



Gender justice as the basis for sustainable climate policies

A feminist background paper

By Ulrike Röhr, Meike Spitzner, Elisabeth Stiefel and Uta v. Winterfeld

Gender justice as the basis for sustainable climate policies

A feminist background paper

*By Ulrike Röhr, Meike Spitzner,
Elisabeth Stiefel and Uta v. Winterfeld*

Publisher:

German NGO Forum Environment
and Development
Am Michaelshof 8-10
53177 Bonn

Fon: +49-(0)228-35 97 04
Fax: +49-(0)228-92399356
E-Mail: info@forumue.de
Internet: www.forumue.de

The German NGO Forum on Environment and Development was founded 1992 after the UN Conference on Environment and Development. It coordinates activities of German NGOs in international policy processes on sustainable development. Legal representative is the German League for Nature and Environment, umbrella organization of German conservation and environmental protection associations (DNR) e.V.

Responsible:

Jürgen Maier

Coordination and Editing:

Ulrike Röhr

Authors:

Ulrike Röhr, Meike Spitzner, Elisabeth Stiefel and Uta v. Winterfeld
Working Group Women in the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development

Tranlation:

Steward Lindemann

Layout:

Bettina Oehmen

Print:

Knotenpunkt GmbH, Buch

Bonn 2008

Photos: left - www.bigstock.com; right - Ulrike Röhr

genanet - focal point gender / environment /
sustainability LIFE e.V.

Dirksenstr. 47
10178 Berlin

Fon: +49-(0)30-308798-35
Fax: +49-(0)30-308798-25
E-Mail: leitstelle@genanet.de
Internet: www.genanet.de

genanet – the focal point gender justice and sustainability has been created to raise awareness of gender equity in environment and sustainability policy and to integrate it into research, policymaking and the activities of environmental organisations. Genanet provides an informative and strategic discussion forum for experts from politics, administration, planning, research and education whose work focuses on areas where gender, environment and sustainability issues all converge.

Content

Foreword	4
Part I	
What's the „justice“ we're talking about here?	6
Part II	
Climate change and other predicaments: Can our economic system be rescued?	10
Part III	
Climate protection and justice - Is that possible without actively addressing androcentrism?	14
Conclusion: The curtain has fallen, but many questions remain	22
Who we are	23

Foreword

The debates on justice in conjunction with climate policies have thrown the doors wide open for a topic that for a long while was underrepresented in climate negotiations: gender justice*. This is seen in the growing numbers of organizations that have taken up the topics of gender and climate and is demonstrated by numerous papers and articles. What is often missing - both in the organizations and in the papers - is a fundamental theoretical analysis that can be used as the basis for handling the perspectives of gender justice.

The Working Group 'Women' in the German NGO Forum on Environment & Development and genanet - focal point gender, environment and sustainability are both organizations located in and active primarily in Germany. They have taken up the challenge and are daring to undertake a first step toward closing this gap. They examine the topic of gender justice and

* We are using the term gender justice because it is more encompassing than gender equity or gender equality. Gender justice puts a focus on „what is just?“ and „what kind of justice do we want?“ Is it about distributional justice? In the context of climate policy, that would mean that all people have the same emission rights per capita. Or is it about recognizing knowledge and competencies, e.g. of indigenous women in relation to using forest resources? Is it about putting an economic value to such knowledge, or about creating a different economy?

The term gender justice articulates a feminist approach that goes beyond seeking an equitable share in the existing power system, which has been causing the current problems. We believe this system needs to be changed. Working towards that goal, we combine strategies of campaigning from the outside with advocacy strategies operating on the inside.

climate in three steps and in three different aspects:

In the first section Uta von Winterfeld will show that concepts of justice are not per se fair in regard to gender but rather are the expression of a reality characterized by a gender hierarchy. Thus a critical feminist analysis is offered which, at the same time, examines whether approaches aimed at achieving justice will more likely contribute to a continuation or to a change in the prevailing relationships.

Operating on the basis of the prevailing model of the economy, one oriented exclusively on growth and quick profits, economist Elisabeth Stiefel offers her critique that the entire field of the „care economy“ has been blanked out. Her economic criticism is fundamental in nature and does not at present offer easy access to climate policies and their - primarily economic - instruments. The networks of feminist economists are called upon to devote more attention to this subject.

The third section is a drastically abridged and thus unavoidably simplified version of an essay by Meike Spitzner. If reproduced in full, it would go far beyond the scope of the present work. In spite of this, we want to present this analysis, as cumbersome as it they might be. They offer a great deal of material for discussion but also provide a basis for well-founded gender analyses of climate policy projects and programs. We hope that it will be understood as such and put to good use.

In spite of their divergent approaches and positions, the three sections make one thing quite clear: It cannot be sufficient

to attempt to counter climate change or attenuate that change by applying old answers to the new challenge. Rather the fundamental question of societal change is introduced. Sir Nicolas Stern, author of the famed Stern Review and chief economist for the British government, has characterized climate change as the

greatest market failure the world has ever seen. We want to respond to him and to all those who are dealing with the future climate regime by citing the words of Albert Einstein (or might that have been his wife, Mileva?): „We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.“

Part I: What's the „justice“ we're talking about here?

Effecting change in society implies first and foremost an obligation to achieve social equality and requires policies aimed at redistribution. That's the opinion heard on the one side of the fence. Change in society implies cultural change above all. The claim to the recognition of differences has to become reality and that requires policies based on recognition - so the voice from the other side. If we follow feminist political scientist Nancy Fraser, then we see that these two approaches are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary: It is a matter of clarifying the way in which economic disadvantages and cultural non-recognition are interwoven one with another at present (Fraser 2001, p. 24).

Justice today requires both redistribution and recognition (ibid.). With the advent of climate change, the question of justice arises once again and presents itself as a challenge to society. The question cannot focus upon climate change itself, however. Droughts and floods do not adhere to recognition criteria, nor do hurricanes select their paths in accordance with distribution aspects. And nonetheless these consequences of climate change do not befall people as a simple matter of fate since climate change is anthropogenic. Thus the question of justice has to be directed at human thinking and actions. If the question is posed in a critical feminist setting, then it does not point to an ideal and perpetual status. Justice is not achieved once and for all; instead it will have to be established again and again. What's more, questions about justice will uncover injustices.

