

# **Agriculture and Sustainable Rural Development in Times of Crisis**

**Critical Engagement from a Gender Perspective  
25 and 26 of January 2013**

**Beyond Food Security:  
The Concepts of Food Sovereignty and  
Meal Security**

**Meal Security and Poverty Reduction –  
Who cares for our daily meals?**

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# Meal Security or Food Security? That is the Question

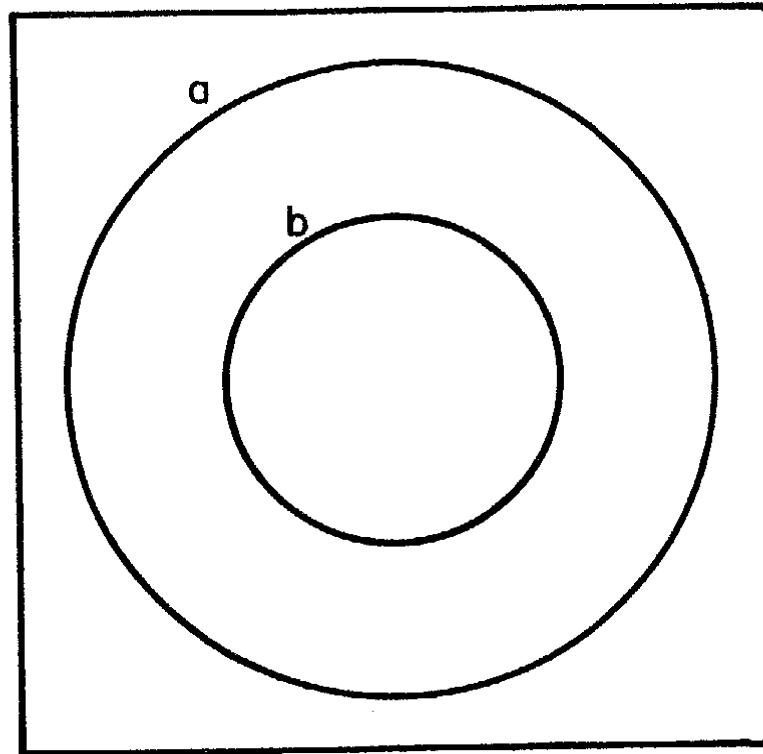
Meals are ties that bind

All relationships start with a joint meal

If you are interested in connecting with someone you will ask her/ him to have ....  
a coffee, a drink or even a meal together

# Mary Douglas 1971

## DECIPHERING A MEAL



*Figure 1.* Social universe (a) share drinks; (b) share meals too.

# Poverty

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Having no one to share with  
means Poverty !

