

Ana Ashtalkovska, (Ohrid, Macedonia)

Patriarchy is guilty for everything

Abstract: Even in the contemporary literature patriarchy is damned to be the key reason for women's discrimination on the Balkans and in wider frame also. We are pointing out the fact that this definition of patriarchy is no longer relevant. Many examples from the field work materials are showing the existence of woman subculture in the traditional community and its belonging to the real model of thinking and acting, which is often neglected in different studies. This overlooked fact is contributing to the large amount of controversies when it comes to gender questions in the traditional community. In that sense, we are arguing many generalizations connected to gender issues among which, placing woman in the marginalized groups as very risky and pretentious one.

Key words: Patriarchy, gender, woman's discrimination, traditional community, ideal and real model, human rights

In our feministic literature as well as in the literature for human rights patriarchy is the main reason for women's discrimination. Therefore, patriarchy in its classical sense of the meaning is still used as the synonym for "traditional, religious and cultural prejudice and customs which very often are denying women's rights". (Grozdan V., 2004, 308) The quoted author in her article is analyzing the history of women discrimination starting from the Greek civilization as the carrier of patriarchal ideology which is identified as the period of women exclusion in the following way: "women's exclusion from the public political and civil life and constitution of their roles as wives and mothers has its roots in the astonishing period of the Greek Antic civilization. This is the time when gender stereotypes are definitely and with no coming back put in force". (Ibid, 310) Going further through history, the Christian religion has been having a very important role in this sense because: "Christianity seals woman's destiny as her husband's servant", and this is the women's position until the second half of the 19 century when the battle for affirmation comes from Western Europe with the French declaration for men's rights and after that with the same declaration but this time for women's rights. (Ibid, 313)

Pretty much the same definition for the patriarchy as the absolute domination of men over women is relevant for the large number of researchers who were writing for the Balkans and Macedonia during the first half of 20 century. As the encouraging exception to this rule I will mention two researchers: Josef Obrembski who was doing his research in Poreche at 1932 - 33 and who is distinguished with his ability for detecting the real model at the traditional culture, which is not always matching the ideals of the community; and Milenko S. Filipovik who did his research in Western Macedonia and is

writing about women who are engaged in typically male professions (important village functions such as village chief, village attendants or clerks), so in this context he says: “it seems that regulations and rules weren’t that rigorous, so the position of certain women could be completely different thanks to the woman’s personal character or to the particular set of conditions”. (Filipovich, 1991, 110)

In this sense, it is important what professor Aneta Svetieva is pointing out: “it is impossible any longer to look at the gender rights and obligations in the family or community as black and white opposition. One has to be aware that very often some variants of traditional culture are not corresponding to the publicly accepted ideal model and classical model of patriarchal culture.” (Svetieva, 2001, 26) Because of the controversies of publishing completely different or even conflicting results of the scientific research which are treating women’s rights in the traditional communities, Ljupcho S. Risteski points out the “need of more subtle and more complex research of all the aspects of folk culture (...) for the purposes of identifying the woman’s influence on culture and all those mechanisms which are contributing to the harmony or balance in man - woman relations.” (Risteski, 2002, 91, 106).

In wider range, anthropology and its sister disciplines have changed their attitude towards women’s question together with the forces of post - modernism and post - colonialism (...) and with these attitude changes, the methodological basics of these disciplines were shaken when women or 50 percents of the world population finally appeared at the scene. (Rapport, Overing, 142) In the early anthropological studies before the revelation of women, information are interpreted through the prism of the ideal, patriarchal model, without having in mind the personal experiences of the population in question. For example, Žarana Papić stress out that in the Levi - Strauss research of the “primitive communities” man’s position is presented as the common human position. (Papić, 1997, 270). This of course doesn’t indicate that Levi - Strauss was a chauvinist but it shows the disregard of the woman subculture and its methods for woman’s realization in the community which doesn’t necessarily correspond to the publicly accepted ideal model in the traditional communities. This perspective is one of the greatest turning points in the anthropology, which becomes aware of the women’s elimination from the research, as well as for the man’s principles and basics of the theoretical and methodological hypothesis; thus, radical reevaluation of the anthropological position in this sense is considered necessary. This doesn’t mean that anthropology should consider women’s gender as universally inferior one, but on the contrary - that women have had much greater rights, obligations and powers than what was assumed till then. Apart from this, as one of the greatest anthropological contribution for the development of gender studies in the 80’s and the ’90s, is its focus on the cultural and social differences due to the anthropological traditional interest for non- western cultures and societies. (Rapport, Overing, 143, 144) These two advantages are problemising the feministic and other generalizations, which were very popular at the time, based on binary oppositions and dichotomies in determining the gender statuses in which woman’s gender is always the inferior one or the one placed at the negative or undesired side of the opposition. These binarisms which are coming from the western reasoning are replicated on global level and consequently are identified as one of the western myths. Some of the most popular binarisms are: woman versus man; nature: culture; emotion:logic; family:society; private:public etc. etc. And again, there is a risk of

ethnocentrism in anthropology but this time in the field of gender issues because: "this particular package of values is hardly a universal. (...) A similar absurdity was evident in much of the early literature on gender, where any piece of ethnographic information on women's activities was taken as evidence of female degradation. (Rapport, Overing, 146, 148)

