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Gender and Accountability: Challenges for Reform in Developing States

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Anne-Marie Goetz: Today I'm going to be addressing the issue of governance reforms, and the question of when attention to woman's rights and gender equality comes into the picture in the current governance reforms discussion. Any of you who work on development or conflict know that governance is the name of the game right now; a big challenge in post-conflict states is to rebuild economies and establish democracies as much as possible, and to do that you need stable states and efficient bureaucracies, you need to minimize corruption, and to address human rights violations. So there is a vast architecture of "governance reform" unfolding in the world right now. This is not only true in post-conflict areas, but also in the straight development aid field; since the World Summit, states have committed themselves to doubling or tripling the quantity of aid that poor countries will receive, on the condition that they meet basic good governance conditions, and there are an elaborate set of indicators to measure good governance performance.

Unfortunately, none of those "good governance" indicators tell us anything about women's political participation, woman's human rights, or the way woman experience corruption, and so on. Yet, governance has always been an important framework for attaining feminist goals, whether in developing countries, post-conflict countries, or this country. The state is an essential ally in efforts to transform social relations; we need states to help women establish an institutional survival alternative to dependence on men. States can reinforce women's subordination or can strengthen women's labour, reproductive, and other rights. That is what governance is about for women: guaranteeing their human rights, their property rights, their rights to their children, and so on, so they can have autonomy. But states rarely meet the targets they set themselves in signing international women's rights agreements or in their own constitutions, because state institutions and personnel internalise gender biases, and facilitate the masculine capture of public resources, private assets, and citizenship rights. Gender equitable governance requires addressing endemic corruption, bureaucratic ineptness, and economic mismanagement -- the stuff of contemporary governance reforms. This requires addressing accountability of public authorities *to women*. States should answer *to women* and they should answer *for* gender equality.

What does governance mean in the contemporary framework I was describing? The World Bank is the biggest spender on governance reforms at the moment, as is the American government, and they describe governance in politically antiseptic terms. It is defined as "the manner in which power is acquired and exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development." This definition does not discuss the legitimacy and credibility of governments, and it does not get into human rights issues in any great detail. In contrast, European and Canadian donors see governance in a more political and human rights framework; they talk about "participatory development." They view participatory development as a value, with a holistic approach to democracy promotion, respect for human rights, reduction of military

spending, cleaning up the public sector, control of corruption, and strengthening of the rule of law.

So let's start with the question of why is there a "governance problem"? There are three perspectives on what the cause of bad governance in poorer countries and post-conflict countries: the liberal, the Marxist, and the postmodernist. The liberal perspective describes the bad governance problem as one where states are detached from people and employ undemocratic means to function. They are not accountable to their populations, they do not respond to their populations, and sometimes they do not even bother getting legitimated by their populations. In some contexts -- Africa is very much singled out for this -- the state is the primary arena through which any accumulation takes place. The whole business is done through the state. The state buys and controls licenses and jobs -- if you want a job in the police, you buy it, and so on. Africa is not the only region in which this occurs, although I am going to focus largely on Africa today. But anybody here who has worked on India, for example, knows there is an elaborate and very interesting system of purchasing public sector jobs in the region. If you want a low level job as a policeman, you pay one year's salary to the person next up in the rung; if you want a higher level job you pay two years of your expected salary to the next person up in the rung, and that person donates most of that money to the political party thugs who are in charge of that particular district.

The liberal view is that in the past states have been overly interventionist and have cramped market development. For a solution, it proposes the state needs to be cut back, and transformed into an enabling instrument in the market. It calls for a transformation of subjects, people who are subject to patronage systems, into independent free citizens.

The Marxist perspective on governance failure does not blame poor countries and their cultures for these problems, but instead identifies external causes of state crisis. For example, an African country cannot possibly survive off of selling cocoa or sugar because commodity prices have declined through globalization. Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in the 1980s limited the capacity of the state to respond to people's needs, leading to political and social breakdown. States, because they cannot respond to people's needs, are less and less seen as legitimate, producing increased political crisis, ethnic conflict, religious revivalism, and civil strife. Of course the Marxist solution is popular struggles from below, a new international economic order, abandonment of globalization, and a reinvigorated developmental state.

