Engendering Deliberative Democracy: Women's Environmental Protection Problems

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Abstract

In this paper I consider the western, male-centred practice of deliberative democracy and its suitability for addressing cross-border environmental problems that intersect with the issue of women's protection, featuring the use of threat or force (hereafter referred to as environmental-women's protection problems). Central to this paper is the consideration of the extent to which the problem-solving practice of deliberative democracy is relevant for processing such problems. It is contended that although deliberative democracy as a political methodology in the form of inclusive participatory designs is relevant for processing environmental-women's protection problems, it needs to take on board feminist environmental insights from the broad area of feminist ecology. These would include: a focus on activism contesting structural injustices, relationships, ecological embeddedness, security, women's agency, gender training and culturally-sensitive community development processes. Ultimately, such considerations would make deliberative democracy more meaningful in a problem-ameliorating sense for such problems.

Keywords: *feminist ecology, democratic problem-solving, problems of ecological security*

Introduction

But why my friends, must we deny <u>our</u> women any notion of reason or common sense?...I will not cease to repeat it, woman's most important duty, apart from her social responsibilities, is to be a good mother. —Mustapha Kemal Ataturk[2]

I leave my native land. Unbinding my feet I clean out a thousand years of poison. —Jiu Jin[3]

Consider the following scenarios: In scenario one, a woman aged 60 who served as an adviser to municipal and imperial officials and participated in (otherwise) all-male public assemblies, was violently attacked on her journey home. She was seized by an ecclesiastical group of black-clad men, dragged and taken to a church where she was completely stripped of her clothes and murdered with shards of pottery. Once they had torn her body limb from limb, her remains were burnt. From a Bishop's point of view associated with the church where she was taken, her punishment was deserved because of what he termed her paganism and satanic wiles; beguiling people through her enchantments! (Dzielska 1995).

In scenario two, a man is engaged in writing public lyrics. He writes: "In the beginning God made various kinds of women with various minds. He made one from *a hairy sow*... [and] one from the sea ... she holds you at a distance like a bitch with pups. For woman is the biggest *single bad* that Zeus has made for us; a ball and chain" (cited in Lattimere 1960).

Hypatia's plight in Alexandria (415 C.E.) and Semonides' prose in the 7th century are not historically isolated cases of violence or abuse against women. Nor are they used here as exemplars of *environmental*-women's protection problems. They are presented here for two reasons: First, to illustrate in a western sense how women have been scripted as outside human-kind by reason of their sex; and second, to suggest the importance of linking democracy[4] to the *protection of women*.[5]

My underlying premise is that, "the claims of nature and people especially where these are relations of vulnerability, require democracy both in order to recognise these claims and as a method of resolving the conflicts and problems these claims raise" (Barry 2002, 135). Nevertheless, it is far from clear whether democracy and democratisation can/will be sustained in polities throughout the world if the rate of environmental decline continues apace. Thus, defending the advancement/deepening of democracy is an important project, as is the processing of problems associated with environmental degradation. But what sort of democracy is meaningful to advance and deepen in the political order sense?

Procedural electoral democracy alone, which involves

the "process of expressing one's preferences and demands, and registering them in a vote" (Young 1996, 120) is flawed for several reasons. First, electoral democracy is not necessarily able to effectively process the claims of muted groups (i.e., those whose vocal and/or physical articulations have been rendered inarticulate by the dominant communicative system of a society).[6] Nor does it necessarily make its way into the public interstices of everyday life. Additionally, electoral democracy is not the *end state* of democratic transition as some western and "newly democratised polities" (e.g., Chile) assume; thus, advancing it at the expense of civility and social responsibility and justice (Pearce 2004). Furthermore, a wide range of scholars have shown that procedural electoral democracy can be disparaged for its casting of divisions between public life and private life, its liberal individualism (Phillips 2000, 513), as well as its embeddedness in exploitative market economies (refer to Fotopoulos and to related Journals: *Democracy and Nature* and *Periektiki Demokratia*).[7]

Before pursuing the topic of democracy further, however, it seems appropriate as a starting point in this introduction to lead into a discussion of a particular set of environmental problems and how the issue of women's protection is nested in them.