Besides anthropologist's cultural baggage, he or she is implementing personal identity and signature in his or her writings and research. One of the well known anthropological controversies is when, for instance, two researchers are presenting completely opposite results for the same research problem. These kind of controversies are justified with the differences of the personal perspectives of different researchers. As a good illustration for this type of controversy is the comparison of the analysis from two scientists who were doing their research in Poreche in the first half of the 20th century: Petar Jovanovik in the 1926 and Jozef Obrembski in the 1932-33. The former believes that: "the main characteristic of social life of Poreche inhabitants is evidently emphasized patriarchy which is seen in every social form. Social moral is very high (...) women are respected and the family moral is very strong". (Јовановић, 1935, 290, 302) It is obvious that this sort of analyses are influenced by "the romantic projections of the past values". (Rihtman - Auguštín, 1984, 58) Unlike him, Jozef Obrembski besides the ideal model of thinking is revealing some insights from the real model of acting. Or another example - Pavikevik is not consent with Rihtman who thinks that "social deviations" are more than present in the traditional community, so she is coming out with a model of binary oppositions which is meant to serve for "critical research of patriarchal communities and its fitting thinking structures" (Pavichevich, 2000, 116, Rihtman D., 1981, 74). Unlike her, Pavichevich considers these kinds of deviants from the ideal model are related to transformation of the patriarchal society and that they were exceptionally rare in the past. (Ibid, 116) She is criticizing Rihtmans' model of binary oppositions because it gives the impression of equal existence of the oppositions. On the contrary, thinks Pavikevik, proclaimed social and moral values existed as a real model of behavior and because of that she is classifying these goings-astray as some form of sub model, whose following or straining from the main ideal model varies in a different places with different conditions. (Ibid, 131).

In this context, it is very important to point out that both models of behavior (ideal and real) are culturally defined and according to that both are equally relevant to studying the culture of one community because ideal model is part of that community as much as the real one. In our case the central characteristics of the models are: "ideal model of the traditional culture where male principle is dominant, with major rights and duties, and the real model of traditional culture in which woman through the mechanisms of the woman's subculture is adopting a large amount of latent rights". (Svetieva, 2001, 26).

Depending on the researcher's personal perspectives, interests and needs, field materials which are collected will represent both models separately, so this can easily lead to the above mentioned anthropological controversies and contradictions. Likewise, another type of contradiction is typical while doing the field research. When it comes to women issues (and not just in this case) very often informants are revealing very contradictory information depending on whether the ideal model is in question or their lived experience, and also very often these contradictory information for the same research problem comes from the same informant. The following sequences are from the

field work materials for my diploma work which is titled as: "Premarital sexual relations in folk culture of Poreche - taboo and the real situation" which are available at the Archive of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in Skopje. For example, very popular saying when a male child is born is: *"the house eaves are laughing for a male child because the house will be open"* which means that with a birth of a male child the parents are gaining some kind of security for their old age according to the patrilineal principle of housing. But on the other hand, for the same matter there is different statement which indicates that sons are not that sensitive for their parents' condition. Young girls are not supposed to have any contacts with their male fellow: *"No way, before I married, I swear in the fire which is glowing may it burn me, if I spoke one word with a boy"*. Further on, the same informant is revealing her relationship with her lover; they were communicating through letters, and the letters were mediated by some village boy to whom she didn't hesitate to speak with because (she says): *"No, it is not embarrassing to talk to him because I didn't love him"*. For the mutual boy - girl relations among youngsters in the village she says: *"...he will pinch you. A boy who is stupid, who is a bachelor, who doesn't know anything, he will not marry if he isn't touching you with his hand. So he will pinch you on your hand, he will touch you on your leg (...) - do you love me - he will ask you secretly and surreptitiously"*. On these grounds we can state that regulations applicable to these dates between youngsters are elegantly avoided because in certain situations it is required to act opposite of the publicly acknowledged ideal model. In the different set of conditions, the same informant is saying that the youngsters on their dates are remaining: *"with full eyes and empty hands"*. The two models of thinking/acting are not in competition for a ruling position (some are having a problem with the inability for statistical measuring for which model is the prevailing one in everyday life) but they exist side by side. If, for example we intend to present the woman as a victim then we can focus on the next statement: *"Married woman is lower than man. Man has to be greater than her. We are saying - if a woman knows anything she should get married to another woman, not to a man. Man is on the top because you are entering in his home and he has to feed you. A woman is not allowed to move in front of her husband. (...) Everything should be as man says, and wherever he is sending her she must go."* We can stop here and support our idea of discriminated women in Macedonian folk culture with a countless number of similar statements, or we can go further with the deeper research of women status. For example, for the research considering premarital sexual relations we have confirmed much greater women's rights even for a taboo theme as sexual relations. Woman has a right to put a "sexual taboo" on her husband, not to fulfill his sexual needs during pregnancy, during her period, post natal period etc, as long as she can use this woman's right when there is some kind of conflict between spouses. (Obrembski, 2001, 257) As a manifestation of the individualism of young people we have been dealing with immoral girls (whores, bastard - mothers and dishonest women). They are satisfying their needs despite the damage that they are inflicting on their families and also on the whole village community as the manifestation of collective responsibility for the individuals actions. Similarly, irregular ways of getting married are widely spread but they are opposite of ideal model according to which marriage selection and decision is a family one, not individual, especially not when the individual is woman.