Finally, postmodernism is an approach that tries to understand where peoples and countries are coming from on their own terms. Postmodernism sees the post-colonial state as an alien import anyway. This perspective views it as inappropriate, holding that we should not be trying to make post-conflict states conform to this alien idea of what the state is. Even the notion that states have citizens who are rights-bearing individuals is seen as counter-cultural and alien. In this view people are part of communities, they are knitted into social structures where they have rules that are ascribed to them by their gender, race, and so on. In these countries it is very difficult to propose Weberian bureaucratic systems of decision making because everything is determined by patronage. Who do you get your support systems from? Patronage systems are governed by a logic of distribution, not a logic of accumulation, consumption, and investment. There are

many interesting analysts of this kind of politics, such as Jean Francois Bayart. State and society are not separate; they are interpenetrated by personal relations, family relations and fraternal networks. These are served by an avoidance of institutionalisation and an 'instrumentalisation of disorder' [see Chabal and Daloz]. The postmodernist perspective solution is: why try to impose this Western model? Why not try to understand it from within and re-imagine these moral communities, build upon their strengths. This is a somewhat romantic vision. It proposes more local government or locally appropriate government.

The "Washington Consensus" was about basic economic reform and structural adjustment. The "Post-Washington Consensus" is that you now need government reform, good governance, in order to make economic reform work. It concludes that unaccountable state institutions have held the market back, and the state needs to be stripped down and made into an instrument for market development. There must be a focus on strengthening the institutions of market governance and the incentive structures for accountability in public institutions: enforcement of contracts, assertion and protection of property rights, and predictability of rules. Now this is a very Weberian picture, where efficient bureaucracies and effective states will produce economic growth, and that, in turn, will promote democracy. It is the dominant paradigm and it works like this. It is called "downsizing": getting rid of "unnecessary" workers, reducing the burden of public salaries on the gross national product, increasing taxation, introducing merit-based systems of recruitment and promotion, and getting rid of corruption, if you can – a tricky job. In all of this, accountability systems are key, reinforcing the rule of law. Improving electoral systems is necessary so that people can hold their governments to account.

Accountability is about two things: answerability and enforceability. Answerability is about making the power-holder answer for what they did. If you made a mistake, if you stole money, explain why you did it. Secondly, enforceability means if you don't like the answer you get rid of them. So accountability is about enforceability - getting rid of the troublemakers. It is important to bear these two things in mind.

The paradox about accountability is that it is often about weaker parties holding stronger parties to account. Economists call this a principal-agent relationship. We [the constituents] are the principals. We cede power to an agent, the government. We say to the government, "You make decisions on our behalf for the next four years, we will check up on you at the end of four years, with periodic checks in-between." In the end, however, if the government goes to war in Iraq and you disagree, you are actually powerless to stop that in the short term.

Now this principal-agent relationship actually poses some problems when it comes to women's relationship with the state. This is because it supposes two things which are obvious to you and I, but are not obvious in situations where woman are severely subordinated to men – where there are strong patriarchal systems. It supposes: one, that consent of principals means something, and two, that principals have an objective sense of their own interests.

A feminist approach to thinking about the meaningfulness of consent *for women* starts with the fact that in many cultures women's consent is not required. Their consent is not required for sex in marriage, for example, because they have lost some rights in the marriage relationship. Even in most traditional marriage relationships, where women voluntarily consent to a loss of power and a loss of rights, we are not thinking of woman as full legal individuals. As anybody here who has done feminist politics knows, politics is predicated upon the notion that a full, free, consenting individual consents to a surrender of power. Women do not fit into this equation because in most cultures woman are not seen as full free individuals.