There are a host of cross-border environmental problems around the world involving the degradation, depletion, and/or scarcity of water, forests, and agricultural land (Fox, Renner, and Westing 2001). These problems have been discussed in a growing body of western environmental policy-related literature which ranges from exclusively ecocentric, to exclusively anthropocentric resource-use approaches.[8] Generally, while the bulk of the literature from exclusively ecocentric and various other anthropocentric approaches refer to environmental problems in so-called northern contexts, problems documented toward the exclusive anthropocentric end of the spectrum characteristically refer to so-called poorer rural southern contexts. This paper engages only with this almost exclusive anthropocentric analysis of environmental problems related to so-called southern rural contexts.[9] Given that these problems exist, it would be untenable to denounce any degree of differentiated moral responsibility towards such problems, and to recommend abstention from any collective problem-solving efforts (Schmidtz and Goodin 1998). The argument that nature "ought to seek its own balance," as some deep ecologists in the past have advocated, is ethically objectionable. (Obviously, such scholars would reserve a different judgement for their own families!)

The conventional study of cross-border environmental problems related to so-called southern contexts is enormous and difficult to categorise for comprehension efficiency. Nevertheless, what is striking is that since the mid 1990s, envi-ronmental problems are increasingly represented as exhibiting an environmental scarcity-violent conflict linkage (along with intermediate and consequential effects such as migration and poverty). That is, environmental problems are increasingly portrayed by a growing number of western scholars and policymakers as problems in which nonlinear feedback linkages exist between resource scarcity and various intensities of [socio-political] conflict" (Homer-Dixon 1995, 2).

The idea that environmental resource scarcities can contribute in causally distant, yet powerful, ways to socio-political conflict is a significant way to think about various political conflicts across the world[10] (particularly considering that traditional political purviews built on the denial of the human-ecological relationship preclude this possibility (Plumwood 1993). For instance, consider the area of water scarcity. It makes eminent sense for those of us with some exposure to ecological literacy or grounding in ecological sensibilities to contend that water, has both livelihood and political importance (particularly if it is a shared resource between two countries) so that its depletion — whether through extensive agricultural irrigation and/or privatisation (and thus inequitable distribution of its use) can become a source of local, national, or international conflicts,[11] particularly if a colonizer consciousness is involved. It also makes eminent sense to add that these conflicts can happen in the midst of rural civilian populations, and that civilian protection issues will be centrally involved. Yet, on closer inspection, accounts of environmental problems featuring the environmental scarcity-social conflict nexus not only gloss over the issue of civilian protection, but glaringly leave out how this nexus intersects with the pressing issue of women's protection and the urgent need for action to address this issue. For instance, countless rural women across the world are subjected to physical and verbal violence within environmental scarcity and its complex pathway to social conflict and beyond. Sure, some of these women may be armed but myriad of others are not. In this context, my paper will begin by foregrounding the intersecting issue of women's protection within the environmental scarcity-social conflict nexus. In short, it will begin with an overview of the central features of environmental-women's protection problems. At the same time it will attend to the issue of institutionalised problem-solving action with respect to such problems.

It ought to be noted at the outset however that there are numerous diverse ways that environmental-women's protection problems can be processed in a problem-solving sense. One way, which appears consistent with advancing and deepening the project of democracy, is the forging of democratic *participatory* practices in which affected or potentially affected people of a 'polity' can fairly and substantively participate collectively in problem-solving rather than rely on pri-

vate 'command and control'[12] decision-making and electoral politics which poorly represent politically excluded constituencies (Hager and Wagenaar 2003, 2). The strand in democratic theory that suggests this is known as *deliberative democracy*.

Generally speaking, deliberative male-authored *democracy* accounts,[13] which emphasise the opening up of democratic spaces in public spheres (including transboundary ones) as well as an active public decision-making tied to realising a 'common' or collective good, rather than simply a narrow self-interested one, appear particularly promising for participatory problem-solving. So too does the conception of 'Habermasian'[14] processes they advocate which largely appear gender-neutral in intent.[15] For instance, as Young (1996, 122) concisely describes it:

> [I]n the ideal of deliberative democracy, participants come to a political problem with an open mind about a solution; they are not bound by the authority of prior norms or requirements. The process of political discussion consists of reasoned argument. Participants put forward proposals and criticize them, and each assents to a conclusion only because of the "force of the better argument"...The goal of deliberation is to arrive at consensus ... even when this is not possible and participants resort to voting, their result is a collective judgment rather than the aggregate of private preferences.

