

Gender and the need to hear and heed the overlooked in sustainability-based global environmental governance

K.Morrow@Swansea.ac.uk



Hillary Rodham Clinton
School of Law | Ysgol y Gyfraith

The Importance of Viewing Existential Threats as Sustainability Issues

- Recognising that the economic, environmental and social aspects of human endeavour are interlinked is only the start ...
- Acting on that recognition is imperative
- The **social limb** of sustainability has been relatively neglected – but arguably needs to move to centre stage for us to progress



Sustainability and the Imperative to Change the Shape of Global Governance

- Science can only take us so far:

‘We can so easily be misled into thinking we have knowledge when actually often all we have is data.’ Sandi Toksvig: *Between the Stops* (2019)

- Change depends on active and inclusive human agency – we urgently need to address the social limb of sustainability
- Human agency requires a voice for all and the means to secure a hearing for that voice

Structural/systemic malfunctioning

- Whose voices dominate?
- Where is the benefit?
- In practice this type of problem prompts the asking of difficult questions:

‘Who really wants to be alerted to a structural system that benefits them at the expense of others?’

Reni Eddo-Lodge: *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race* (2017)
- Global environmental governance and structural inequality



How Does Gender Affect Governance?

- 'Gender is expressed at many levels. It is related to individual identity, to knowledge production, to the interaction between individuals, to institutional and to cultural practices. It is both material and ideational. As a power relation, gender intersects and is interrelated to other forms of power and to differences in political agency and access to resources.' (Annica Kronsell, Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions 7 (2013) 1– 15, at 2, drawing on Lykke, 2010)
- Gender and reactions to risk

Gender – not just ‘women’s issues’

- Evolving approaches to exclusion based on sex/gender
 - Women
 - Women and Gender
 - What this could cover as our understanding of gender evolves:
 - LGBTQI – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex
 - LGBTQQIP2SAA - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirit (2S), androgynous, and asexual
 - LGBTIQCAPGNGFNBA – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Curious, Asexual, Pansexual, Gender-non-conforming, Gender-Fluid, Non-binary, and Androgynous
 - What matters: equality, inclusivity and intersectionality



Why it matters

- Principle and practicalities
- Environmental degradation affects all – but especially the vulnerable
- Gender is a source of structural and practical vulnerability
- Gender is a significant axis of exclusion from having a voice in law, policy, and decision-making - we are beginning to address this – but thus far in a fairly limited and superficial way
- Gendered lived experience is an underacknowledged source of agency
- We need more than data to secure our future, we need to fully harness human agency ...

Credits

- Images
- Slide 2 - Indiana University South Bend, Centre for a Sustainable Future
- Slide 4 – UNSDG icons
- Slide 5 – flagshop.co.uk