There can be no talk of justice

The dimension of gender equality is the one most often absent in debates on climate and justice. The discussion is more frequently centered on global or inter-generational equity while the gender issue is neglected. But the problems of climate change and justice cannot be adequately analyzed without considering the social category of gender. Women and men make differing contributions to the causes for climate change. Thus, for instance, Swedish men use as much as 100% more energy than women to achieve mobility (Röhr 2007, p. 40). There are differences between women and men in regard to how they are dependent upon and affected by climate change. Given their fundamental orientation - either toward lifeworlds or toward technology - they feel that different measures will be necessary. They also differ in regard to the action options they see. As always, the degree to which women participate in decision making on climate policies is small (ibid.).

These „injustices“ cannot be eliminated simply by way of gender mainstreaming, participation and emancipation. Instead, they point out two aspects central to justice itself. The differing contributions to the causes for climate change and the differences in the degree of impact resulting from that change bring distribution-promoting justice into play. It cannot be equitable for one person or group of persons to be left holding the bag for the damage others have done. Moreover, the bias toward technical and commercial solutions designed to curtail and adapt

to climate change brings about a need for recognition-promoting justice. There is no equity in deeming other approaches to protecting the atmosphere to be worthless or, in fact, not acknowledging their existence at all.

What's more, insistence on familiar technical and market-based solutions harbors the danger that the familiar relationships between winners and losers will continue to exist. It is for this reason that the fear is expressed, in the North-South context, that adaptation to the consequences of climate change will result in a third wave of colonialization (Meyer-Abich 2007, p. 237). Thus in the course of the first, military, colonialization during the sixteenth century Peruvian gold was shipped to Spain while Indian and African women and men were sold into bondage. The second phase, mercantile colonialization in the nineteenth century, redistributed goods from the bottom to the top of society and from the South to the North. And now a third, neoliberal, colonialization of nature and livelihood threatens. Those who champion the interests of a globalized market economy entice us with the yields from carbon credits, generated by market-based instruments such as the Clean Development Mechanisms. What they are not taking into account is that we are dealing with individuals' living environments. Overlooked, for instance, is the fact that forests represent the basis for subsistence and income of 350 million people (gendercc 2007). Colonialization always involves externalization and exclusion. The productive assets and the resources of others are appropriated either at no cost or at favorable costs and the abilities of those specific others are devalued. These various colonialization processes are, on the basis of their functions, blind to any potential recognition of other individuals.

On the crux with justice

The crux associated with justice and the philosophy of justice comes to light when

approaches and attempts to achieve greater justice struggle to cope with structural injustices. One can sense feminist disappointment in regard to the fact that women, in spite of legal equality and in spite of successful qualification programs, have achieved key positions in society only in exceptional cases. And men, conversely, have only to a limited extent taken part in traditionally female tasks and the experiences associated with them. The crux also becomes apparent, this time in the philosophy of justice, when universal concepts of justice, drafted by men, take up the problem of injustice. Thus John Rawls argues:

„If, for instance, men are given preference in terms of basic rights, then this inequality is justified in accordance with the principle of differentiation¹ ... only if it brings about advantages for women and is, from their viewpoint, acceptable.“ (Rawls 1979, p. 119)

Thus some individuals might profit more from trading in emissions certificates, and others to a lesser extent, only if the ensuing advantages are also of benefit to those who are most disadvantaged. The crux here is to be found in the fact that a conception has been drafted without knowledge of the experiences of the *other entity* - regardless of whether this is the other gender, another people, another community or another economic system, one oriented on livelihood. Here in particular, benefit sharing does not help because it is biased toward the prevailing economic concept, aiming at maximizing utility. Basic categories relevant to feminist thinking - such as care and the concrete „other entity“ - are certainly helpful. In contrast to an abstractly defined „other entity“, this entity will in each case have a concrete history and identity.

¹ In accordance with the principle of differentiation, there is nothing unfair about social and economic inequalities provided that the greater advantages enjoyed by a smaller number of individuals also bring about an improvement in the lot of those who are less advantaged.

Brought to a fine point, the crux of justice is found in distribution, referenced to the fact that it can be „equal“ but still „unjust“. Referenced to recognition, the difference is found in the fact that there are still cultural dominances in the background of formal recognition and that certain hegemonies continue to prevail. If, however, justice is not to be just half-hearted, but instead represent equality for everyone, then there will have to be alternate concepts of redistribution and recognition (Fraser 2001, p. 66).

The challenge of justice

Nancy Fraser employs the terms *affirmation* and *transformation* to differentiate between conventional and alternative concepts of justice (ibid., pp. 46 f and p. 55 in particular).

Redistribution is deemed to be affirmative if a superficial new distribution pattern for existing goods is established, to the benefit of previously disadvantaged groups. It is transformative if there is a change in how the goods are produced. This differentiation can also be described with the concepts of secondary distribution (women receive a larger share of the wealth generated) and primary distribution (women achieve access to the means with which wealth is generated). However, the term „redistribution“ is insufficient since the cards in the game of distribution are thoroughly reshuffled - if not replaced entirely.

In terms of climate change and climate policies, a more equitable distribution would be affirmative if, for example, groups previously disadvantaged in the climate regime were to be allocated a somewhat larger share of available emission rights. It would be transformative if, when allocating agricultural lands and forests, preference was given to those who need them for their livelihood, who use them sustainably, and who retain and further develop the productivity of fields and forests.

„Recognition-promoting justice“ is affirmative whenever a superficial redistribution is undertaken out of respect for groups that, in the past, had only achieved a lesser degree of recognition. It would be transformative if the prevailing recognition relationships were to be thoroughly restructured. This differentiation raises the question of power (in terms of the power to define societies and the opportunities to assert one's authority) and mastery (as a command and subordination structure). Is the recognition of the other entity based on the prevailing mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion - or does it promote a change in the pecking orders previously built into societal values?

With a view towards climate change and climate policies, „recognition-promoting justice“ is affirmative if, for example, women participate in the advantages and the utilization of their knowledge (their knowledge being recognized as valuable in avoiding climate change and adapting to its consequences). It would be transformative if, for instance, women's abilities to sustainably produce food were given priority over global production and energy use.

Even then, justice would not be installed immutably, once and for all, but its function of revealing inequalities would be strengthened.