Within this spirit of deliberative democracy with its emphasis on qualitative communication and participation, democratic participatory designs, notably citizen 'juries,' panels, or forums, as they have been variously called, are conceived as among a range of practices conducive to collective problem-solving.

Laudable as this all sounds, borrowing an *analytical* lens grounded in the broad area of feminist ecology[16] (rather than from analytics arising from within the discourse of deliberative democracy) cautions against accepting unequivocally the institutionalised knowledges of male-authored texts when subordinated women are not sufficiently considered, and allows for a critique about what Plumwood (1995) refers to as "systems of rationality."[17]

In this light, while my paper will attend to outlining the characteristic features of environmental-women's protection problems, at the same time it raises the question of the extent to which the practice of deliberative democracy in the form of, for example, citizen juries and panels would constitute a meaningful problem-solving framework for addressing these problems in a problem ameliorating sense. Thus, it sets out to complete three tasks: Firstly, to briefly outline the characteristic features of environmental-women's protection problems

or more precisely, the distinguishing features that the issue of women's protection brings to the environmental scarcity-conflict nexus; secondly, to outline deliberative democracy as a pragmatic problem-solving framework; and thirdly, to briefly discuss the limitations of practically oriented democratic deliberation and to draw attention to the need for feminist environmental insights from the broad area of feminist ecology. The following elaborates on these.

The Characteristic Features of Environmental-Women's Protection Problems

> [H]er life was lived through overlapping interactions between extended family (rural and urban), the physical locality, the wider cultural and resource-using locality, development-defined groups (for sewing, saving, vegetable growing), the church (a strong local and international 'community') and the school where she taught with its own networks of teachers, pupils and families...(Cleaver 2001, 45)

A discussion of the features of environmental-women's protection problems — which imply making complex phenomena tidy — inevitably obscures important nuances tied to discrete problems in contextual situations. I cannot hope to make this a comprehensive briefing paper on such problems. What I aim for is simply to direct attention, in an overview sense, to the need for their consideration in the absence of sufficient consideration in male authored accounts, rather than to engage monistically in comprehensive problem investigations and definitions.

An adequate approach to a discussion of the characteristic features of environmental-women's protection problems, I would suggest, requires the preliminary recognition that environmental and social problems, although grounded in real conditions, have an interpretive dimension with *material* effects, as distinct from merely discursive effects. What this means is that while real social problems exist, these problems are described, interpreted, and invested, with various meanings by public policy enquiries and have discursive, but also *material* social change consequences (Bacchi 1999). This is an important point aptly conveyed in an example provided by Bacchi (1999, 46). She writes: "[F]or the woman raped ... [h]er feelings will reflect the 'lived effects' of discourse and it is sadly inadequate to suggest that she simply start to 'think differently' about sexuality. There are real bodies and real people living the effects of discursive conventions, and it is essential to attend to the harms they experience."

From the foregoing account it ought to be clear that a degree of problem interpretation is at work in problem representations, and that this 'discursiveness' has implications for

the lived material world; problems are not problems of discourse alone. Within this context, there are various ways to approach the representation of environmental-women's protection problems in order to highlight the nature or characteristic features of such problems. A more sophisticated way, I would suggest, is to draw attention to some systemic features which characterise problems (Semmens 2001). This view also resonates with Bacchi's (1999, 110) understandings since they "bring attention to the holders of power and influence, and would disrupt a version of the problem which in the end holds those who are oppressed responsible for their oppression." Towards this end, Warren (1996) suggests that both conceptual and empirical approaches are equally valid.

On the conceptual level, diagnostically, environmental scarcity and the violation of women's human rights and capabilities, which can feature in this, could be interpreted as sharing intertwined forms of domination associated with ruthless exploitation (Salleh 1984; Plumwood 2000, 214). For instance, it could be argued that they centrally involve a master or colonizer consciousness (let us recall Semonides!) embedded in a constellation of social forces that instrumentalise both the non-human biological realm and women (historically associated with this realm) treating both as the inferiorised 'other' in a framework of oppositional reason (Plumwood 1993). In this respect, environmental-women's protection problems are not merely problems that foreground the need for environmental (non-militarised) security, but also the need for women's security, since gender-based discrimination would be a central facet in the intertwined forms of domination.

