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NATIONAL SECURITY AND GENDER FROM ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

ABSTRACT

Every society has a gender system, a male-female dichotomy. This paper reviews different approaches of Social/Cultural Anthropology that study human societies, culture, behavioral patterns, and other aspects affecting human culture including gender. There existed beliefs that females relate to nature and males to the culture, some researchers saw gender as a behavioral function of the sex. In the culture of hunters and gatherers gender was related to reproduction and food distribution, which stimulated the formation of the first artistic performances and the creation of beauty cosmetics and decoration. The contemporary political agenda of Gender equality concerns mostly equal voting rights and equal employment opportunities. Therefore gender-related demonstration of power and control play an important role in security.

Keywords: security, gender, culture, anthropology, evolution

1. ABOUT GENDER AND SOCIETY. WHY ARE ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES RELEVANT.

There are several arguments to advocate why Cultural/Social Anthropology as the youngest and the most holistic out of humanities is important for the relation of National Security and Gender. Even though anthropology is a very young science, it has evolved significantly reflecting

the development of human society.

One of the most important anthropological theories put forward in the 19th century by Franz Boas is Cultural relativism. Cultural relativism is the idea that the beliefs, values, and practices of one culture should not be judged on the criteria of another culture. Each culture works in its way. According to the concept of cultural relativism, a researcher should set aside his or her cultural norms to understand another culture and explain its worldview. Because a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture. Even if they appear strange from the outside, they make sense when being contextualized within their particular cultural framework. This paper aims to map various theories from evolution and cognitive anthropology, through material/economic anthropology to political anthropology because they focus on different perceptual causalities.

Every society has a gender system, a male-female dichotomy. Nevertheless, the concept of Gender Equality and most gender-related matters have been diverted and misused by the political lobby within the last decades.

Former Finnish Minister of Defense, Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn, stated that Gender is not only about women - it is about both - men and women. Women are not all the same, they have their expectations of life, different situations in the societies. Everybody is an individual with his or her own needs. (REHN, 2015)

2. EVOLUTION AND COGNITIVE APPROACH

Hunters and gatherers are considered a basic stage of cultural evolution. Contemporary natural tribes are a reflection of the culture of hunters and gatherers.

There is an interesting gender perception of the Ihanzu tribe from Tanzania, where women's rain rites take the shape due to people's ideas about transformative processes that privilege gender symmetry over gender

hierarchy. However, the ritual logic is ultimately independent of what men and women do and do not do, think and do not think, in their everyday worlds. (BLOCH, 1987)

There are also natural tribes with ritually performed confusion of gender roles as a collective representation of contradiction to express that the processes of production and reproduction are mystically intertwined.

In the last century, many anthropologists promoted a theory that females relate to nature and males to the culture. Therefore, the logical outcome from this struggle of natural versus civilized processes was the dominance of men over women. Some anthropologists even saw gender as a behavioral function of sex.

When we look back on the connections of femininity with nature and masculinity with culture, Contemporary Society is now dealing with the Breakdown of Natural Equilibria and is desperately seeking a solution. Because "the growth of human domination over nature is also accompanied by increasing threats to humanity." (ŠKVRNDA 2009: 2, 4; HOFREITER 2006: 13, 21)

This trend forces us to reconsider or reevaluate the dominance of men over women. However, this is in general a philosophical question, it seems necessary to point out a possible correlation.

3. ECONOMIC AND MATERIAL APPROACH

In the culture of hunters and gatherers, womanhood or femininity was substantially related to menstruation which distinguishes women from men in terms of reproduction. And menstruation was bound to the lunar cycle, while the lunar cycle impacted hunting and food provision. The distribution of sources (meat, prey) was about the monopolization of food provision versus manipulation with reproductivity and fertility.

The development of the first art is also bound to gender and

reproduction. Symbolic culture arose as a response to increasing levels of reproductive stress experienced by females during the rapid phase of encephalization. Because pronounced menstrual bleeding was valuable for extracting mating effort from males, even non-cycling females “cheated”. The main reason for female usage of body (beauty) cosmetics was the changing level of male discrimination in choosing females who will receive their investments. Menstruation is the most responsible indicator of imminent fertility, so attracts the male effort. This sexual selection caused competition between women (because of the polygyny of early hunters and gatherers) who started to use red pigments to signalize fertility. Male preferences of decorated women supported the extension of ritual traditions. Usage of RED PIGMENT is done primarily by female coalitions in puberty and nubility rituals as a costly signal which is crucial for mate choice and marriageability because red color symbolize beauty and sexual maturity. (POWER, KNIGHT, DUNBAR, 1999)

4. POLITICAL APPROACH

Today we need to take into consideration the fact that women's emancipation is quite a newborn trend when it comes to human evolution from the first hominids or even Homo sapiens (a few million years ago) through Hunters and Gatherers to contemporary society. We should not forget the fact that in many modern and developed countries (or societies) women got their voting rights quite a few decades ago.

The political agenda of Gender equality is not only about equal voting rights but also about equal employment opportunities. Feminists use to talk about limited employment options for women and the system of feminine versus masculine jobs.

This question has two dimensions - one is concerning women's option to choose between work and household according to the family's economic

situation, the other one results from the division of workload in the household. While legislation protects the dual role of women (as mothers and workers, women are disadvantaged in the labor market competition with men as a result of their heavier workload at home.