References:

- Fraser, Nancy 2001:** Die Halbierete Gerechtigkeit. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt/Main
- Fraser, Nancy 1997:** Justice Interruptus. Critical Reflections on the „Postsocialist“ Condition. Routledge, New York and London.
- Gendercc:** „Women for climate justice 2007: Protecting tropical forests and gender justice.“ Position paper, Bali
- Meyer-Abich, Klaus Michael 2007:** „Alles tun, um nichts zu tun - Gewinner und Verlierer der Klimaänderung“ in: Müller, Michael; Ursula Fuentes; Harald Kohl (eds.): Der UN-Weltklimareport. Bericht über eine aufhaltssame Katastrophe. Kiepenheuer & Witsch: Cologne, pp. 233-237
- Rawls, John 1971:** A Theory of Justice. Harvard University Press
- Rawls, John 1979:** Eine Theorie der Gerechtigkeit. Suhrkamp: Frankfurt/Main
- Röhr, Ulrike 2007:** „Geschlechtergerechtigkeit - die fehlende Perspektive in der Klimapolitik“ in: Khor, Martin et al.: Klima der Gerechtigkeit. VSA: Hamburg, pp. 39-46

Climate change and gender equality

To ensure that justice is not truncated, it is first necessary to ask about two aspects: distribution-promoting justice and recognition-promoting justice. Secondly, the function of justice has to be addressed. Is it, as affirmative justice, to affirm existing relationships or is it, as transformational justice, to contribute to its change?

Distribution-promoting justice

Affirmative

Superficial redistribution of existing goods to disadvantaged groups.

Secondary distribution: Women receive a greater share of the wealth generated.

Transformative

Fundamental change in how goods are produced.

Primary distribution: Women achieve access to and exert influence on the generation of wealth.

Climate change

Affirmative

Groups previously disadvantaged in the climate regime will be allocated more emission credits.

Transformative

Agricultural lands and forests are assigned to (or retained by) those who need them for their livelihood and who will use them sustainably.

Recognition-promoting justice

Affirmative

Superficial redistribution of respect to groups that in the past had only achieved a lesser degree of recognition.

Transformative

Existing recognition relationships will be thoroughly restructured.

Climate change

Affirmative

Women share in the advantages that grow out of the utilization of their knowledge (about how to avoid climate change and adapt to its consequences).

Transformative

Recognition of the significant role women play as food producers; recognizing the priority of a reliable local food supply over the global use of plants for energy production.

Part II: Climate change and other predicaments: Can our economic system be rescued?

Sustainable economic activity from the female viewpoint

A body of literature – in the meantime quite extensive – reports that women and men use different yardsticks to measure the sustainability of economic activity. Quite generally speaking, women are among those who perceive directly whether life is made more difficult when material and social environments worsen. Women are, on average, less mobile than men, they have less money and they bear greater responsibility for their families. There is no question that they are impacted significantly more than men by global changes such as climate change, shortages in the supply of consumer goods or reduced social services. The breadth of their tasks also causes, in addition, a shortage of time that can be described quantitatively, at least, as a „twofold burden“.

It has indeed been recognized in recent years that the *effects* of current development can in no way be deemed to be neutral in regard to gender. But only the emergence of another viewpoint, represented by feminist-economic theory development, made it possible to include gender relationships (i.e. cultural, political and economically defined differences between men and women) in the analysis of the **causes and directions of change**.

Women and the „false economy“

Feminist economists complain of a *false economy* that is neither adequate for current needs nor sustainable. But feminist economic thought does not have an easy time when it attempts to coax from the economic mainstream new interpretation patterns that are amenable to women's needs. If sustainable economics are to take account of the situation in which women find themselves, then assignments within the family must not be ignored. Sustainability has to recognize that active, intergenerational care and provisioning require their own resources.

This is one stated objective that is likely to spark bewilderment even among committed advocates of sustainability. In the past, sustainable economic policies referred primarily to dealing gently with nature and the environment, to the benefit of future generations. Consequently, the current discussion recognizes the rationality of the commodities markets in the give-and-take between production and consumption. Neither does a sustainable market economy offer any orientation whenever it is a matter of taking account of the amorphous needs of our lifeworld. Even those economists devoted to sustainability usually disregard all needs beyond the needs of consumption.

It is this realization that gives rise to questions about the objectives and mechanisms, but also about the structural conditions for and limitations on economic activity in a world that is being ever more uncompromisingly subordinated to the dynamics of globalized commodities markets.

Fundamentals, conditions, structures of the concept behind the industrial economy

There is no question that the roots of current economic practices go far back into the patriarchic past, even though the story of the industrial market economy began only with Adam Smith in the 18th century. Smith, whose major work was devoted to the *Wealth of Nations*, concentrates on efficient manufacture and unfettered, worldwide marketing of tradable goods. The fundamentals he laid down over two hundred years ago continue down to this very day to be his successors' mantra in both theory and practice.

Activities that the founding fathers of the industrial economy felt to be non-productive had no place in the economic thought construct. So, for instance, Smith saw household help as a luxury that could hardly be justified. The wages and upkeep for domestics narrowed the resources that could otherwise have been invested in the stock of capital used for the production process. Household service was, in his eyes, an expression of non-productive consumption.

It was suspected that consuming disposables drained resources from the economic cycle embracing production, reinvestment and expanded production. Following in its founder's footsteps, standard doctrine adhered to over the centuries embodied the feeling that the *consumption* of goods after they had been produced was the equivalent of their destruction. Withdrawals – due to consumption – from the circulation of goods, the latter

progressing in an upward or downward spiral, appeared to be something of a bloodletting in regard to the goal of continuously growing wealth.

The *spiritus rector* for this process was (and still is) the *homo oeconomicus* engendered by Smith and visualized as an entirely autonomous, thoroughly rational individual. As producer and market participant he is interested exclusively in his own advantage. Only in his function as the head of the family does he permit himself and his family a modicum of altruism and solidarity. He permits his wife to specialize in the management of the household and protects her from having to compete in the hard-hitting male world. But he also profits from this division of labor. The family is, for him, a place of leisure and consumption. He is spared – not only as husband but also as father – of having to deal with the banal realities of everyday family life.