Given this conceptual situation involving the colonizer consciousness, agents like global and local political/cultural/household economies predominantly based on patriarchy, large transnational company operations, armed rebel militia, and armies and authorities attached to the state, need to be *foregrounded* rather than backgrounded as instigators in the ecologically degraded rural habitats that poorer resourceful women (particularly the widowed, the orphaned, the adolescent mother populations) inhabit. This point is often obscured in the environmental scarcity-social conflict literature, which is more inclined to point to more generalised intermediate and consequential agencies like poverty and/or resource capture.

Yet transnational company operations, armed rebel militia, and/or armies and authorities attached to the state can collectively or differentially be implicated in environmental scarcity, depletion, social conflict, and human rights violations concerning women.

For instance, this is how Antonysamy (2003) tells it:

> In [a region] in India for the past five months ... more than 65 bore-wells were sunk to extract the ground water for the production of Coke [Coca-Cola] and Maza. The police are giving protection to Coca-Cola, and the people waging struggle, especially women and children, are behind the bars. That is today's democracy. This is only one sample. There are hundreds of ongoing struggles in India and all over the world against industrial pollution mostly affecting the poorest of the poor marginalizing them further and further ... Rivers are major livelihood resources for the communities. For example in Tamil Nadu, apart from being affected by the pollution by the industries, the rivers are facing another problem of sand mining by powerful contract companies ... Due to such extensive sand mining by the river sand mafia and its corrupt tactics, the adjoining wells used for irrigation and drinking have become dry as the ground water keeps going down...

In the environmentally degraded regions of the Great Lakes from the Eastern Congo to Burundi, such as rural Bujumbura, where environmental scarcity/degradation is entwined with armed militia conflict and women carry the burden of livelihood maintenance, it has been reported that, "the most nauseating cruelty and ill-treatment imaginable on rural women from utter misery to sadism" can be found. In numerous cases, women are raped to death and/or buried or burnt alive as they venture out at night in search of food (Bag Essa 2004, 4). In Burundi in particular, the phenomenon of sexual degradation is so great that unwanted pregnancies are contributing to population increases and the spread of HIV/AIDS (Nivonizigive 2004, 7).

In cases where overt violent conflict is not intertwined with environmental scarcity and women are not killed, environmentally induced social conflict can result through poverty and/or violence in women's decisions to migrate into gender-discriminating interstices in democratic polities to secure a livelihood. These sites can further discriminate against them. Discrimination is evident in women's experiences in refugee settlements and in situations like slavery, trafficking, and dangerous and/or arduous working conditions in obscured political sites (e.g., economic free trade zones propped by multinational companies, known as maquiladoras in Mexico).

Discrimination also appears in the indifference shown by numerous state officials who fail to adequately investigate complaints or address this issue of justice. For instance, women workers in the maquiladoras in Ciudad Juarez have been exposed, because of poor working conditions and long bus journeys, to horrendous crimes, which include domestic violence, abductions, and mutilations. Mexican state authorities are refusing to recognise the common features of such

crimes rooted in gender-discrimination (Amnesty International 2003).

Arguably, more than fragmentary case studies could be used to convincingly establish the validity of these claims. For instance, empirical and quantitative scientific-based studies ought to be used to further assess the validity/merit of the environmental scarcity-social conflict nexus and its intersection with the issue of women's protection. Environmental problems, however, are problems that become displaced across time and space (Dryzek 1997) making definitive causal inferences difficult. Also, geographical satellite mapping methodologies are limited with respect to capturing problems associated with female mobilities in obscure political sites.

Statistically also, data is thin with respect to the issue of women's protection and its link to the environmental scarcity-social conflict nexus, because women often do not appear on official local and international statistics and/or are misrepresented by authorities. Data omissions also apply in the case of particular agents such as transnational companies who are quite adept at practising the art of 'submarining'— a widely-used term that suggests an invisibility associated with their involvement in outsourcing operations under various company names. Yet the absence of quantitative and empirical data does not mean that the existence of environmental-women's protection problems ought to be considered suspect. Evidence does not guarantee validity particularly in the eyes of government authorities. In the words of Jordan (2002, 29):

> [e]ven when presented with incontrovertible evidence of extensive trafficking of all forms, many governments still refuse to acknowledge that trafficking is a problem ...Governments consistently fail to consider ... the perspective of the trafficked person and are particularly inept at understanding the problem from the perspective of trafficked women.