In liberal theory it is essential that you have individual, personal relationships with the state, and men have such relationships. They enter into a contract, they pay tax, they get a service, and they get certain rights. They get rights to demand: "How is my money spent?" They get rights to decide over public policy. They are in a relationship with the state as earners and/or as people who will die for their state, as soldiers. Those of you who study conflict from a gender perspective will know this argument: that you are in a relationship with the state if you are prepared to die for it. However, if you are prepared to give birth for the state, that is not quite as useful. It is useful, but not quite the same, because it does not give you the same personal relationship to the state. It gives you a relationship with the husband, or the father of the child. Woman are subsumed to the family, and subordinated to men and the relationships they find themselves in. Frequently this relationship is inscribed constitutionally. For example, the Bangladesh constitution says that women's primary obligation is to their family and that men's primary obligation is to the state. Or, take the example of the Egyptian constitution, which says that if a woman would like to travel she must have her husbands' signed permission when she reaches the border. That suggests that you have no individual relationship to the border police, your husband mediates that. These roles are inscribed constitutionally and also in public policy.

The second problem, when it comes to accountability systems, is that it is assumed that as principals we have an objective sense of our interests. An "objective sense of interest" is a Marxist notion which comes from the idea that you have political interests, which come from certain objective features of your life. For example, whom you work for and how much you earn, class interest, gives some political interest. Now when it comes to gender, it has been very complicated: do we have interests as women that we all share? Within this room we are going to disagree on abortion, we are going to disagree on a number of things. The point is that as women it is often very difficult to come to an objective sense of shared interests as a gender, because we also have other interests that are intersected by class, race, age, marital situation, and so on. Under the Marxist perspective the ability of disenfranchised groups to seek profit in the market, and to seek accountability from the state, is seen as contingent upon sustained collective action based on stable individual and collective identities – not identities fractured by the pull of ascriptive loyalties.

Now, that is pretty abstract stuff. More specifically, what does this mean when we look at government reforms and try to build modern government systems? *These gendered*

dimensions of the state-citizen relationships result in the outright exclusion of women in governance reform. This exclusion allows for the loss of assets, credit access, exclusion from business deals, and exploitation of gender discrimination to suppress wage increases and labour activism.

A feature of government reforms at the moment is using the state to make markets more receptive to global capital, and a good way of doing that is introducing and protecting private property rights. Privatizing communal land, for example, is something that happened in Uganda. Now there is nothing to say that women cannot buy land, certainly they can. The practical reality, however, is that women do not have the wherewithal to purchase land. They have been farming communal land for generations and suddenly it is privatized. Their husband buys it, their household land is now private property owned by the man, and he can alienate it at anytime without her permission. She is completely excluded. Other features of governance reforms do this as well, exclude women outright. They are not part of the brave new state that is created, particularly in Africa through, governance reforms. This is happening right now. For those of you who study development, it is extraordinary that forty years after Ester Boserup wrote her book on women and economic development, where she pointed out that land alienation is what disempowers women, this is happening all over again.

Another way this gendered state-citizenship relationship gets distorted, or distorts women's chances of profiting from governance reforms, is that women are incorporated in the most peculiar ways. Where women are seen as instrumental for good governance, suddenly they get noticed. Women are seen as "natural" community managers, "natural" healers in conflicts, and suddenly they are incorporated as resources for conflict resolution or local government. One version of this is a message from the World Bank that women are good for healing and resolving corruption. There is a series of studies here by really respectable economists and statisticians at the World Bank, such as Daniel Kauffman -- what was he thinking? He says there is a significant correlation between the level of women's rights that exist in a country and the level of corruption, and that there is also a significant correlation between women's rights in a country and the level of liberal democracy. But every correlation that you see between women in politics and low corruption is fully explained by the levels of wealth and the quality of liberal democratic institutions in the country. Other studies likewise repeat this mistake. Dollar, Fisman, and Gatti use the World Value Survey and these behavioral studies to show that women are more trustworthy and public spirited than men. In other words, the more women you have in parliament the lower the level of corruption. These studies are based on people's perception of corruption not measurement, because as you know corruption is a consensual crime. It is not very well reported because both parties, however unwillingly, consent to this crime. A somewhat more puzzling study comes from Gokcekus and Mukherjee. These people looked at public sector organizations which varied from having 45% women in the staff to 70%. When there were 45% or fewer women in public bureaucracies in Eastern European and Latin American countries corruption levels were high. As the percentage neared 45% corruption levels dropped and continued dropping, but then when they got up to 70% corruption shot up again. How do we explain this?