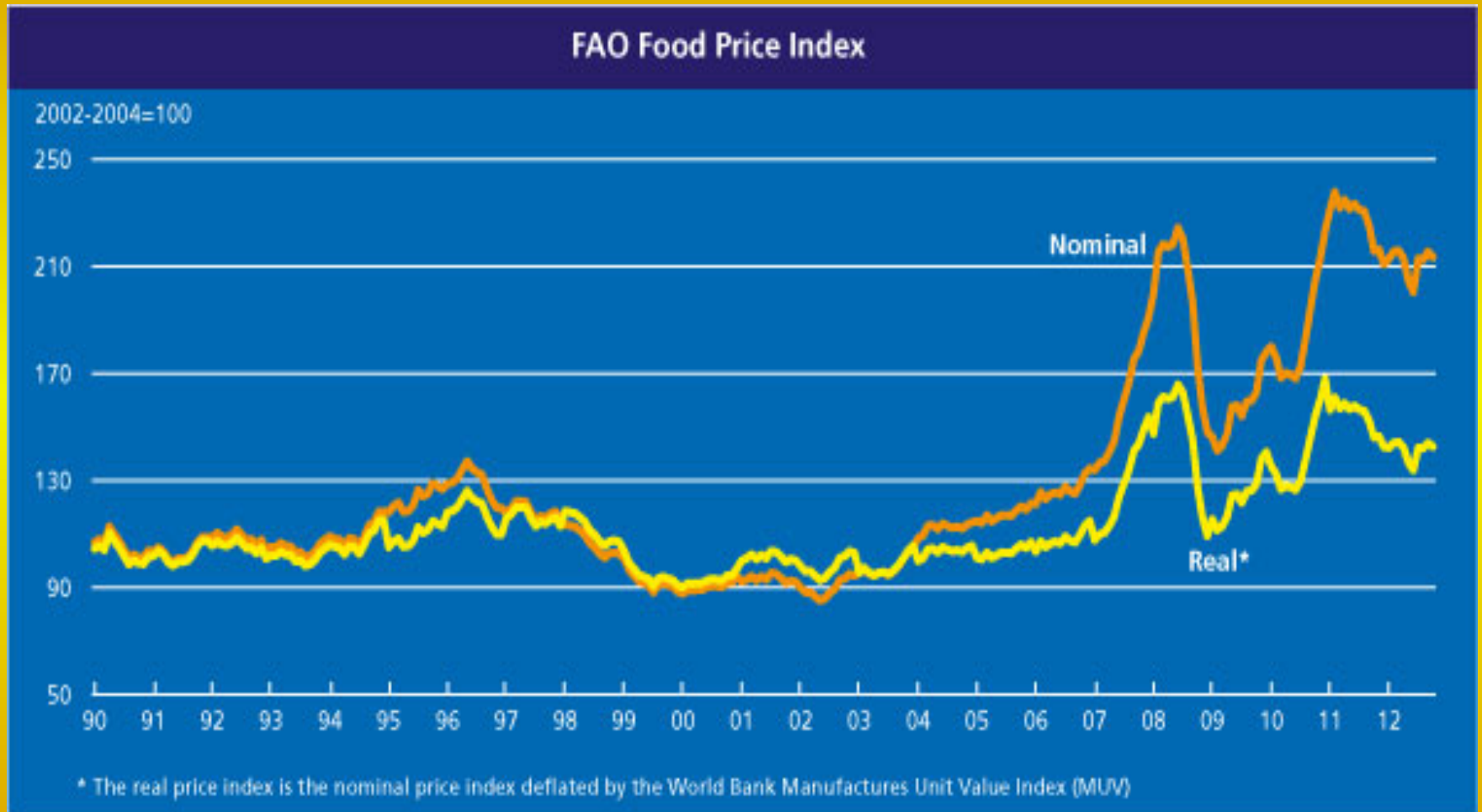
# A New Concept is needed

Food security concepts do not offer a realistic perspective to overcome hunger and malnutrition.

We can not reduce the numbers of hungry people by 2015 as has been declared many times over the last century.

In fact, the situation is getting even worse.

# The dramatic peaks



# The Dilemma of the 21st Century

- “12 Billion people – almost double the current population – could be normally nourished, so those dying of hunger are being killed.”

(Interview with Jan Ziegler, Lederer 2007)

- “In a world overflowing with riches, it is an outrageous scandal that more than 1 billion people suffer from hunger and malnutrition. We must take urgent action now.”

(Jan Ziegler 2010 – former UN rapporteur of  
Right to Food)

# Who and where are the hungry people?

- 75% live in rural areas
- Half of them are small scale (female)farmers
- 75% of children that get up hungry and go to bed hungry live in region with food surplus.
- 2/3 of them are female
- Thus Hunger is a highly gendered issue.



**Poverty has a female face**

# UNDP

**When Development is not  
Engendered it is  
Endangered**

# The data

**Women still are the ones  
to nurture the world.**

**(Worldwatch Institute Washington)**

# The interesting point is not

Vulnerability  
but

How do women who have less **access to land**  
Are not equipped with **advanced technologies**  
Less participation in **political decision making**  
And a low **status in society**

still are the ones who take responsibility to nurture  
their children, the community and ensure meal  
security worldwide?

Concepts of food security have  
not helped to solve this dilemma.

# **Meal Security or Food Security? That is the Question!**

The term Meal Security has another meaning than food security. Just changing one word can make a big difference in the perception and conceptualization of the issue of human nutrition and wellbeing.

All cultures have developed their own systems of categorization and distinction. All normative systems including religions have recommendations concerning edibles and taboos.

“Amniate Ghazai” means:

„Meal Security“

Just by asking the question:  
What do we need to prepare a  
good meal?