To summarise, environmental-women's protection problems are located in the uncivil interstices of non-democratic, but also in nominally democratic, polities; are problems of a colonizer/master consciousness; and involve violent and degrading gender discriminations. Given all this, and in view of my paper's introductory 'section' on democratic practices in which public participation, deliberation, and action for problem-solving are foregrounded, it ought to be obvious why the problem-solving deliberative democracy methodology offers an appealing 'design'; one which holds relevance for environmental-women's protection problems.

Undoubtedly the political problem-solving methodology is *relevant* for environmental-women's protection problems, but to what extent is it *meaningful*? This warrants a closer ex-

amination of the problem-solving turn in deliberative democracy. Thus, it is to this that I now turn.

Deliberative Democracy as a Pragmatic Problem-Solving Practice

It is important that you know how to curb your anger
Especially when you are a woman
Hold back your laughter
Only letting out correct amounts of it
But most of all
You've got to be prepared to show
... that you know how to remain silent
About what is done to others
(Jastrzebska 1999, 134).[18]

The mainstream literature on classic deliberative democracy theory since the early 1980s is diverse. Nevertheless, it has largely been preoccupied with the wider theorisation of democracy and with debates centering on governance legitimacy issues for enhancing the quality of the public sphere, to the virtual exclusion of democracy as a social change problem-solving methodology for processing an increasing array of cross-border environmental problems. Feminist scholars from within the deliberative democracy project have also been engaged with this project on theoretical grounds in emphasising the making of polities more gender-sensitive with respect to themes such as communication, participation and the recognition of difference (e.g. Phillips 2000; Young 1996; 2002).

In recent work, a number of environmentally sensitive theorists and pragmatists (e.g. Fung 2003; O'Neil 2002) within the terms of a qualified form of Dryzek's (1997, 84) 'democratic and environmental pragmatism,' have represented deliberative democracy predominantly as a political problem-solving method. None of these works, however, explicitly address the matter of environmental-women's protection problems so that one is left to presuppose that such an urgent matter is subsumed, however uncomfortably, within wider environmental debates. Indeed much of the controversy about the character and meaning of deliberative democracy as practiced in this environmental context centres on: (a) whether it is radical enough to address the ecological problematic; (b), whether it is ecologically rational or legitimate enough to admit and resolve ecocentric environmental interests (Zwart 2003); (c), the decision-making problem of enabling environmental outcomes under value pluralism (i.e., incommensurable or incompatible values); and (d), the suitability of advancing the project of institutional public participatory designs for institutional 'designers' through explicitly developing public participatory models for deliberation. Although all

these controversial areas are relevant for a substantive examination of deliberative democracy as a problem-solving practice, my own paper engages with the latter focus due to the time constraints.

The growing interest in the institutional participatory practice of deliberative democracy can be attributed, on the one hand, to a sense that "practically inclined democratic deliberation" (Cohen and Rogers 2003, 240) provides a more responsive context for addressing social problems — including environmental problems — than, to borrow Fung's words (2003a, 338), those ambitious plans for "plate-tectonic shifts in political and social organisation," and on the other hand, a widespread discontent with liberal democratic electoral politics (Smith 2003, 54). As noted by scholars like Fung (2003a, 339), individuals and organisations seldom have the time or the "wherewithal to affect" large-scale tectonic changes, and "the institutional forms of liberal democracy plus techno-bureaucratic administration seem increasingly ill-suited to the novel problems we face in the twenty-first century" (Fung and Wright 2003b, 3).We could add to this by saying that some newly created democratic polities, particularly in non-western countries are much less likely to fear inclusive democracy as understood by scholars like Fung.

Under practically inclined deliberative democracy, democratic participatory designs have been advanced under a model known as 'empowered participatory governance' (which includes but is not restricted to designs such as citizen 'juries' or 'panels' among a range of institutional design choices). This empowered participatory governance model according to Fung and Wright (2003b, 15) "can be expanded both horizontally-into other policy areas and other regions-and vertically-into higher and lower levels of institutional and social life" particularly as it promotes a range of deliberative fora for problem-solving. (So far so good with respect to the introduction of meaningfulness for environmental-women's protection problems.)

