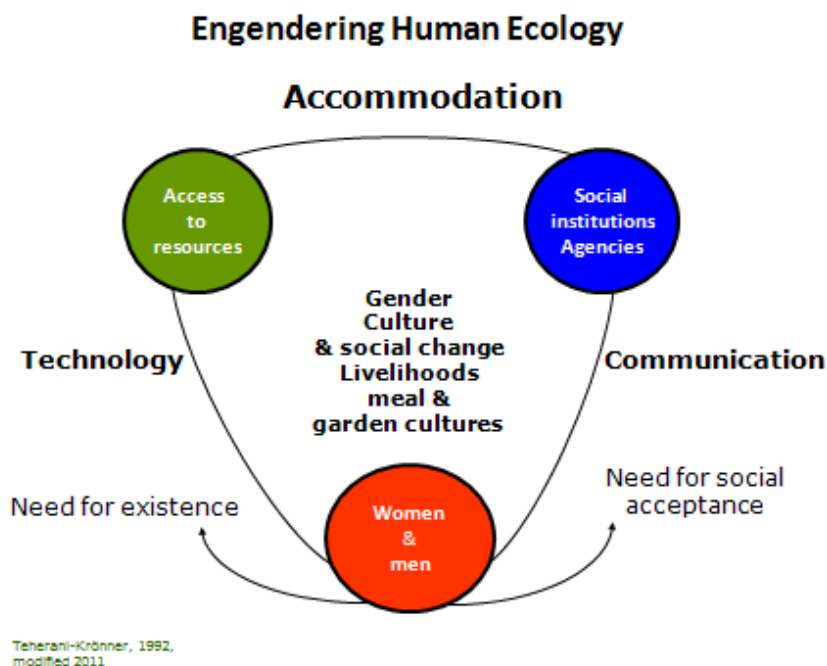


History of Garden Cultures and Urban Agriculture – Contribution to HUB Summer University : Land in the City - Green in the City

Gardens and the vegetation in green areas around and within settlements have inspired human history and art. The vision of paradise - 'paradesa' *pairi-daēza* the old Persian word for a fenced area - has influenced the phantasy of human kind with the aspiration of heaven on earth. Even today the many different types of garden cultures reflect this basic need to create a place of beauty and connectedness to nature according to diverse interpretations of esthetical values and philosophy. Garden cultures are excellent examples of the concept of 'Nature-Culture' that will show us the way human beings have accommodated within their social and natural environment. I will introduce the human ecological framework that will help to analyse the history of garden cultures in different parts of the world.



The human ecological triangle as the Nature-Culture arrangements operate with two dynamic motivations. There is the need for social acceptance, as articulated by the contemporary German philosopher Axel Honneth alongside and as strong as the one for material existence. I think that this dual basic needs have to be considered as equal forces in shaping our cultural development with regard to gender relations.

We will start with the concept of Persian Gardens referring to the 9 gardens that have been included to the UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE list in 2011.

There we can read: "The Persian Garden materializes the concept of Eden or Paradise on Earth." (UNESCO 2011: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1372>)

We will learn why the UNESCO has given this award to the Persian Gardens with their sophisticated irrigation system and water management. The history can be traced back to the 6th century BC. Their structure and arrangements have influenced the Gardens from India to Spain and even the Gardens of Versailles.

"The perfect design of the Persian Garden, along with its ability to respond to extreme climatic conditions, is the original result of an inspired and intelligent application of different fields of knowledge, i.e. technology, water management and engineering, architecture, botany and agriculture. The notion of the Persian Garden permeates Iranian life and its artistic expressions: references to the garden may be found in literature, poetry, music, calligraphy and carpet design. These, in turn, have inspired also the arrangement of the gardens." (ibid)

We can compare the culture of the Persian Garden with concepts of gardens from other countries – and it will be nice if each of the participants could introduce a garden – preferably from their home country.

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