Women's liberation was framed strictly in terms of legal equality and equal labor force participation. Western socialist feminists claim that legal equality and high rates of labor participation indicate women's superior position in socialist nations vis-a-vis capitalist ones. The primary cause of gender inequality was defined as capitalist relations of production. On the other hand, feminists from post-socialist countries point out the problems of multiple roles socialist women have been expected to fill - a good worker and competent professional, a caring mother and wife, and an enthusiastic comrade. (OCCHIPINTI, 1996)

Women from post-socialist countries (not only during the period of social transition) are a good example of women's confusion in their "maternal role", their "worker role" and their "family role".

Occhipinti who did her fieldwork in former Czechoslovakia in 1994 noted the development of an "anti-feminist" movement represented by women returning to the domestic sphere (raising children and housekeeping) that was promoted by men and women alike. Some theorists suggest that this retrenchment is a response to the Communist party's version of feminism, part of the post-1989 backlash against all things communist. Hence the family became a locus of opposition and liberation. (OCCHIPINTI, 1996)

As Eastern European women recently have begun to reject the state's former definition of feminism, they also have found little meaning in liberal Western ideas of feminist liberation. With the emphasis on motherhood, women's greatest political power may come when they organize as mothers. One of the most popular Czech women's organizations, called Prague Mothers, is dedicated to women's right to choose motherhood over work and focuses on environmental issues. (OCCHIPINTI, 1996)

Feminism or female activism admittedly played an important role in the development of modern human society.

The major theme of feminism was women's attempts to gain a voice in politics to oppose the "historical silence of women in public life" because the main problem was contrasting possibilities of expression for men and women. But the silence was not necessarily a result and a symbol of passivity or powerlessness, there existed cases when silence was a form of political protest as a strategic defense against the powerful. (GAL, 1989)

Images of women throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union focused on the woman as mothers, as workers, and as active citizens. While women were active in the "Velvet Revolution", both as prominent dissidents and as participants in mass demonstrations and strikes, only a few women emerged in leadership roles in political parties after the change of political regime. (OCCHIPINTI, 1996)

5. GENDER AND SECURITY

The behavioral patterns examined by the theories mentioned above have a common feature - they are an expression of power and control. Power can be used for good purposes but an aggressive manifestation of power brings security threats.

Men and women are different not only in biological, cognitive, or emotional aspects but also in the tendency to aggression.

DAVID argues that everyone benefits when men learn the difference between power rooted in talent and knowledge ("power from within") and power rooted in the control of others conditioned to be submissive ("power over"). (DAVID, 2012)

The theory of Cultural Relativism should be taken into account in CIMIC and Peacekeeping operations. Only with a proper understanding of the operational environment with its variables and elements, it is possible to

assure effective and human use of power and military decision-making tools and methods. And CIMIC and Peacekeeping operations are just those where the involvement of women is more than necessary.

Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn (former Finnish Minister of Defense) stressed out that peace operations; peacebuilding and peace negotiations are not possible without women as an active part of them. In most cases, women are those who have to implement the decisions. By statistics and research, those peace agreements where women were involved are much more effective, their results are much more sustainable and peace more long-lasting. The results of peace agreements consist not only in reconstructing the physical environment (building, bridges, infrastructure...) but also in the psychological building of the life after the conflict, healing the war trauma, social health, and education. (REHN, 2015)

These claims support the need to balance the representation of both genders in every area of human society including security. Yet gender quotas are another aggressive tool suppressing natural competition and prevent women from demonstrating the added value of a feminine approach.

Some psychologists believe that there is no big difference between men and women in terms of psychological traits and abilities, including cognitive abilities, verbal and nonverbal communication, aggression, leadership, self-esteem, moral reasoning, and motor behaviors. (APA, 2005) On the other hand, many researchers are explaining the diversity which can be used for the benefit of human society.

Stereotypes suggesting women as more cooperative than men are broken by decades of research proving that:

- men cooperate better with other men than women cooperate,
- women tend to cooperate more than men when interacting with the opposite sex,
- men are equally cooperative, particularly in situations involving a dilemma that pits the interests of an individual against the interests of a group.

(BALLIET, LI, MACFARLAN, VAN VUGT, 2011)

Arguments from economic and material approaches about hunters and gatherers and evolutionary theories may explain the diversity in cooperation of men and women when faced with a social dilemma.

Competition between women may result from the evolutionary need to secure enough food for their children and themselves. This “instinct to marry the most successful hunter” led women to be attractive expressing their beauty and fertility.

“Male coalitions have been an effective strategy for men to acquire resources, such as food and property. Both hunting and warfare are social dilemmas in that they firmly pit individual and group interests against each other. Yet, if everyone acts upon their immediate self-interest, then no food will be provided, and wars will be lost. To overcome such social dilemmas requires strategies to cooperate.” (BALLIET et al., 2011)

American Psychological Association published also researches about female veterans with PTSD who faced sexual assaults. This problem is much more serious than gender quotas or women ratio on the labor market including the military personnel. How can violent people who hurt, attack, harm, and threaten other people ensure national or international security?

5. CONCLUSION

The perception of gender was formed throughout human evolution. Even though the perception of gender and gender-related matters was changing dynamically during the last decades, there are still traits of hunters and gatherers culture in modern society. There are undoubtedly situations where instincts affecting our behavior are stronger than learned and culturally acquired behavioral patterns.

Gender confusion is dramatically increasing lately, similarly as

confusion between private and public issues. State security and defense are built on rules, discipline, courage, wisdom, and readiness, not on chaos, confusion, or weakness.

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