My hunch on this is that certain features of corruption are homosocial. I mean this in the sense that dirty deals in dark rooms, in some cultures, have to happen between members of the same sex. Otherwise, your sexual integrity is implicated, impugned. I know, for example, in Bangladesh I used to study microfinance systems and the men were always ripping off the different organizations they worked for, but they did it in the tea houses at night. They did their deals and they made their arrangements. If a woman were part of that she would be seen as completely sexually compromised. But, if you get more women together maybe more dirty deals between women can happen. I do not know. I like your explanations as well, and I think they show that there is cultural specificity to the kinds of corruption and patterns we are observing. The problem about these assumptions about women and corruption is that they dwell on this essentialized notion of feminine virtue.

These assumptions are also based on *perceptions* of corruption. I think this issue of corruption and gender is really interesting, but we should look at how gender shapes *opportunities* for corrupt behavior rather than making gendered assumptions about how people act. There is little doubt that gender must shape opportunities for corruption. In addition, there are probably gendered currencies of corruption. In other words, women are asked for sexual bribes, or there is sexual extortion – you want to get a good grade? Then you know what to do with the teacher. These forms of corruption are not addressed in the good governance indicators that are used to measure good governance for countries who are ready to get increased amounts of aid.

These [governance] reforms are going on as we speak and there are absorbing huge amounts of money in post-conflict and developing states. There is no question that good governance is needed. We need to create efficient public sectors and get rid of corruption because we know that it has a damning effect on the poor and on woman's chances of profiting from their labor, let alone having their human rights respected.

The formula for governance right now takes the form of this neoliberal approach to the state as a problem. The championing of the private sector in the market as a solution to many of the capacity ills of the state produces serious problems of regulation, coordination, and of course equity in treatment, particularly in state services subcontracted to private providers.

A product of the state being undermined, broken-up, and privatized, is the informalization of authority. This is the least recognized and the most devastating aspect of governance reform for gender equality because as you break-up the state you revitalize traditional power systems and create new and more informal forms of interference and influence. This takes the form in Eastern Europe, for example, of revitalizing the Mafia and private networks of economic activity. This takes the form in Pakistan of revitalizing feudal clans in Balukistan or in parts of Punjab. What is going on is a recomposition of the state and of public and private power leading to the end of the relatively short era of the 'developmental state.' and this has very serious gender implications.

What is the alternative to this mono-cropping of institutions and this market fixated mono-tasking in governance programs? Well, to come back to that postmodern

perspective that I described earlier, there are not many respectable observers and political scientists that make a strong argument for indigeneity, but there are those [see Mkandawire, Adebayo Olukoshi, Mamdani] who argue for locally appropriate solutions. They say, why are you bothering to impose, for example, a modern court system and a modern legal system when there are perfectly good customary dispute adjudication systems and customary systems for adjudicating property relationships. Locally-legitimate institutions, gradually made more responsive to direct local democracy, have a lot of merit. Those of you who work on post-conflict situations know that the sheer cost of trying to bring in the rule of law often leads to a revitalization of customary systems because modern court systems simply cannot cope.