# What do we need to prepare a good meal?

- Ingredients
- Spices
- Energy
- Technology
- Time
- Recipe
- Knowledge
- Cultural criteria for choice and valuing healthy food



Rich and diverse traditions inspire  
fusion meals in Europe and USA



# **Meal Cultures**

**Not raw products, but meals people eat  
should be at the centre of food security  
and safety discussions and actions.**

# Mostly it is the women ...



# Meal security

... includes the whole cycle of production, marketing up to the preparation of meals, from the cooking pot up to the plate up to eating habits.

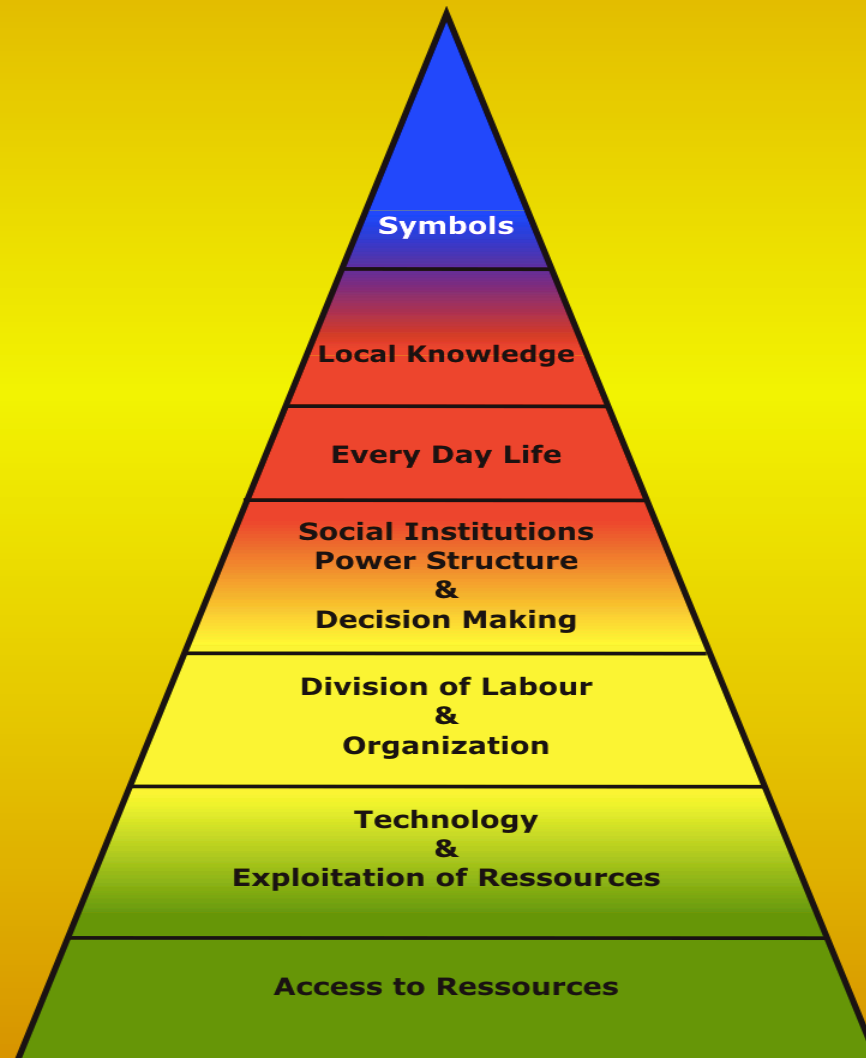
# Production & including the social reproduction sphere

The care economy –  
the hidden informal contribution to  
human welfare –  
needs to be recognized and revalued in our  
research concepts (GlobE Kenya).