Arguably however, if we turn to Fung and Wright's discussion on *countervailing power in empowered participatory governance* (2003, 260-289) the model of empowered participatory democracy exhibits enormous tensions between the promotion of interest-based democracy and deliberative democracy in its movement towards institutional forms of participatory governance. It ventures very closely to privileging existing representative democratic problem-solving structures that involve organisational representatives (informed by the countervailing power of civil society), rather than advocating, empowering, and promoting the active participation of 'citizens,' particularly women, in problem-solving for problems that centralise the colonizer consciousness and gender discrimination. In other words, it resonates with what Torgerson (2003, 117) would call "the development of a dis-

sident policy professionalism," with its emphasis on "reversing the order of policy discourse from a technocratic to a democratic pattern" kept in check by forces and mechanisms that would reduce or contain dominations in the interests of "a democratic mode of policy/ planning discourse." In this respect, it closely resembles the 'multi-stakeholder approach' arising from participatory policy and planning discourses. This is not necessarily a negative movement. In fact, multi-stakeholder approaches appear to be an advance over administrative sectoral problem-solving. Nevertheless, the point is that they are not new, nor particularly deepening of democracy in a critical deliberative empowerment sense.

For instance, 'outside' the context of practically inclined deliberative democracy discourses, 'multi-stakeholder' approaches have been promoted under various guises such as inter-agency forums in gender and development and operational relief contexts, and in urban safety contexts, on local, domestic, and international scales. They involve key statutory and non statutory organisations, as well as 'ordinary citizens'— *once* a problem has been interpreted or defined by the public professionals. In some cases female-citizen friendly methodological tools have been used such as 'women's safety audits.' Arguably, however, these approaches are insufficiently critical when it comes to empowerment and involvement of affected women populations and lapse into the administrative reasoning of efficiency; in some cases even stacking the odds against women 'citizens' participation. For instance, in one case, involving the issue of women's protection from domestic and urban violence in Britain, the stakeholders involved a local solicitor, a representative from the probation service, a city council representative, a crown prosecutor, a health authority, a welfare agency representative and a local women's refuge representative. (If you were a woman who had experiences associated with environmental scarcity and conflict would you feel secure enough to participate?) So much for critical deliberative democracy's emphasis on the engagement and inclusion of the affected in "focussed problem-solving ... and deliberation!" (Cohen and Rogers 2003, 243; see Young 1996).

Given that environmental-women's protection problems, if we recall, are open to a variety of problem constructions by public enquiries due to their discursive dimension; have real material consequences; and intrinsically concern gender-discrimination in areas beyond formal democratic sites, there is a need to foreground the removal of gender-discrimination in a substantive, rather than a nominal sense, closer to the ground of everyday life if democratic participatory 'designs' are to have any meaning in a problem-solving sense for environmental-women' protection problems. In this regard they need to engage with the promotion of authentically non-gender discriminatory participatory 'designs' in the form of 'Cit-

izens Juries' (or forums) for problem-solving. These have been understood by environmentally oriented authors as resonating with the spirit of deliberative democracy (see for instance O'Neil 2002; Zwart 2003). What do we make of these as they are currently conceived by male authorship?

Fishkin and Luskin (2000, 17) concisely describe the essence of this political problem-solving method as follows: "The shared idea is to gather citizens together in small groups to discuss policy issues face-to-face, thus providing both opportunity and incentives for the participants to behave more like ideal citizens." Smith (2000) adds to this picture. He states:

> *that citizen forums share a number of features. [A] cross section of the population is brought together for three to four days to discuss an issue of public concern; citizens are exposed to a variety of information and hear a range of views from witnesses who they are able to cross-examine; and the fairness of the proceedings is entrusted to an independent facilitating organization.*

We could add to this by being more specific. The institute of Public Policy Research in Britain describes the process along these lines: A representative group of 12-16 people are selected with no formal alliances using a stratified random selection method (this may be with respect to a community or affected population). This group meets for approximately four days. During the process it is briefed about a particular issue and engages in discussing possible approaches towards problem outcomes by cross-examining witnesses who introduce various aspects of a problem from various angles. The 'jurors' collectively decide and report on the outcome of their findings with the assistance of skilled moderators or facilitators. The decision need not be unanimous or consensual.

While the 'Citizens Jury' model appears to be more meaningful for environmental-women's protection problems, the standard conception of the Citizen Jury problem-solving model is, I would contend, reflective of masculanised thought posing as gender neutrality, not so much in its logic-style (e.g., like Semonides) or intent, but by effect. The following elaborates on this.