There are some feminists, such as a good friend of mine Celestine Nyamu who is a Kenyan constitutional lawyer and has written a very convincing defense of traditional patriarchal systems of land control in Kenya. She says that modern land titling that has been imposed since the fifties, and revived in the seventies, has resulted in the absolute exclusion of women from land control, because of the male titling that I explained earlier. Gender bias and male purchasing power result in land going to men. Nyamu says under customary law a woman who has lost a husband or a single woman may apply to the customary chief for communal land and get it because it is recognized that women are the food-crop producers and, therefore, no woman should be left without land. She makes a very convincing argument that you work within morally legitimate local traditions and do not slap on these alien imports that force a completely alien notion of the relationship between citizen and state. However, by and large, I do not think this argument is sustainable because, indeed, most customary systems are not that friendly to woman and their rights.

Customary systems are very resistant to challenge and change *and*, as I mentioned, there are really interesting authors on this subject worth looking at. Specifically, Mamdani writes on conflict resolution and customary conflict resolution systems. The advantage of such systems is that it is pragmatic, as someone said the other day in a seminar I attended in New York. They said, "The state does not go beyond the capital in African countries so why are you insisting on pretending and holding people to these rule of law ideas?" It is pragmatic. The disadvantage, however, is there are no strong cases, and you may prove me wrong here, of where such a system has consistently worked to promote growth, poverty reduction, *and* gender equality. That is a lot to ask. But I think there is a danger in this often very politically correct discourse about indigeneity that we are blind to the importance of being critical especially when it comes to woman's rights.

Obviously, my view is that indigeneity and the revival of tradition poses huge problems for women. They pose problems for women because we are back to this question of the individual, the free individual being an alien notion. But it is only alien for women. If you look at men in Africa, they forum-shop between the modern and the traditional system. You got a dispute to adjudicate? First you go to your friends in the customary system, that doesn't work out you go to the modern legal system, you forum-shop. That option is not available for women because they don't have these two identities. Men have their

customary and their modern legal identity, women have just one, they are subsumed to their ascribed identity.

An amazing example of this was in the newspaper today, (New York Times, page three) the trial of Jacob Zuma in Johannesburg, South Africa. You know he has been charged with corruption and rape. He is being tried under modern secular civil law for the corruption charges and also for the rape charges, but now he is trying to pull an indigeneity move on the modern legal system. Because his defense for rape, which he does not deny except that he does not call it rape, is that as a traditional Zulu male (with all the privileges that patriarchal Zulu tradition bestows on him) he had no choice because the accuser, a thirty-one year old anti-AIDS advocate, had signaled her desire to have sex with him by wearing a knee length skirt to his house and sitting with legs crossed revealing her thigh. Indeed, he said, he was actually obligated to have sex. His accuser was aroused, he said, and "In the Zulu culture you cannot just leave a woman if she is ready."

He is playing the indigeneity card and it is extraordinary that it has such legitimacy, that he is not laughed out of court. However, it has real legitimacy because of the kinds of arguments I am talking to you about. The World Bank is in a way enabling this by saying we cannot afford to modernize the entire legal system, the customary system is going to have to do for personal relations and domestic relations.

What is happening right now for women in the context of governance reform in Africa and in post-conflict states is a serious dilemma. If you want to be loyal to your ethnic identity you must accept a subordinate position. There is a sense of deeply fractured and contradictory identities. They are divided between family and community, and other identities derived from women's activism, peace activism for example and anti-globalization activism. Unfortunately, a very dominant pattern in organized women's reactions to the state in Africa, and unorganized women's reactions to the state, is evasion. This is very well explained in Aili Mari Tripp's work. Women would rather just avoid because the state either exploits them, exploits their labor, or re-imposes the institutional requirement of dependence on men through revitalizing these customary systems.