For many years the subject of housework did not exist for economic experts. Only in the past few decades has there been a metamorphosis of work on the home front – toward household production – and the concomitant integration of women's tasks into the overall economic concept. When looked at more closely, however, household management means nothing more or less than making do with the income available and managing the consumption of purchased goods. It is only consistent that in this model children are assigned a role associated with consumption – or do not enter into the picture at all.

Real household tasks are arbitrary and amorphous. From the economic viewpoint they enjoy a profile associated with the economies of goods, at the very best. Of particular consequence is the nonexistence of a dimension to describe care and provisioning. The absence of a category not specifically tailored to economic optimization ultimately becomes visible on the labor market in the value assigned to services involved with the household

and personal care. They are felt to be non-productive; thus remuneration is minimal.

Down to the present day, associating the household and family with a male actor was an aspect that characterized the system behind the industrial economy. It would have been necessary at some time in the past to take conscious counter-measures in order to relieve services to persons (both paid and unpaid) from the blemish of appearing to imply a reduction of wealth. But even after the end of the so-called labor-based society, modernization of economic theory and practice to align with the needs of women and families has yet to come to pass. Expressed hopes of being able to transform the industrial society into a services economy free of patriarchic structures have not yet become reality.

Women, men and families are expected to master problems triggered by long-outdated principles. The workability of the single-breadwinner household has irrevocably become a thing of the past. And the relationship between the sexes can no longer be seen as the private affair of men (and husbands). Economically connoted terms such as social capital and human capital put the consumption sector in a new light. Last not but not least, it is necessary to revamp the expectation that – with changed consumption patterns and sustainable lifestyles – we can preserve what is now being threatened by unrecoverable loss due to the one-sidedness of an industrial economy.

Current impetus toward reorientation

Over the course of history there have repeatedly been phases in which there was speculation about options for escaping the immanent growth imperatives of the industrial economy. One event that brought together many individuals' hopes for a more humane world was the First Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, held in Mi-

ami in 1991, prior to the UN Conference on Environment and Development. In the Women's Action Agenda 21 for a Healthy Planet the participants expressed their deep mistrust of the industrial development model. They pointed to the danger that women, against the background of their responsibility for care, would be forced to shoulder ever greater responsibilities without achieving guaranteed access to the required resources.

The final agreements adopted by the Earth Summit in Rio embraced women's demands without actually questioning the industrial development model itself. Climate change and the increasing frequency of emergencies in the supply economies around the globe are forcing us to reconsider the situation. We need to strike a post-industrial balance between material production and that which is insufficiently described by the narrowly-focused economic term „consumption“.

Climate change

No one seriously doubts that climate change is being driven by decisions based on economic considerations. Considered to be the primary culprits are the extensive use of fossil fuels and the associated emissions of CO₂ that are so harmful to the climate. People are hoping to achieve a degree of relief by boosting the efficiency with which old energy resources are used and by developing new energy sources.

In contrast to a professional discussion usually fixated on environmental aspects, numerous commentators are now prepared to deal with the larger contexts of an economy based on industrial production. But even those who criticize the *economic system* seldom see beyond the *ecosystem*. The limits of growth are seen above all to be determined primarily by the finiteness of physical and material resources. There is, however, rising awareness that affluence and wellbeing are not identical and indeed are often not even

compatible. As an alternative to a lifestyle with a large carbon footprint, many people are thinking more about spaces for families and friendships, spaces that make possible sensible, goal-oriented living.

A further step in the critiques delves more deeply into the market economy system. Market prices are tailored to the viewpoints of individual companies and their profit motives. They blank out those costs that are borne by the general public or non-participating individual actors. In order to compensate for a deficit in justice generated by the markets, governments impose restraints or fees upon those who pollute excessively. The best-known example is the implementation of CO₂ emissions certificates subsequent to the Kyoto Conference, the intention being to create incentives to develop low-emission production methods.

Studies have revealed the extent to which marketing emission rights involves temptations to circumvent reduction goals. Once again, a burden of costs is imposed on non-participants, expressed in losses of their own economic and social resources. What is new is that committed environmental experts are calling for a linkage of environmental and social research in order to discern the driving forces and mechanisms of the global market and to develop common strategies for a good life.

The predicament of the provisioning economy

The feminist-economic analysis also addresses the effects of an economy defined by the never-ending production and sale of physical and material goods. The situation held by women in this system is, however, thoroughly different from the one held by men. The starting point for the differences is the understanding of „family“ in an economy dominated by industry.

In the theoretical construct of the male householder, the family's internal space serves as a place of care and provisioning for human beings between birth and death. Early theoreticians saw the tasks defined as female and assigned to women as being permanently ensured by civil marriage and private claims to support. It is against this background that the change in the living forms marks the necessity for new approaches in our thinking, followed by thoroughgoing reforms.

In no way is the suspicion to arise that dogged adherence to outdated business models makes some men the winners – and women with their children the losers – in societal change. In the conventional course of discussion it would be all too easy to raise the objection that not only nurturing life but also the monetary costs and the costs to the real economy represented by the *care economy* would be blindly externalized under the dictatorship of the logics of goods.

To date, researchers on families and men's affairs have been more likely to participate in this sorely needed discussion than have economists and environment experts. This is all the more regrettable since not only private households, but public budgets as well tend to feel that services in households and for individuals might be expendable. Since homes for the elderly and hospitals generate high costs, engineers and scientists are thinking about using robots to substitute for costly personnel in some cases. A prototype, dubbed */Care-O-Bot/*, has already been developed and is to be further refined to ready it for marketing at global scale.

For further reading:

Ferber, Marianne u.a. (Hrsg.): Beyond Economic Man, Feminist Theory and Economics. The University of Chicago Press, 1993

Lohmann, Larry: Climate Crisis: Social Science Crisis. A chapter for: Der Klimawandel: Sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektiven, VS-Verlag, 2008 (forthcoming)

Part III: Climate protection and justice – Is that possible without actively addressing androcentrism?

On the critique of androcentrism as a prerequisite for a climate regime and climate policies able to achieve sustainability and justice.