Making Participatory Designs Meaningful for Environmental-Women's Protection Problems

Unlike Hegel's or Aristotle's political philosophical works, which are blatantly sexist or intrinsically biased against women, the ideas associated with deliberative participatory designs are not explicitly sexist. In fact, they can be commended for their attempts at gender-neutrality in so far as they draw no distinction between men and women's reasoning capabilities and see no problem with the inclusion of women in participatory designs under the model of empowered, participatory governance, or in the standard 'Citizens Jury' model (which has become somewhat sidelined in it). Yet feminists have long highlighted that masculanisation of thought can often pose as gender-neutrality in some cases by intent and in others by effect. Is this the case with participatory designs associated with the model of empowered governance?

Feminists like Young (1996) and Phillips (2000) have expressed over the years dissatisfaction with the way certain themes and topics with respect to communication, reason, and participation get addressed or fail to get addressed in deliberative democracy given that they have gender implications. Hence they have proposed a re-thinking of deliberative democracy as 'communicative,' or more recently, 'inclusive' democracy. They have noted, for instance, the need to admit a wide variety of communicative/speech styles including forms of greeting, testimony, and narrative, noting also that emotions are integrally connected to dialogical exchanges. It is to the credit of male deliberative democracy scholars — who are interested in furthering and deepening the deliberative democracy project in new directions — that they have taken on board such insights over the years.

Yet for the area of environmental-women's protection problems, practically inclined deliberative democracy, and the standard 'Citizen Jury' model which is embedded in it, may be too narrowly conceived and needs to pay more attention to themes like deliberative communicative content and process, since these may be covertly privileging maleness, as Lloyd (2000) would put it.

For instance, arguably, for affected women populations in their role as 'jurors' or 'witnesses' in 'Citizens' Juries,' participation and inclusion is not merely about the right to speak and join in decision-making in predominantly male-designed forums. It is about being secure enough to speak, being listened to in the fullest sense; and problem-solving from a wide empowerment rather than narrow deliberative base (that is empowerment in all spheres of affected women's lives). It is about taking *substantive* action and being met with a *substantive* responsiveness not only in national, but also transnational contexts by democratic facilitators and policy professionals. This means access to material resources, and access to further deliberative fora. Significantly, it is also about opening up the procedural norms of participatory designs like citizen juries and panels for discussion by 'jurors' and 'witnesses' (Something that the standard model of 'Citizen's Juries' leaves out). For example, it would allow the 'jurors' to define and construct situational problems through the assistance of skilled moderators or facilitators and to choose their

own witnesses. (Something which is not encouraged by the Standard 'Citizens' Jury' model because it may distract from objectivity and consensus.) It would also allow the framing of questions by jurors such as 'does one need formal citizenship status to participate in 'Citizen Juries'? What is the nature of power in these designs? How have the boundaries between public and private been drawn? What forms/topics of discussion and forms of communication have been deemed inadmissible?' (Benhabib 1989). Participants' silence on these questions does not necessarily signify reduced awareness in respect to their framing. As one poet so aptly put it: "I may be silent but I'm thinking. I may not speak, but don't mistake me for a wall" (Shigeji 1999). Women, regardless of ethnic origin and/or literacy, can appreciate the need to ask such questions (framed in non-academic terms, of course). It does not require a Habermasian cognitive competence. In some cultures, for instance, when domination becomes too much for women to bear, their way of showing this is not through dialogue. Consider this:

> *Grandmother used to drink like a man ... When grandmother was in a pub one night, a man with a long beard came in. He goes up to her and says, 'Have you a light, my pretty? ... My grandmother gets some paper, rolls it up, pushes it in the fire, and says, 'Here's a light, my pretty,' and she puts the paper to his beard and it goes up in flames!* (Okely 1975, 78).

In sum, all this calls for gender-sensitivity, not gender-neutral 'masculanised' thought.

The idea that deliberative participatory designs, (including the 'Citizens' Jury' model), may be too narrowly conceived for addressing cross-border environmental-women's protection problems draws support from a range of critical scholars from within the discourse of deliberative democracy (e.g., Cohen and Rogers 2003), as well as from the environmental stream. Eckersley (2002), for example, although she is concerned with a wider ecocentric environmental project, nevertheless aptly captures the mood of deliberative democracy's critics by suggesting three general limitations concerning its problem-solving methodology. She argues that deliberative democracy is "insufficiently critical and emancipatory when it comes to the perspective of oppressed and marginal groups," that "it is too instrumentalist in the way that it seems to close off non-instrumental democratic encounters and the opportunity to engage in dialogue for dialogue's sake; and third, that it relies on a "liberal humanist, moral premise rather than on explicit environmental values."

