Domestic violence: political and ethical analysis of power relationships

Domestic violence is essentially evil – evil in the sense of Nicomachean Ethics that it is not the excess or deficiency where the evil dies. In the case of essential evils the case does not depend on the circumstances; one is always wrong (Aristotle, 1107a). As there is no justification for domestic violence why is it so difficult to root it out and how to analyse that evil? Furthermore, with the ”essential evils” should there be a need to compromise or tactically improve the situation by small steps away from present situation. Domestic violence involves intimate human relationships with a great variety of power relationships involved that often are also part of wider social networks making easy classifications of public and private or domestic and social not applicable or misleading. As an issue of great social and human significance the DV should be seen as a key political and social issue requiring efficient protection for the victims and maintaining/improving ethical standards of the society. Human rights always are a concern of the whole society and the DV cases should never be seen as ”private incidents”. However, for the individual also in this evil ”the noblest kind of retribution is not to become like your enemy (Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, VI 6)”. Humans have a capability of understanding evil, whether through their personal experience or learning from others and this understanding opens possibilities to create a world without DV. This paper analyses the evil of domestic violence and how the political science can help to understand the power relationships involved and how to change these power relationships toward emancipatory ones that are built on social justice, equality and human dignity.

“I fear that often the international community is too fundamentalist and that declarations and condemnations only produce a backlash. I have
always believed that it is more important to be effective than it is to be righteous. For example, the international organisations and NGOs often concentrate on human rights when trying to influence a situation in a country. While it is naturally extremely important, we have to ask whether it is the most efficient way of bringing about change.” Martti Ahtisaari 2004 (Nobel Peace Prize Winner 2008).

The goal of eradicating domestic violence and other forms of violence from society is a very clear and may even fallaciously appear as something that is not controversial enough to provide for great ideological or political battles. No one in right mind should speak in favour of domestic violence, although that occasionally does take place, either in the form of showing understanding for the motivations of the perpetrators of crime or questioning the innocence of the victims. However, the differences of opinion become clear when it comes to the responsibility of different actors and speed of action as well as the tactical choices where to start. Being right is the starting point, but it is not enough since efficiency and action is what brings a change.

In the end we need a change in the society, including its culture, politics and economy. “Change in the society requires a change in people’s attitudes and values concerning power, work ethics, and society as a whole. This can only be achieved through citizen participation and better and freer education - from the inside. Outside actors can only establish the framework for democracy; the content can only be given by each country’s own citizens”, Ibid. In the end the most “domestic” thing in DV may be its close relationship with domestic culture. There are limits how much the international community can do to produce a change in DV situation of any particular society. However, different societies do provide models for each other and through contrasting and comparison people discover shortcomings of their own societies. For instance, in Japan the general framework for democracy has been in place since the post-war reforms,
where Americans played a central role, but the content for gender equality and prevention of violence has been given by the society. Obviously the issue of DV was never a high priority even for the American occupiers but without the democratization and changes in the organizational structure Japan would be even in far more difficult position to effectively address the issue of DV.

Domestic violence is a marker of injustice, inequality and inability or unwillingness of the social system to enforce justice and democracy in the society. If the personal safety and integrity is not guaranteed each case is and should be seen as a proof a failed state or dysfunctional state. In short, human rights always are a concern of the whole society and the DV cases should never be seen as ”private incidents”. As with peace-keeping in international conflicts, the first task in all violent situation is to produce a safe and secure environment. In DV that means that institutions should be created to deal with the issues and that policies should be enforced. That is a phase where political iniatives are needed, but very soon it will be tested whether the social, political and economic organisations are prepared to support full enforcement. In other words, the first phase may require tactical thinking and a bit of Machiavellian mindset. After all, we are dealing with states we just condemned as being failures. The next phase of social transformation, however, is even far more demanding since it requires the reorganisation of existing power relations, including those related to politics, economy and working life in the realm of so called public sphere and the power relations within the family. In the solution the public and private spheres are not autonomous. A very large problem with domestic violence is that it is all too often seen as ”domestic” in the sense of being somehow less of a concern for the rest of the society. A change in the social power relations will, of course, have consequences in all levels of society and may also lead into questioning or reinterpreting ”public” and ”private” or ”domestic”.
Language of domesticity

*Domus* (or as in the Latin script: DOMVS) is the Latin for house or home and normally refers to a range of house from a palace to a city houses that the wealthy and middle classes owned. Usually the *domus* includes such details as private baths, collection of statues and lavish use of marble. The masses, the vast majority of people, in Rome lived in *insulae*, incredibly cramped apartment blocks, while many wealthy people lived in countryside *villas*. The Roman *domus* was interestingly multifunctional as there was no clear distinction between rooms meant solely for private use and public rooms and front rooms were usually rented to merchants if the house was next to a busy street (for more on DOMVS, see e.g. Gabucci 2005: 258-261).