I am going to end by saying evasion is not an option and that women must engage with the state. I am going to, to my own discomfort, take a liberal position on women's citizenship and confess that I am a closet liberal. I think it is essential that women enter into a direct relationship with the state via accountability relationships

Political accountability requires actors to make leaders responsive by collectively impressing their views upon them, and demanding explanations for actions taken. Such collective action requires strong and stable identities, identities that are shaped by relations of production and social reproduction. If social formations require people to fracture their time and hopes between different types of activity, this will result in fragmented identities and weak collective action. In societies where these social formations exist, then, collective action is either small-scale, or dominated by elites.

You all know that in most post-conflict constitutional changes or agreements these days there are quota systems, there are reserved seats to make sure that women do get represented and do get elected into positions of power. That is extremely important and should never be undermined. Simply being present, however, is not enough. There has to be a capacity for women in society to hold authorities, including elected women, to account. There are some serious gender failures in accountability systems, specifically the accountability systems that are being promoted by the World Bank and by the international community, and these can be seen in the following areas:

- (1) Substance: Often violations of women's rights or the neglect of their needs, are not seen as accountability failures, or problems.
- (2) Seekers: Women's groups or women as a political constituency lack the leverage to demand answers from power-holders. I have spent most of this talk discussing how there are weaknesses in women's capacity to demand accountability because they are not seen as individual rights bearers and do not see themselves as such. Cultural systems do not give them this privilege.
- (3) Targets: Who is accountable? Donors? Governments? Multi-level governance confuses lines of accountability. When you've got governance split up between private providers for this part of your health care and this part of your education, who is accountable if it goes wrong? The private provider? The state regulator? How do you track them down? You have got international organizations as well interfering.
- (4) Methods: Key accountability institutions are inaccessible to women. Can women really take a case to court, especially a collective action or public interest case?

So here are some essential analytical tools for looking at accountability situations and breaking it down by gender: First of all, most accountability failures are discussed in terms of sheer capture, and that means corruption, the capture of public resources for private gain. Are there gender specific forms of capture? Can we find cases where men are capturing resources and rights that belong to women? Can we speak of gender specific forms of corruption? I think we can. As I described before, there are gender specific forms of sexual extortion.

What about kinds of bias that are not picked up by accountability systems? There are two kinds of bias that I think are important to look at, the first is mandate bias. Many accountability institutions do not feel they have a mandate to address injustices against women. We have seen this in international courts and war crimes tribunals. It was not considered to be part of the work of tribunals to address crimes of sexual violence until women prosecutors brought it up.

Second, there is the unintended, accidental biases that come from race and class privilege. We are so accustomed to doing things in a certain way we fail to see that these ways and methods of doing things are inaccessible to other people. For example, you want to take a case to court? In Latin America you have to be able to speak Spanish, you have to be able to travel a long way and pay for legal services. It is also impossible to pursue class actions. A very important form of accountability reform in that respect has been the

introduction of public interest litigation in India, for example, which enables people to take cases to the court on behalf of a disenfranchised group purely on the basis of writing a good letter to the judge. The book I wrote with Rob Jenkins, *Reinventing Accountability: Making Democracy Work for Human Development*, addresses this kind of thing in great detail. It describes the new forms of accountability seeking around the world and all kinds of innovations that are trying to make accountability systems more accessible to citizen action. Public interest litigation is one example, but there are many, many others, such as citizens engaging in horizontal accountability functions like public audits, for example.

A quick example of what I mean by this comes from Rajasthan, in Northern India. Rajasthan is described as a feudal state. It's very patriarchal, and there's a group of mostly women called the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), the Worker's Peasant's Power Association whose husbands have migrated to cities to sell lemonade by train stations. What the women do for a living in this drug-prone area is they get minimum wage employment on government poverty relief schemes. That means they sit in the hot sun on the side of the road and they break rocks by hand and they build roads, bridges, and culverts. It's a dreadful work, but it pays. Technically, it pays the minimum wage. Of course it does not pay the minimum wage because the government engineer is there and he'll say, "No ma'am I'm not going to give you the full wage because you're one inch short today on your quota" or he'll say "I'll pay you next month" and he never does. So he is pocketing the money.

