy.

AN EMIC PERSPECTIVE ON FUNDAMENTALISMS AND GENDER

- The point of many fundamentalist beliefs about “traditional” gender roles, duties, and relations is that men and women are to respect and honor one another, and interact with modesty and piety.
- Men are family, religious, and community leaders, but--for example--the Bible mandates that men are to put the interests of those they are responsible for, such as wives and their children, and the women and children of their communities, above their own interests in all their decisions and actions.



FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY

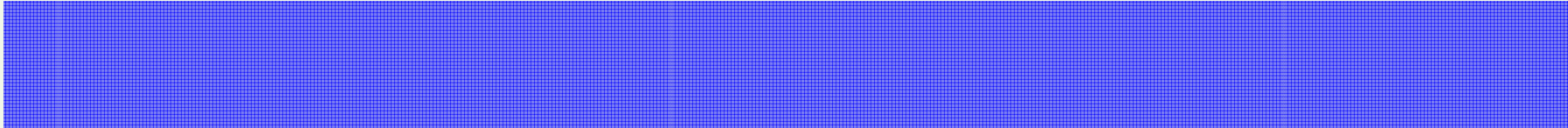


- ▲ A theoretical perspective that focuses on describing and explicating the social, political, cultural, religious, and economic roles of women.
- ▲ Many branches of feminist theory are critical of the patriarchal gender relations of religious fundamentalisms.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ISSUES ARISE WHEN:



- ...political/religious/cultural workers use the status of women as a tool to critique or even wage war against other political/religious/cultural factions.
- ...in secular democracies, religiously fundamentalist and conservative political groups come to governmental power and attempt to impose moral standards and gender roles and relations on the entire population, such as:
 - Issues over abortion and school prayer in the U.S.
 - Making adultery and fornication against the law in other countries.



POWER

Power and Gender

- "Power" is a broad concept that describes the ability or freedom of individuals to make decisions and behave as they choose a person's access to resources and ability to control them.

Types of Power

Two types of power help to describe the inequities in male and female gender roles - "power to" and "power over"

- "Power to" describes the ability of individuals to control their own lives and to use resources for their own benefit
- "Power over" means that individuals can assert their wishes, even in the face of opposition, and force others to act in ways that they may not want to

Mechanism of Power

- Differences in power between men and women are not absolute or universal. Some poor, illiterate, unemployed, or homosexual men have little power and few resources
- Women's gender roles do give them some power but is more limited and influenced by:
 - her culture
 - age
 - income and education

Mechanism of Power: Gender and other Factors of Power

Gender is just one of many other factors such as:

- ▶ Education level
 - ▶ family pressures
 - ▶ social expectations
 - ▶ socio-economic status
 - ▶ exposure to mass media
 - ▶ personal experience
 - ▶ expectations for the future
 - ▶ religion
- Consequently, no two couples' "decision-making environments" are identical

Mechanism of Power

- The type of marriage - whether free choice, arranged, or polygamous - also affects the relative power of a woman
- The age of a woman at first marriage relates to her ability to communicate

Mechanism of Power

- Better-educated women can communicate more easily with their husbands.
- Education may also increase a woman's earning capacity - and thus her leverage in house-hold decision making.
- A woman who has some economic power more likely to discuss family planning with her husband.

Mechanism of Power

- ❑ A woman's power to make decisions increases with her level of education also with her husband's level of education
- ❑ younger women who marry older men have less power

gender roles are changing toward more equality for younger men and women in some cultures

Gender and Distribution of Power

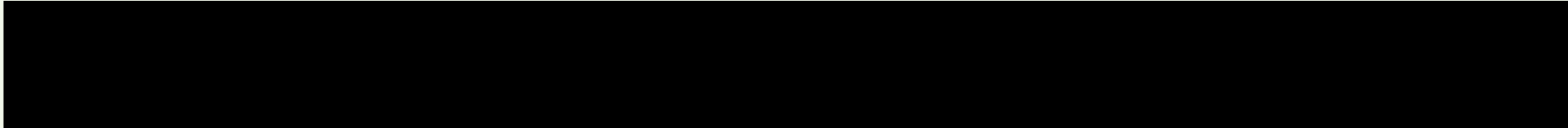
- Gender has a powerful influence on decision-making and behaviour
- men are the primary decision-makers about utilization of resources