1. Justice and gender

At the center of the discussion on gender are questions about

1. the *assumed* social, economic and political differences between *women* and *men*. Described here are the dissimilar interpretation, acceptance, evaluation and treatment of everything that society associates with the biological gender.
2. the dissimilar evaluation practices, powers of definition and design, and dissimilar burdens and relief that can be observed in *inter-gender relationships* (i.e. in a relationship mandated by social structures). The described dissimilarities are constructed, produced, accepted and perpetuated to reflect biological gender *asymmetries*. Focused upon here is the depiction of the conditions dictated by structures (*differences in evaluation habits, interests, objectives, significance, influence, opportunities and burdens*) and helping to perpetuate gender inequality. It is fundamentally a matter of unfair distribution of societal goods and the prerogatives to shape society; it is a matter of resource use that does not serve the common good. It is a matter of „justification“ on the basis of gender.

Only when we make these dissimilarities – the definition of gender roles and the hierarchic gender relationships – the *subject of questions about justice* and grasp them in accordance with the *gender problems* still in existence can gender problems be recognized and addressed at all.

Justice: Gender differences or gender relationships as the reference point?

If these central relationships are ignored, then the phenomena associated with gender differences will be grasped only on the *descriptive* level. These phenomena *have no informational value* in regard to equal treatment. This can be obtained only if the phenomena are understood as indicators pointing to contexts not previously recognized and enabling later identification of contextualization, interpretation and the like, as may be possible or practiced in the social sphere. Otherwise they are meaningful only through their reference to a *norm* that, however, cannot itself be deduced purely from the differences alone. Whether the revealed phenomena of gender differences deviate from or correspond to the norm is determined by the *definition of normality* itself. And this is what is at stake whenever *androcentrism* is a central barrier to justice (see box). Research on traffic and sustainability and policy consulting has already taken this qualitative leap from a descriptive approach to one based on structure analysis. There the appropriate

differentiation is made between „research on gender differences“ and „research on gender relationships“. This leap has yet to be taken in climate research and policies.

Justice affects both the passive AND the active sides of attributions and rejections

Assigning attributes to any group confronts individuals – each of whom is *per se* unique – with stereotypes and fixed patterns for interpretation. The individuals *have no choice* but to deal with this. If the variety in lifestyles, thinking patterns etc. were as diverse among men as it is among women, then both genders would initially appear to be affected equally, both positively and negatively, even though different substantive characteristics are assigned to them. This might thus be equitable. Or maybe not?

The following are elementary for the confrontation with expectations and attribute assignments – tending to be „a poor fit“ for the individual – when making comparisons of the genders: 1. How were stereotypical impositions and interpretation patterns constructed and defined? 2. Did and do both sexes exert similar influence on this? 3. Are the interests and viewpoints that result from contexts that are ascribed to the „female“ *coequal* to those considered to be „male“? Decisive for the degree of gender equality or gender hierarchy is, in addition, the *logic* according to which the characteristics were separated out and allocated to the sexes.

Justice – An assignment for public purview or „private“ negotiation on a skewed playing field?

The differentiation between „public“ and „private“ spheres, defined and ascribed exclusively specific to gender, does not level out the *gender hierarchy confrontation and adaptation pressure* in the gender relationship. Women move far more actively in both spheres („worlds“) than men. Thus women's participation in gainful employment is a several times the

share of men's participation in family nurture. Burdens and relief were always distributed unevenly, both in regard to gender and between the working worlds assigned to the sexes. This specifically contravenes relations with nature and the society – types of relations that are at the same time thoroughly reconcilable – as has been discovered by the analytical identification of the „crisis of the provisioning economy“. Non-reconcilable and unbearable relationships, on the other hand, are promoted.

This non-sustainable polarization, inequitable in regard to gender, is at the present experiencing a further polarizing impetus due to the „double privatization“ being pursued by the politics of economic liberalization or deregulation. Additional provisioning burdens (and relief) are being shifted from the public sphere into the private sphere. On the one hand, everything that was lost in regard to provisioning quality in the wake of privatization and deregulation is being transferred to the provisioning economy of the private households. On the other hand, only those segments relevant to provisioning that promise profitability and amenability to rationalization are shifted to the private sector and that is done only if a market ensues. The responsibilities and expenditures for provisioning previously assigned to public services (and that they rendered only inadequately in the past) are, owing to privatization, not subject to democratic steering, political discourse and equitable distribution. Quite the contrary: they are removed from such control and are depoliticized. They become the object of non-governmental, non-public „negotiation“ between unequal „private“ operatives.

Given the opposing economic logics inherent to the „female“ provisioning economy and to „male“ gainful employment, differing degrees of readiness to assume responsibility and to accept externalization are bound to collide. The economic terms with which the responsibilities and cost distributions for provisioning

are „negotiated“ are subject to an androcentric definition hegemony in which the „real“ economy, defined androcentrically, becomes the yardstick. The „other“ economies – the public sector working to the benefit of the common weal and households working for the wellbeing of those closer to home – have to articulate themselves in these terms. Otherwise they remain mute and powerless in negotiations.

Justice and gender II: The problem with maleness in society

The *masculinity problem found in society* gives rise to general and fundamental problems with justice.

Supposedly „generally valid“ thought processes have been infected with individual constellations of interest due to the institutionalization of traditionally inequitable gender relationships, gender-specific distortions, asymmetrical evaluations and unacceptable generalizations. Still to be achieved is the active relativization of established ways of thinking, viewpoints and action orientations – specific to disciplines or subjects – to the benefit of more gender-neutral and thus objective alternatives.

Formal justice is neutralized by highly efficacious androcentrism particularly in the areas most critical to defining justice or injustice. The rules that determine how we earn our livelihood, that determine independence, educational options and lifestyles are androcentric in their structures, in both the North and the South.

Androcentrism – the absolutist male perspective in the perception and definition of problems, in theoretical approaches and in the formation of models, categories and terms as well as in the development of methods and empiricism – strengthens and (over-)empowers the one sex while the other sex becomes unsure, unsettled and alienated (de-empowerment). This is the reason for

failure by operatives who could drive change forward to the benefit of a holistic and humanistic perspective.