This group of women got together and said we want to know where our money goes and why we are not being paid. They went to the local government offices and they said, "Show us the accounts, just show us where the government money came and what was spent on that poverty reduction scheme." Of course in the government office they said, "You have no right to information under the constitution because there is an official act that dates from 1917 and comes from the British government..." So the women made friends with the office cleaners and got the information. They got photocopies, not just of the accounts but also every single bill, voucher, and invoice. This included the precious labor employment wage register, which has the name of Sheshila Banu how many days she worked on the road project, her thumbprint, and what they paid to her.

This group then organizes public hearings, people listen, gents and wife. All they do is put up a tent in the hot sun and stand under it and read out the accounts. It sounds extremely dull, but it is absolutely electrifying. They read out that Sheshila Banu worked for ten days in Udaipur breaking rocks and Sheshila Banu is standing there. She falls over laughing and says, "That it is impossible, at that time I was visiting my sick grandma in Jaipur, I could not have possibly been breaking rocks." Or they'll say, Renan Sobhan was also engaged in this project for ten days, and again everyone falls over laughing because he has been dead for twenty years. Or they'll find a bill saying Rajiv Lal was paid fifty thousand rupees to repair this school roof. There is the school – no roof. Rajiv is standing there and everyone is saying, "Where's the money? Where's the money?" and he says "Nobody asked me, nobody gave me the money." and so on and so on.

These affairs are quite amazing. Women step up and testify, which is quite extraordinary. Then they add up what is missing and they present the local authorities with the missing amount and say, "Where's the money?" The amazing thing is, the local authorities confess, usually. They say, "Yeah, I stole it, but I had to re-pay my election expenses. It cost money to get you guys elected. I had to buy you boots or soap for the ladies." Or sometimes they give the money back. If they do not, this group goes to the police and lodges a criminal case and there is an investigation and a court hearing and so on. Interestingly, they have substantially reduced corruption in their area. So this is what I mean about direct citizen engagement, this is a public audit. Usually this function is done at a very macro level by a distant, technical authority. However, the above method has been replicated throughout India to great effect. It is an interesting innovation in holding states to account, and it has strong gendered elements.

I thought I would end with a provocative statement. I've suggested here that the existing alternatives to governance reforms are not very attractive from a gender perspective. Marxism, sadly, is not an option, nor is Socialism. The postmodernist solution is frankly a romantic recreation of a traditional past. I think that what we have seen around the world is not a pretty thing. There is social disruption, women are being forced out of old livelihoods through capitalism, through market and governance reform, as have men. Conflict shapes and changes people's roles, but all of this has a creative dimension as well. As you know, those of you who study conflict know that conflict often opens a window of opportunity in gender relations, a chance to change social relations. So does capitalism.

I am not a big defender of capitalism at all, but I do think that its creative destruction is something that can be exploited by women. It is dangerous to throw up our hands and say, "It's all so terrible" and "We have to boycott McDonald's." There are changes in market relations that actually do put woman on a more even footing with the state. I am not saying this is easy, I am certainly not saying it is pretty. Changes in social relations, such as the shrinking of powers of domestic elites in relation to international capital and the shrinking privileged position of men in labour markets, have created opportunities for women. Women have taken advantage of this in export sector jobs, education, connectivity to outside world, migration, and local government positions. What we should be looking for is a shift in women's market engagement, a shift that includes institutional survival possibilities that are not predicated on dependence on men. That means access to property rights, and clean access to markets.

Similarly, with democracy we need to see a shift in women's relationship to the state, we need to see women both elected and acting as a constituency and holding elected representatives to account. We are seeing changes in these social relations around the world that are changing the power of domestic elites in relation to international capital, and that is not necessarily healthy. But we are also seeing changes in the power of men and in the tyrannies of both men and domestic elites. Yes, there is terrible gendered backlash but I think it is an important role for the international community to say, "This is happening, we are not going to stop it, but maybe we can make it work for women."

Biography

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