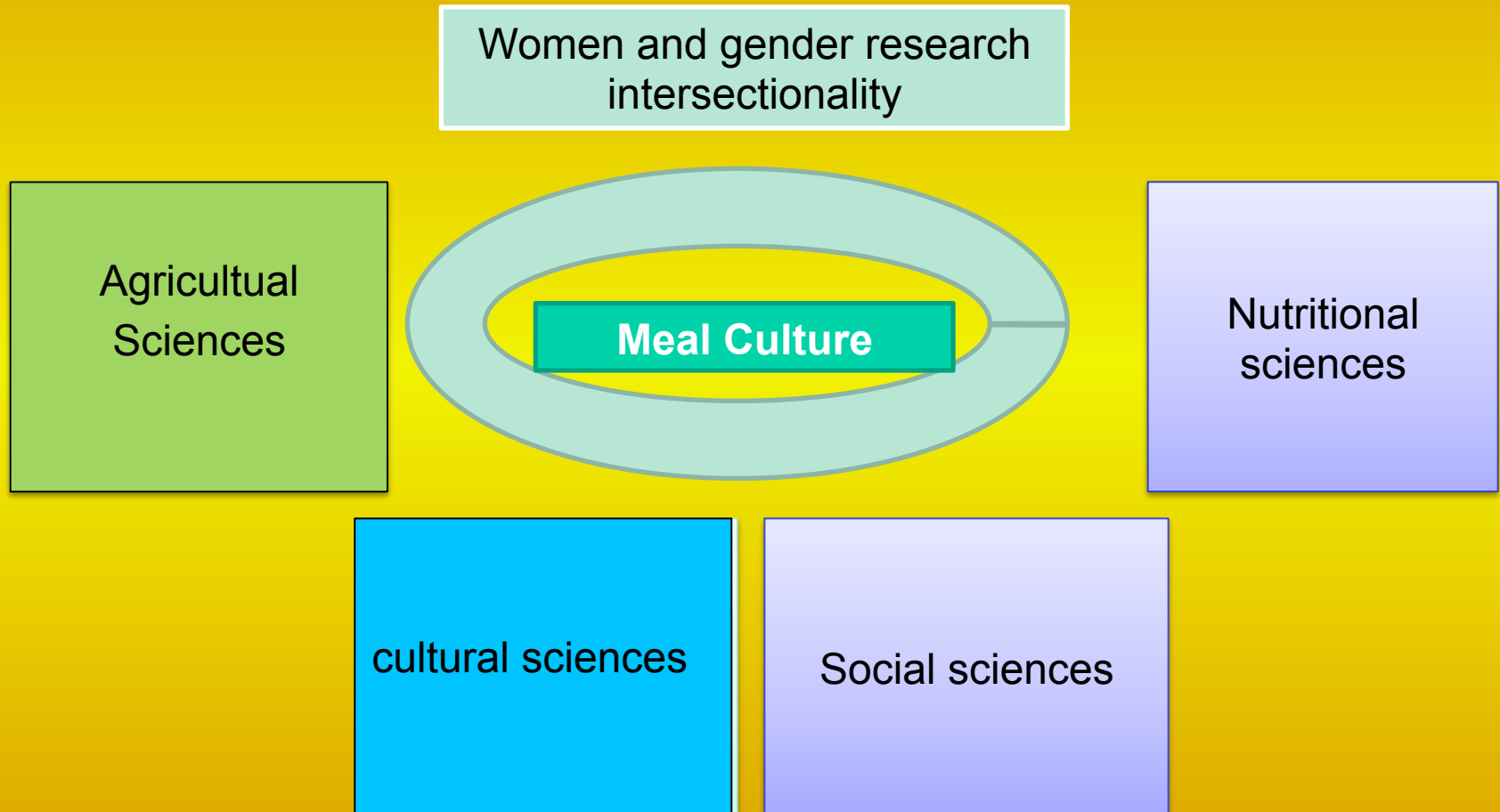
# Meal Security and Sovereignty

**If food security debate and the agricultural policy and economy would focus more on meal cultures and not just on some particular market – oriented food or cash crop, then the whole ecological, economic and socio-cultural processes of food production, processing, preparation, sharing and eating would become an important part of scientific reflection on nourishment.**

# The gendered human ecological pyramid



# Meal security needs bridging





# last remark

We need such courageous steps to solve problems of hunger in the world. The gender dimension must become a central component of the whole food cycle and food/meal security & safety measures.

'Gender blindness' still is a problem even within agricultural and nutritional sciences and policies.

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I am happy that this challenge will be taken over by my colleagues.

My legacy hopefully will be.....

# Ester Boserup Price



Born 1910 Kopenhagen – 1999