Substantive justice

The substantive injustice resulting from androcentrism and embodying one-sided, gender-hierarchic pressures to adapt is effective in a highly dynamic fashion. While androcentrism lets men to think, see, process information and feel in ways that are familiar and fully identified, women are subordinated to a „normal“ rationalism that does not align with their own experiences. On either the conscious or subconscious level they feel the deviation of this rationalism from their own ways of seeing and feeling as a burdensome and difficult situation. This is due to the fact that they are forced to grasp their own perceptions as „not normal“. If they approach this dilemma assertively, then they are confronted with a biased burden of proof. They themselves, quite individually, have to uncover deficits in regard to gender neutrality in an institutional setting and describe them in a form that can be articulated, demonstrated and proven. This can hardly be done „in passing“. Rather it requires time, gender-analytical knowledge and the institution's support and readiness to change. It would seem apparent that this aspect of androcentrism – and not „a lack of interest“ – is the reason why women avoid or leave fields that are heavily dominated by men. That is why the potential for change in society shrinks in the face of institutionalized androcentrism. As long as androcentrism is not systematically discussed, a „pressure towards maleness“ will be exerted on how both women and men think and perceive. This gives rise to one-sidedness and a repression of „female“ aspects in political economic, scientific and societal issues. In the absence of a change in perspective, it is impossible to thematize the fact that androcentrism gives rise to unjust and non-sustainable dynamics that are highly effective in institutions and – to an ever greater extent – on society as well.

Androcentrism

The term „androcentrism“ is understood to embrace certain patterns of thought, observation and action in regard to political, economic, scientific and societal issues. These patterns place men and maleness at the center or deem them to be the yardstick and standard while seeing women and femaleness as a „peculiarity“, as a deviation from the standard. The term „androcentrism“ was defined in this manner for the first time by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1911 in her book *The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Culture*. According to Perkins Gilman, universality, i.e. general validity, is assigned to male life patterns and thought structures in androcentric cultures while female life patterns and systems of thought are deemed to be deviant from the norm.

Androcentrism may be grasped as a societal, scientific or political fixation on „maleness“ and as a gender-specific distortion of society, particularly in regard to the claims lodged by this maleness as to its expansion and the power of definition in this society, and to its externalizations. Androcentrism is a specific form of sexism in which femaleness is not *directly* designated as inferior but rather is grasped as „the other“, as „that which deviates from the norm“. It is felt to be *outside* „normality“ and outside „the real essence of things“. Instead, what is connotated by „femaleness“ is disqualified *indirectly* by androcentrism. It is marginalized, devalued as being insignificant for the whole, subjected to male (value) standards and held to be definable in categories derived from those standards. Androcentrism thus possesses structurally efficient, *indirect* effects on society, tending to impose a hierarchy on the sexes.

Given the fact that „human“ is tacitly made equal to „man“ and that the male view of things is considered (without its being questioned) to be universally valid, androcentrism comprises two fundamental moments. On the one hand the constructions of societal maleness current at any given time – together with the associated characteristics, assignments, predispositions, orientation, practices – form the constitutive characteristics of androcentrism. On the other hand the general characteristics, assignments, predispositions, orientation and practices split off from the current construction of societal „maleness“ are moved to a non-male „outside“ and are externalized. At the same time, an illusion that „maleness“ is complete in and of itself is created. This illusion significantly underrates the risks resulting from unrecognized particularity and its elevation to completeness. In reference to the actual totality of societal and human existence, it negligently adopts a radical minority perspective.

Since the problematic equating of „human“ with „man“ and of „maleness“ with normalcy is practiced in almost all contexts, institutions and policy fields without discussion, while at the same time a claim is made to „scientific objectivity“ and „general applicability“, the effect of androcentrism is a more subtle imposition of hierarchy on the sexes. It is thus often very difficult for both men and women to recognize its deeply internalized „naturalness“. It is difficult to recognize a gender distortion in the supposedly „normal ways of looking at things“. It is difficult to recognize this as a pervasive deficiency in gender neutrality in the supposedly objective opinion.

In research, maleness-perspectives are made the standard, particularly in the definitions of problems, in theoretical approaches, in categorization and formulation of concepts, in the development of methods and in empirical studies. These perspectives are deemed suitable for general use. That, and the extent to which they represent limitations on research, on its results and on its conclusions, is – in spite of the claim to objectivity and scientific method – as a rule not examined, specified or made transparent.

In accordance with the male-dominated image of humanity, a structural gender hierarchy is established for dealing with *factual connections*; this hierarchy exerts aggressive adaptation pressures on „femaleness“ in regard to orientation, thoughts and views instead of adapting maleness to the far more sustainable „female“ rationales and action orientations in terms of society, the provisioning economy and ecology.

A numerically equitable involvement of women is thus a necessary – but by no means sufficient – precondition for establishing *justice in the institutional orientation*. A transformative perspective in regard to change by way of gender mainstreaming has been institutionalized only recently and to date only very tenuously. This is due in large part to the general underestimation of the justice problems engendered by androcentrism.

2. What does justice mean in view of prevailing androcentrism?

Androcentrism pervades almost all political fields and scientific disciplines – as both a justice problem and a gender problem. Fortunately the global, European and national guidelines for gender mainstreaming contain several central and potentially effective approaches to eliminating androcentrism in institutional action. It is no accident that the approaches in gender mainstreaming aimed at eliminating androcentrism are those that are fought most vehemently, since this is where the most efficient structural change to the benefit of gender equality will be found. The fundamental approaches for the promotion of equality in view of pervasive androcentrism are listed below.

(1) Gender mainstreaming requires that androcentrism itself admit that it has installed the basic interpretation pattern, one that lays claim to the prevailing concept of gender *neutrality* while at the same time perpetuating gender distortions. Gender mainstreaming contains guidelines on how to achieve equity in the face of the prevailing situation.