Domains of Power

- Men are often called “gatekeepers” and have many power roles
 - husbands
 - fathers
 - uncles
 - religious leaders
 - doctors
 - policy-makers and
 - local and national leaders

Change and Resistance

- ◆ changes in gender roles, and hence behavior, often touch emotional and political nerves.
- ◆ such changes are perceived as threatening
- ◆ Change is a part of the global trend toward equality and justice



VIOLENCE

Power and Violence

- Using violence as beneficial to the maintenance of family structure

The process of socialisation especially of males

- Men socialised into aggression for problem solving and demonstrating authority
- Women socialised to submit to male authority
- Encouraged to develop character traits that complement male headship of the family

Sociological perspectives on deviance i.e.

- abusive individuals are deviants brought about by an unfulfilled childhood, lack of attention, exposure to violence etc.

Violence and Values

broad sets of cultural beliefs and values

- “masculinity” linked to dominance/honor
- rigid gender roles
- male “ownership” of women
- approval of physical chastisement (punishment) of women
- “machoism” (cultural ethos that condones violence as a means of settling of disputes)

Gender and Risk:

Its Impact on Life

- ◆ men be the initiators
- ◆ be perceived powerful
- ◆ be seen as risk-takers ('BRAVITY')

Gender ,Risk and Disaster

Intentional and non-intentional injuries are among the major causes of morbidity and mortality for both women and men at all ages and across all societies.

men are more likely than women:

- ☒ to die in car accidents
- ☒ to suffer death or disability as a result of occupational hazards.

Consequences of Risk

For many women, their economic and social security is dependent on the support of a male partner

- fear of abandonment can be a powerful force
- discrimination against divorced, separated and widow women and their children

Violence in Haven of Intimacy

- ❖ in most communities, women appear to be at greatest risk from intimate male partners or other men they know (father, brother,...)
- ❖ the violence girls and women experience occurs most frequently in the 'haven' of the family
- ❖ gender-based violence can lead to physical trauma, psychological distress. This trauma and resulting distress often lasts a lifetime.

Measures against Violence

□ Legal Reform (paradox of reporting)

- analysis of laws
- strengthen legal reform
- provide safe alternative

Disseminate results

- include and use mass media

Question?

A growing consensus exists that male violence is neither an entirely biological phenomenon nor solely a product of culture.

THEN WHAT? ???

Gender Inequalities and Policy

- ❑ The aim of highlighting gender in this way is to move towards a position of equality
- ❑ all policies must be designed to promote equality between women and men and among women themselves.



CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- ❖ 'Belief system functions as a ground for gendered behavior.
- ❖ Culture learned and practiced by the agents of society.
- ❖ Patriarchy as a system denies the benefits of group of people over the other group.
- ❖ Patriarchy finds its legitimate power on the basis of religion and law.
- ❖ Principles of patriarchy are internalized by the members of a given society.
- ❖ The gendered role is a subject of official policies of any state and subject of change in the span of time.

Conclusion

Gender is significant for two reasons:

et women are found disproportionately among the most vulnerable population groups

et access to and utilization of resources are influenced by cultural and ideological factors

Conclusion

- capacity-building programmes must be designed for both female and male workers
- need to focus not just on 'women's issues' but on the wider question of gender

General Hints

- er* Clearly identify the effects of the project or programme on women and men
- er* directly measure how a project or programme is effective for sexes
- er* take the necessary management decisions.

Key References: Gender in RH

- WHO Technical Paper
WHO/FRH/WHD/98/16, Gender and
Health
- The Battered Woman, Lenore Walker, 1979
Row & Harper NY.
- ARROW: 1997 Gender and Women's Health
Information Package No. 2 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Key References: Gender in RH

- WHO Technical Paper WHO/FRH/WHD/98/16, *Gender and Health*.
- *Gender, UNFPA, Country Support Team for the South Pacific. Raghavan-gilber/vw-99*
- *The Battered Woman, Lenore Walker, 1979 Row & Harper NY.*
- *ARROW: 1997 Gender and Women's Health Information Package No. 2 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.*



• THANK YOU