Given practical deliberative democracy's narrow base, what contribution can insights from the area of feminist ecology bring that would make the practice of deliberative democracy in a 'design' sense more meaningful for processing environmental-women's protection problems? If we consider the central project of feminist ecology to be "feminism that is ecological and an ecology that is feminist, as King would put it (cited by Plumwood 2003, 213), then some important themes, I would suggest, point in the direction of activism contesting structural injustices, attentiveness to relationship-building, ecological embeddedness, security, women's agency, gender training and culturally-sensitive community development processes.

What direction would these take? Borrowing from the spirit of deliberative democracy ...

Why don't we all think about it?

Endnotes

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2. Used here as an example of masculanised thought. Cited in Jayawardena 1982, 170-171.

3. Jiu Jin was a 19th century Chinese revolutionary feminist. This is part of a poem she wrote en route to Japan (Jayawardena 1982, 117).

4. Used here to mean a macro and micro-political order aspiration that is not merely formalistic, is opposed to tyrannical rule, and is processed through principles of freedom of expression and tolerance of diverse beliefs, equality, transparency, and non-violent assemblage.

5. In the sense used here, the protection of women means safeguarding their human rights and human capabilities. Unfortunately, the notion of protecting women has been associated with men's assumed role of protector. 'Protection' has expressed itself throughout histories as men's control over women. In 19th century China, for example, 'protected' women were financially kept by men for sexual and reproductive services. In many 21st century cultures, women are killed or maimed in the name of protection. At the state-level, suggests Mohsin (2004, 43), male control "expresses itself through the state ideology of nationalism."

6. I owe this term to an anthropologist named Ardener (1975, 22).

7. Fotopoulos belongs to the more radical inclusive democracy camp, which can be termed 'revolutionary inclusive democracy,' for it postulates that insofar as representative electoral democracy is grounded in the market economy, then it must be supplanted entirely. This is an understandable sentiment in terms of vision, but in terms of pragmatism it is not feasible in the immediate future.

8. By this I mean that at one end of a continuum the environmental purview is ultimately on affected non-human (biological) populations in the interests of exclusively non-human (biological) populations, while at the other, on affected human populations predominantly in the interests of human populations.

9. The traditional definition of southern contexts characteristically refers to a diverse set of poorer countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and parts of the Middle-East. Nevertheless, it can also refer to poorer regions within Eastern and Western European countries (e.g., parts of Lithuania).

10. Nevertheless, while the environment-violent conflict nexus is a useful one, positing the state as the explicit or implicit referent of secu-

rity and ultimate value that demands protection (as some theorists do in the study of this nexus) is problematic when seen through a gender lens.

11. Indeed, such a view has support from numerous case studies conducted by researchers engaged in the Environmental Change and Security Project at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in the late 1990s.

12. By private 'command and control,' I mean, decision-making in which public authority is sidelined so that decision-making is made from within companies or by bodies associated or dependent on them.

13. Deliberative democracy is not a homogenous body of thought and theorists emphasise different concerns (see for instance Cohen 2002; Dryzek1997; and Fishkin 1992). Nevertheless, this core emphasis is shared by a number of accounts and chosen here for its relevance to the problem-solving context.

14. Associated with Jurgen Habermas' communicative ethics on cognitive competence and morality.

15. I say 'largely appears,' because among other things, the feminist ethic of care (read as sensitivity and empathy) along with an emphasis on relationship-building is obscured. Arguably also, affected women participants are not necessarily liberal individuals uninhibited by norms or requirements.

16. To say this is not without controversy. The area of feminist ecology consists of a voluminous, diverse body of eco-feminist literature. On some accounts, an *analytical* frame may be antithetical to feminist ecological bodies of thought for ontological reasons to do with the creation of objectification and othering. Nevertheless, I draw my support from eco-feminist scholarship which relies on insightful analysis to back their own claims.

17. For elaboration, see the 'section' on environmental-women's protection problems.

18. Used here to make the point that problem-solving practices can 'mute' affected women by their seemingly gender-neutral constructions.

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