- The burden of proof is reversed. It must no longer be necessary to *refute* claims to gender neutrality externally, from the outside viewpoint, and to do so in one's free time. Instead the existence of gender neutrality has to be *demonstrated* by the institution itself in the course of paid, institutional accomplishment of tasks.
- Then the agenda will no longer include a „supplement“ by incorporating the gender dimension; instead, liberation from gender bias is the goal. Assertively combating potential androcentrism represents a change of strategy, away from repairing what is generally recognized and toward *active, institutionalized and substantively systematic review* and elimination of gender-specific distortions.
- Objectivity and impartiality, as a precondition for the ability to generalize findings, demand not only equal numbers of men and women on the team but also *equal representation in substantive terms* in regard to the views of realities and problems, the contexts, assumptions as to effects, and preferences as regards strategies with the representation of gender expertise.
- (2)** The systematic confrontation *with both sides, with femaleness and with maleness* and their relative positioning. The systematic confrontation is no longer only with the „victims“ but also with the structures that are the source of disadvantages („perpetuators“).
- This will result in entirely *new substantive claims*, different from those demanded by simple *protection* of groups of disadvantaged persons. Gender mainstreaming, as a cross-disciplinary task, implies new focus on the *prevention* of gender distortion in perceptions, this being important to eliminate biased production (of knowledge). Problems may be found in research project design and work organization and can discriminate against or prevent gender-neutral approaches.
- (3)** Taking systematic account of *differences in the situation* of the sexes (the European Council's definition of gender mainstreaming) and the thematization of gender *relationships*. It is not the differences between the sexes that are seen as a problem in gender mainstreaming. The question posed is rather how gender as a social category influences peoples' opportunities, how the matrix of social conditions put gender ascription and experienced gender differences *in relationship one to another*, and what is the *relative angle of slope*. The *relationships* between the biological sexes and the social genders are examined.
- Symmetry embraces the non-hierarchic power of definition for reality and normalcy, the non-hierarchic power to design and shape but also and in par-

allel thereto the non-hierarchic perception of the causes, effects and contexts of problems impacting the sexes.

- As regards the illumination „of both sides“, as was mentioned before, this means that both sides – femaleness as well as maleness in the sense of „gender“ – are not to be observed in isolation but in each case in reference to the prevailing asymmetry; they are to be actively analyzed and thematized.

3. Climate policies that are fair to women vs. climate policies reflecting equitable gender relationships

What do the implementation of gender mainstreaming and the transition to an approach critical of androcentrism mean in terms of climate policies?

What can be deduced from the findings about justice – against the background of identified androcentrism drawn from the basic approaches to the establishment of justice in climate policies and in the development of the climate regime? Two fields in particular appear to be worthy of observation. First, it is necessary to rethink the challenges of climate change and the international approaches to solutions in light of these findings.

This could result in new views of the *dynamic factors* involved in the causes behind climate change, of the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, and of the *selection of climate policy instruments*.

Secondly, the efficiency and effectiveness of climate policy instruments could be increased by eliminating androcentrism in the methods used in climate research and assessment. A task of future climate research and policy development would be to work out the corresponding approaches. Some potential starting

points – developed from the findings of gender research in traffic and transport – are depicted below.

3.1 Change and dynamics – the challenges of climate change

Due to a lack of gender neutrality, the „driving forces“ and intervention options have not yet been identified.

The way in which climate change is caused has not yet been grasped from the androcentric perspective and can hardly be recognized with approaches that are blind to gender. Policies focusing on „maleness“ do not regulate working and living conditions sustainably since important aspects are not taken into account. The expanded demand that gender equality be applied in the interest of *prevention* (cf. Section 2 (2)) is to be applied to the dynamics of climate change.

To be prevented here is the establishment of gender-hierarchic „normalcy“ which inherently and covertly contributes to climate change. This implies a systematic critique of the imposition of androcentric standards and would give rise to the following questions:

(1) Androcentrism – a driving force behind climate change

Ought influence to be exerted, from the justice perspective, on the driving forces or at the end of the pipe? Looking back at experiences with the futility of approaches to justice that were „fair to women“ and looking back in particular at the androcentrism-based structural pressures to conform in one’s ways of thinking and viewing issues, we find clear indications that the driving forces represent highly effective dynamics. Based on the logic of systematic allocations and of the structural adaptation pressures on ways of thinking and viewing issues, the result is superior dynamism among the driving forces. Androcentrism has to be understood as metadynamics that are detrimental to the

climate when seen in an approach to justice that includes gender relationships. This casts light, for instance, on the climate problems associated with transport. The increase in motorization among the population is a central, international, androcentric progress paradigm that contributes to climate problems. The androcentric character of the climate problem (and hence the modernization paradigm itself) is not being made a topic of discussion today in spite of widespread impact due to cross-border pollutant dispersion and the problem's own internal dynamics. No attention is paid to the enormous potentials for countering these changes; these potentials are not utilized, let alone implemented.

Similar instances will be found in the energy sector. Introducing technology into the household has in the meantime become a central androcentric strategy for dealing with the crisis in family care work. But it in no way meliorates the crisis. But it does lead to increasing energy demand in the private sphere; it forces the energy dependency of private households and in so doing culminates in an expansion of social injustice. This gives rise to the risks of moralizing and the individualization of questions associated with political steering („feminization of the responsibility for the environment“). In terms of climate policies, revising such androcentric paradigms is absolutely essential.

(2) Adding gender aspects to „liability in accordance with historical responsibility“ and „burden sharing“

„Historical responsibility“ is one of the three principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. This principle has to date been applied only to North-South relationships and not to gender relationships. A gender-related application of the principle to existing gender relationships would, however, would correspond to responsibility logic in view of the consequences for the climate that result from andro-

centrism. It might be possible to model this factor and present quantitative proof in the transport sector.

(3) Fundamental consequences for the selection of climate policy instruments and strategies

Instruments have yet to be developed that would aim at attenuating the atmospheric effects resulting from androcentrism as well as aiming here at the driving factors in particular. Such instruments are lacking particularly in the North, where they could act as multipliers. This reinforces the weight that ought to be assigned to mitigation strategies.

The instruments developed in the past have been criticized internationally in gender-related climate research. The criticism indicates that the instruments reinforce instead of attenuating climate-damaging androcentric dynamics. Their modification would be worth examining.

The financial steering instruments are effective only in part. In those sectors where monetary rationalism is relevant to decision-making these instruments are far too weak, this being due to the low cost level. They are, however, applied in sectors that adhere to the rationality of a provisioning economy, sectors that embrace social, spatial and temporal links and sectors that satisfy non-substitutable tasks associated with coping with the world. Those steering instruments are entirely inappropriate in such environments and, in fact, produce justice problems. Common to both social justice and gender equality is that action options are incomparably small in reference to prevailing conditions. There is only a limited body of options available in avoidance strategies that are amenable to the efforts of gender equality.

Consequently, the direction to be followed in the development of instruments – and the nature of the instruments required – is made a subject for debate.