As an illustration, we will use the model of in favor and against, or model of regulation and complying or disobeying them, encouraged by Dunja Rihtman - Auguštin. We are stressing out the opposition between ideal and realistic model; that of course doesn't mean their equal representation, but simply having evidence of their existence as the reaction of the romantic statements for strongly obeyed ideal or patriarchal model in practice without any straining from it.

Sexual education	Communication	Behavior regulations	Moral	
<i>Children are taught that newborn babies are carried under arm, or the cow, ox or sheep brought them.</i>	<i>Girls are not allowed to communicate with the boys or to have any kind of contact with them.</i>	<i>In their period of maturing girls should be smart, decent, honest, calm and silent.</i>	<i>Girls' behavior should be according to the perception of ideal girl type.</i>	Ideal model
<i>Extended household members live and sleep in the same room, so it is unlikely that children don't get the idea of what is going on while practicing sexual needs in the presence of other relatives.</i>	<i>They are meeting and seeing each other almost every day and spend some time together practicing all the things that are usual for a love affair except the sexual intercourse.</i>	<i>Opposite of these regulations some informants are stressing out other type of girl according to the saying: with her scarf hidden face but with her shirt naked body.</i>	<i>Relatively large number of amoral girls (whores, bastard - mothers and dishonest women).</i>	Real model

A large number of well known domains in the folk culture where women are having a leading role are already defined in literature. For example, woman has a dominant role in the rituals/customs in the family as well as the community. White and black magic are placed in the women activity domain. Regardless of the fact that woman with some of her domains is gaining power with negative aspect; this kind of power is allowing the realization of women's needs and their affirmation in the village community. Again, feministic analyses can classify some of the women activities in some kind of spheres with lower social evaluation but anthropologists claim that: "women involvement in the ritualistic activities is not the replacement or compensation for some kind of traumatic experience of women in the patriarchal community, but it represents complementary, inevitable, harmonizing segment of traditional culture which still is, in contemporary ethnological studies, named as patriarchal." (Risteski, 2002, 113) As already stated above, in certain situations women are dealing with typically male functions as village chiefs, village attendants and clerks, but they can have, also in special situations, leading role in the family as well, which is supported by a large number of examples of extended families where woman is the head of the household. Besides all arguments of low-grade position of women in the family and the community, still, it has to be stated that the head woman of the extended family has a great deal of rights and there is the fact that woman can possess her own land property if she is having one and it is her personal belonging. (Rihtman - Auguštin, 1984, 104) "Institution "women's judgement" functions from gossiping to forming of public opinion of the village community. While following all the events, women are constructing or destroying myths

according to the needs of women's subculture". (Risteski, 2002, 105) Even those truly marginalized groups of women are having their own mechanisms for improving their family and community position. Barren woman in the traditional village community has marginal position according to the fact that not having children of her own is considered as a great disadvantage, so in such circumstances she is facing lots of problems. What is interesting is that some of the interviewed women have found the way to improve their status in the family through controlling the relationship with their husbands. Man's authority in some cases was strongly reduced by the dominant woman's authority which is completely opposite of the publicly accepted gender roles, according to which men are the only carriers of activity in the family and woman's passivity represents a norm in the ideal model of thinking.

Lots of similar examples can be found in our field work materials, so if we are consulting only our feministic literature then this kind of field work experiences could be very confusing, most of all because they are found where they are at least expected. Even in the traditional village community which is still sometimes identified as patriarchal "according to the ideal order women are lower than men, but in reality it can be said that there is a balance in gender statuses". (Rihtman - Auguštin, 1984, 127) Besides the first impression of the ordered and clear classification of things in the folk culture, in accordance with the ideal - publicly accepted model, contradictions in this sense cannot be neglected from the researcher - for example, what is classified as unwanted or at the lower scale of evaluation can have completely opposite characteristics in various situations. And again, while feminists are fighting for securing a better women status through criticizing all of the situations where woman is invisible and marginalized (Papić, 1997, 17), it would be a good, refreshing change to pay attention to those situations where man is in the same position. This type of research is truly required, especially for the balance in gender research because there are many segments in our folk culture where men are not allowed access particularly in the sphere of women's activities. Currently, according to the anthropological attention towards gender, it can be said that men are those who are discriminated.

