



Commission for Gender Equality
A society free from gender oppression and inequality

WHAT ARE THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS KEEPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ALIVE? EXPLORING THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WESTERN CAPE NETWORK ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN



OR, BACK TO FEMINIST BASICS

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MEASURING THE UNCOUNTABLE

- Highest rate of gender-based violence in the world, using femicide rate as an indicator (MRC, 2004)
- 29 % of young men admit to having raped at least once in their lives (MRC, 2009)
- 30 % of young women say their first sexual encounter was forced or under threat of force (CGE Gender Barometer, 2009)
- Teen-age pregnancies in sub-Saharan Africa highest in world at 119 per thousand (UN MDG's 2009)
- Married women in sub-Saharan Africa with unmet need for family planning services 24 %, again highest in world (UN MDG's 2009)





As we shift our focus towards validating the gift paradigm and seeing the defects of the exchange paradigm, many things acquire a different appearance. Patriarchal capitalism... is revealed as a parasitic system, where those above are nurtured by the free gifts of their 'hosts' below."

Vaughan, Genevieve *For-Giving: A Feminist Critique of Exchange* Anomaly Press and Plain View Press, Austin, Texas, 2002, pp. 34

The value of women's unpaid labour in domestic work equals about one third of the world's GDP. Even in a relatively industrialized country like Britain, fully employed British mothers spend an average 18 hours per week more than men, or almost half an extra working week, on unpaid domestic work. Worldwide, women are estimated to own less than one percent of the arable land, but contribute some 60-80 % of their countries' food. By far the major part of the labour used to produce this is free, especially in small-scale agricultural systems where marriage laws and customs award ownership of land and decision-making over crops to men. In Kenya, only 6% of Kenyan women have title deeds to land, although 96 % of rural women work on family farms. In Malawi, only 2.7 % of women are registered owners of commercial land, although 70 % of full-time farmers are women who contribute 80% of the labour in the agricultural sector. In Uganda, women own only 5 % of the land, often have insecure tenure to the land that they do use, yet account for the largest share of agricultural production. In South Africa, 29 % of women still live under similar systems.



In 2004, 11.9 % of beneficiaries from land distribution were female-headed households. While there are no figures available for female beneficiaries of the land restitution programme, it is possible to say that since 1994, female-headed households have formed some 13.3 % of beneficiaries of the Land Redistribution and Tenure Reform programme. This national average conceals wide provincial variations ranging from 1.63 % in Mpumalanga to 41.25 % in the Western Cape. Assuming that Black women owned less than 1 % of land in 1994, and that by now some 5 % of land has been redistributed, this would give a reasonably reliable estimate of women's land ownership of about 2 % in South Africa.





In 2000, men spent an average of 87 minutes per day on productive activities excluded from GDP calculations. Women worked just under three times longer, or an average of about 247 minutes per day. The value of unpaid labour was between 32% and 38 % of GDP, of which about three quarters is provided by women. In 2003, 80% of the unpaid labour in the agricultural sector is contributed by women. Since then, it is likely that the ration of unpaid labour has increased. First, the increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS has led to an increased burden of care which has fallen largely on women.

Second, economic policies have led to a gradual replacement of monetized services by free labour. Thus a study of 40 households in 2005 concluded that the effect of trade liberalization (GEAR) on unpaid labour is that: “[Women’s] market and non-market work increase is roughly double that of men, at the expense of their pure leisure time. As a large proportion of [men’s] time spent outside market work is devoted to leisure activities rather than domestic work, men perform even less domestic work with trade liberalization, especially in urban areas and within the female headed household categories.”

Women are systematically excluded from equal opportunities in the labour market. The unemployment rate for women (narrow definition) in 2003 was 35.9 % as compared to 27.2 % for men. By 2007, this rate was 30.8 % for women as compared to 21.1 % for men. Thus not only are women accessing the labour market to a lesser extent than men, but the growth in employment between 2003-2007 has overwhelmingly benefited men. When they do get work women earn less. In the paid labour force, as of 2005, female (paid) economic activity in South Africa was 58% that of male, and the ratio of estimated female to male earned income was 0.45, that is for every rand earned by men, women earn 45 cents.

Thus it should come as no surprise to learn that female-headed households predominate amongst the poorest of the poor, or that roughly twice the ratio of children in female-headed households went hungry compared to children in male-headed households.



The outcome is considerable exploitation of women's reproductive abilities. Africa's population has tripled since 1960's. World population increase from 5 billion in 1987 to projected 9 billion in 2050 places intolerable strain on women, earth resources and ecosystem services. WHAT A PITY! Since,

recent econometric simulations in five Latin American middle income countries demonstrate that both a reduction in gender wage discrimination, and an increase of female participation in the workforce, are factors which tend to reduce the Gini coefficient and actually increase the rate of economic growth. Equitable growth is strongly poverty-reducing: "Most important of all, this growth would be very pro-poor since it has an important impact on poverty. In the outstanding case of Chile, in the simulation with no barriers to [female labour force] participation, the relation between growth and poverty would be around one to four, that is, for each percentage point of growth due to improved gender equity, there would be a decrease of four percentage points in the incidence of poverty"

Costa, J, E.Silva and M. Medeiros *The Growth Equivalent of Reducing Gender Inequalities in Latin America*, IPC Working Paper, forthcoming; cited in International Poverty Centre, Poverty In Focus: Gender Equality, No. 13, January, 2008, pp. 9



”..falling fertility is a boon for what it makes possible, which is economic growth...as countries move from large families and poverty into wealth and ageing, they pass through a Goldilocks period in which there are few dependent children, few dependent grandparents – and a bulge of adults in the middle... For countries in demographic transition, the fall to replacement fertility is a unique and precious opportunity.”

The Economist 31 October, 2009



“Housework as individual women’s private responsibility and as a female labour performed under primitive technical conditions, may finally be approaching historical obsolescence.”

Angela Davis Women, Race and Class, 1981

THANK YOU !!!