3.2 Efficiency and efficacy – hindrances due to androcentric aggregation and negotiation levels in climate policies

One may think that androcentrism will produce negotiating problems, problems in deciding on the course of action to be taken, and problems associated both with methods and the range of activity. It would be difficult to overlook the problems associated with androcentric structuring in climate-related negotiations and those associated with „aggregation levels“ in problem perception, problem negotiation and problem solution.

- In the structures associated with the causes for and the negotiation of climate problems, the aggregation level of the „nation-state“ proves to be problematic in identifying the causes for emissions.
- A traditional androcentric construct (as was shown above) is the claim of gender neutrality without any proof of the same, even where unequal gender relationships are known to exist. This lack of objectivity becomes glaring when – as is usual in climate policy making and research – this androcentric construct is applied to the emissions calculations without any basis for so doing (and in spite of indications to the contrary which however, with gender mainstreaming, would not even have to exist). The distribution of national emissions data across the society as a whole in the form of „emissions per capita“ not only dismisses the provisioning economy (and the allocation of service rendered to the person who benefits), but also takes no account of the particular, gender-specific, male emissions.
- This aggregation level is not suitable for national and transnational causation structures. This level has – taking

justice aspects into account – come to understand intrasocietal income distribution but not the transnational, intra-societal asymmetry between the sexes and the role of androcentrism for the development path followed by the North, in conjunction with the causation for climate change.

3.3 Confidence in the direction taken to achieve equality in climate policies: Gender impact assessment

It is advisable to apply the globally oriented gender impact assessment technique (which was developed in gender-related transport research) as an instrument for future gender analyses and estimates as per gender mainstreaming. It can also be used as an *ex ante* examination of the decision-making paths in climate policy.

For further reading:

Spitzner, Meike and Regula Modlich (2006): Women at the Crossroads with Transportation, the Environment and the Economy. Experiences and challenges in Germany. In: *Women & Environments International Magazine* No.70/71 „Women & Urban Sustainability“ - Spring/Summer 2006, pp.31-34.

Spitzner, Meike; Weiler, Frank; Andi, Rahmah; Turner, Jeff (2007): Urban Mobility and Gender. Promoting the regional public transport system in the greater Jakarta area. Focus on Development Policy – KfW Entwicklungsbank Position Paper, October 2007. Frankfurt a.M.

Turner, Jeff and Meike Spitzner (2007): Reality check: How effective have efforts been to integrate gender into donor agency transport interventions? In: United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - UN-ESCAP (Ed.): *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific*, Vol. 76 „Gender and Transport“, p. 35-50.

Spitzner, Meike (2008): Sustainability and Societal Gender Relations - Problems of and Alternatives to androcentric Concepts of Sustainability and the Dimensioning of Economy, Ecology, Institutions and Sociality. In: Joachim Spangenberg (Ed.): *Sustainable Development - Past Conflicts and Future Challenges. Taking Stock of the Sustainable Discourse*. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, p. 198-221.

Conclusion: The curtain has fallen, but many questions remain

Gender justice does not point to a hole or a gap in an otherwise intact, homogenous „blanket“ of sustainable climate policies. Instead it indicates needed reorientations. These affect access to and the distribution of resources and the recognition and appreciation of provisioning and caregiving activities as a fundamental societal task. This can hardly be done, however, under the social and economic conditions now prevailing. Rather the analytical category of androcentrism shows us in particular that the vigilant use of resources and common property will have to overcome androcentric logic rather than expanding that logic by way of further market-based instruments, commercialization and tradable rights.

A call to patch the holes in our blanket

Given the fact that ours is an organization operating in an industrialized country, we have decided to focus on the situation prevailing in the industrialized North. This is joined with the hope that gender experts from the South will continue the debate and augment it with the southern perspective. Ultimately we hope

that - with this critique of the prevailing understanding of economics - we will have made a small contribution to eliminating the one-sided focus of climate policies on economic instruments. How rapidly a system biased toward growth and quick profits can collapse is something that is now unfolding before our very eyes.

We are aware that this paper has many gaps. In some cases the concrete reference to the climate debate is missing; in other cases the individual sections are based on divergent concepts in reference to gender. We would still be sitting around the conference table today if we were to discuss to completion all the differing positions and if we were to pursue to their conclusion all the discussion threads that arose. Our willingness to accept gaps in the paper gives you, our readers, the opportunity to get involved in the debate. We would be happy to learn that you have used this paper to further your own thoughts and would be particularly grateful for information about the results of your thinking. And to our readers in Germany we would extend a sincere invitation to join in the discussions at the Working Group 'Women' in the German NGO Forum for Environment and Development.

Berlin and Bonn, November 2008

Who we are

Working Group Women in the German NGO Forum on Environment & Development

The working group was established in 1995 by women from NGOs and scientists. It aims to integrate gender perspectives as a cross-question into environmental, developmental and sustainability politics. Since environmental and developmental issues are discussed as bearing no gender relevance, the women's working group strives for shedding light on this 'blind spot' and exposing hierarchical structures. We add our own contributions to the internal and public discussion to open up a perspective that includes the dimension of gender equality. That way the women's working group has critically accompanied different national and international political processes.

The working groups puts its main emphasis to the issues: global economy, energy and climate politics, traffic, critical understanding of nature, biodiversity, sustainable and caring economy and development.

www.forumue.de

genanet - Focal Point Gender | Environment | Sustainability

genanet - the focal point gender justice and sustainability has been created to raise awareness of gender equity in environment and sustainability policy and to integrate it into research, policymaking and the activities of environmental organisations. Genanet provides an informative and strategic discussion forum for experts from politics, administration, planning, research and education whose work focuses on areas where gender, environment and sustainability issues all converge. In this way, genanet is a think tank, identifying innovative approaches to and forging new links between the topics. It develops position statements on current environment and sustainable development issues, which are disseminated among the public to foster a gender-sensitive perspective and provides the basis for political lobbying at national and international level.

www.genanet.de

Related to gender justice in climate policy genanet is closely linked to the international network **GenderCC - Women for Climate Justice**. Their platform for information, knowledge and networking provides the required information to mainstream gender into climate change debates, programmes, measures.

www.gendercc.net



Contact: German NGO Forum Environment & Development
Koblenzer Straße 65 · 53173 Bonn
Phone +49-(0)2 28 - 35 97 04 · Fax: +49-(0)2 28 - 92 39 93 56
E-Mail: info@forumue.de · www.forumue.de