At the end, we will discuss another interesting phenomenon in scientific literature. With the evolution of anthropology and development of such a vast number of very useful methods which purpose is researching of the marginalized groups, giving space for their interpretation, hearing their voice etc., etc., women are regularly put together with other marginalized groups like refugees, ex slaves, migrants, colonialized, homosexuals and all those who are ignored by the system. It is symptomatic placing the entire gender or 50 percents of the population in these frames. Treating the lower women status as the universal position, without having in mind specific historic dynamics in gender relations, where inferiority and superiority can vary according to the different cultural patterns for manhood and womanhood (Papić, 1997, 20, 21) is highly problematic, because many differences inside the women's gender are not taken in question. Who can be so relaxed with this kind of rough classification and who can decide that easily that popular and western criteria for this classification are applicable all over the world? In this sense, popularity of this calcification in scientific literature is really a phenomenon. Although the theory allows similar generalizations and besides feministic arguments in the favour of it, I think that in this case we should be more careful. Speaking of that, protecting human rights or women rights becomes problematic if the standards for doing so are

pulled out of one cultural concept. Human rights cannot be seen in any way except as separate special cultural forms and the assumption for concept of human rights as something which exists outside or above this particular cultural sphere is logically and empirically impossible. (Rapport, Overing, 165) Involvement of anthropology in defending human rights is also problematic because: "equality and inequality can be very difficult to judge, and there is a serious methodological question with regards to how we, ethnographers recognize exploitation among other peoples." (Rapport, Overing, 149) Therefore, classification of women in marginalized groups seems more like stereotype than classification if we bear in mind the definition for stereotypes according to which "stereotypes and practice of stereotyping means giving identical faces to all the members of one category or class and (...) they are partial perception and they are problemazing description and evaluation". (Rapport, Overing, 343, 345)

Bibliography:

1. Barret Stanley R., *Anthropology: A Student's Guide to Theory and Method*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London 1996.
2. Rapport Nigel, Overing Joanna, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*, The Key Concepts, Routledge, London and New York 2005.
3. Гроздан Катерина В., *Развојој на њравајџа на женијџе низ исијоријџџа (de facto i de jure)*, стр. 307 - 329, Balkan Yearbook of Human Rights, Minority rights, Balkan human rights network 2004.
4. Филиповић Миленко С., *Човек међу људима*, Београд 1991
5. Светиева Анета, *Сџајџусој на женијџа во џрадицџскајџа селска заедница и семејсџивојџо*, стр. 26 - 42, ЕтноАнтропоЗум, бр.1, Скопје 2001.
6. Rihtman - Auguština Dunja, *Struktura tradicijskog mišljenja*, Zagreb 1984
7. Risteski Ljupčo, *The Woman in Macedonian Folk Culture*, 91 - 115, Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe: Historical Perspectives on Womanhood and Manhood in 19th and 20th Century, Belgrade - Graz 2002.
8. Рапић Жарана, *Polnost i kultura - telo i znanje u socijalnoj antropologiji*, Београд 1997.
9. Павићевић Александра, *Народни и црквени брак у српском сеоском друшџџву*, Етнографски институт САНУ, Београд 2000.
10. Обрембски Јозеф, *Фолклорни и ејџнографски мајџеријџали од Порече*, Книга I, Редакцијџ Вражиновски Танас, Составиле: Танас Вражиновски, Јовановска Соња, Караџоски Владимир, ИСК-Матица македонска, Скопје 2001.
11. Обрембски Јозеф, *Македонски ејџносоциолошки сџџуди*, Книга 2, Редакцијџ Вражиновски Танас, Составиле: Танас Вражиновски, Јовановска Соња, Караџоски Владимир, ИСК - Матица македонска, Скопје 2001.
12. Јовановић Петар, *Порече*, Српски етнографски зборник, књ. LI, Населја и порекло становништва, књ. 28, СКА, Београд 1935.

13. Ашталковска Ана, *Жената невојка и односи на традиционалната селска заедница кон неа*, стр. 248 - 269, ЕтноАнтрополоЗум, бр.1, Скопје 2001.
14. Ашталковска Ана, *Предбрачни сексуални односи во народната култура на Порече - шабу тема и реална состојба*, стр. 411 - 425, 70 години од истражувањата на Јозеф Обрембски во Македонија, Прилеп 2002.