As the slaves took care of most household tasks (and slept outside) the original quite elitist *domus* is a strange root for modern understanding of “domestic” as a unit that isolates the “family” from the rest of the society. What we can learn from the Roman *domus* is that already then people of different classes and gender did have a remarkable variety of life styles and that the Romans had little reason making strong separation between their domestic and (other) social life. In the late Roman civilization/ Byzantium the *domestikos* (in Greek, plural *domestikoi*) were imperial guards, who started to function as senior officers in army and bureaucracy. The English term for *domestikos* is domestic. For instance, *megas domestikos* stands for the commander-in-chief. The point here is that the “house guards” in Rome soon started to view the whole empire as their house. Since the Roman empire was ultimately based on military power and violence, it is only fitting that the very words for domesticity in Rome with time became associated with politics and military affairs. What would then domestic violence mean in the real Roman context; soldiers running amok (didn’t they do that all the time)?
Ie

The elitist interpretation of domus/domestic is by no means restricted to only English and other European languages which operate with the words related to the Latin original. Japanese *kateinai bôryoku* (家内暴力) uses very similarly a concept of house/household that is associated with a quite restricted concept of suitable “house” as a unit for social life. Originally the Chinese kanji for house stands for an affluent house that can keep a pig/swine under its roof. By definition *ie* (house) in Japan came to signify a kind of model family, which was relatively well-off and in good esteem. The Confucian thinking in its great variety in Japan, Korea and China has always been adding a lot of weight to the continuation of the family unit, although in these societies and during the centuries the unit itself has been interpreted very differently. In fact, the Japanese focus on the continuation of the name and appearances (instead of actual bloodline) is more in line with the Roman thinking of adoptions and active historical reconstructions than the narrower Chinese fixation with actual ancestors and bloodlines. The Japanese modern legal system from Meiji to the end of the war further fixed the meaning of *ie* by making it a formal legal concept. The civil and criminal matters in Japan were considered to be involving the families instead of only individuals and the *ie* family was legally seen to cover three generations, regardless whether in reality people already were part of nuclear families or very different family arrangements. In short, the Japanese legal system did not recognise the fact that its concept of *ie* did never factually cover the majority of people. The *ie* system (家制度) as a legal concept was formally abolished by the Allied occupation authorities, but remnants of it can still be found in the interpretations of Japanese law and especially in social practices. The political conservatives in Japan have never accepted the abolishing of the *ie* system and its ideals and their ideas about the policies regarding family or gender equality are based on these concepts of *ie* that were created in Meiji period to support the centralized Meiji state. The Meiji state, too, was a military empire, which was based on
violence and had little room for the culture of democracy. However, the non-democratic political ideas had their political opposition all the time and, as said, the ie seido was always based on a deception or idealized idea of how the Japanese people ought to live.

A major part of the deception was that ie was founded in unbreakable supragenerational permanence. The idea was that the ie was first the basic unit of the village (mura) and then the whole society. In the traditional Japanese village the people in the feudal times were not supposed to move and the society was stagnant and stable by political design. The ie were controlled and represented by their household heads and the ie’s collectively formed the network that constituted the village. The ie’s, however, were never seen to exist independently, but were always in the context of the society/village around them. There was also a hierarchy among the ie’s and the Japanese political system during the feudal times was extremely hierarchical. A system where all the ie’s were controlled by their heads and all the ie’s were bound by the social norms of the village suited well the small political elite that monopolized political power. As a result the ie appears as a kind of closed microcosm where individuals are tied to supragenerational permanence and tradition (Cf. Gotô 1994: 60-62). The conservative ideal of Japanese politics presumes that there is a Japanese Tradition that shows each individual his/her place and ties them to their family and village.

The family registry (koseki, 戸籍) is a means to keep up the appearance that ie still is the basic social unit and that all Japanese are part of that system. Furthermore, since only Japanese nationals can have koseki registry the inability to produce one has become the favourite method of employers and businesses to exclude foreigners. There are examples of widespread company practices to make hiring and even golf club membership subject to koseki excerpts (see Hicks: 120-126). In addition, the koseki excerpt includes information that has helped to maintain
discrimination of other groups such as *burakumin*. However, the most serious consequence of the ill-fated *koseki* is that it keeps up the notion that there is a family head, with a legitimacy (natural and/or legal) to control the family unit according to his skill and wishes. By tradition the males are listed as the heads of household and only in the case of single mothers or Japanese women who are married with foreigners the women attain the status of household head. The Japanese marriage legislation requires a married couple to have the same surname, which in reality leads most families to adopt the husband’s name. In short, the *koseki* functions as a keeper of the conservative idea of the society consisting of controlled family units represented and controlled by a male representative. Furthermore, the main registry (*honseki*, 本籍) is kept in the hometown of the father/grandfather, which means that people literally have to demonstrate the family history of their father’s side, when they need official papers. As an official system this sends a very strong message that the family units are supposed to be controlled by men and that females or foreigners do not count when it comes to family lines. Furthermore, the inability of foreigners to establish a family registry means that the *koseki* separates the Japanese from the rest of the humans and keeps up the notion that Japanese family lives are bound with the Japanese history and traditions, and male bloodlines.

The extension of the *ie* system and *koseki* registration is that Japanese corporate sector has focused on providing employment security to the male heads of households. On the other hand, the families are expected to provide support to the head of household to keep working long days. That arrangement leaves the parenting and taking care of the elderly parents largely to the mothers/wives. All Japanese families are different, but the employers tend to be quite inflexible if the male workers do not work long enough. Since married women tend to be busy with family duties many Japanese employers assume that married women simply can not satisfactorily juggle both demanding work and family life. Of course, there
are many men and women who find it easy to conform with the stereotypes rather than overcome or challenge their restrictions. These prejudices run deep in the Japanese society and have seriously damaged the career prospects of women in working life and, for instance, in building political careers. Regardless of all these stereotypes the Japanese families and gender roles have kept changing. The economic situations change, women’s educations backgrounds have become closer to those of men and also the attitudes do evolve. The contemporary Japanese young people are a far cry from the days of feudal Japan and for many of the ahistoric young people the kind of Meiji mindset of the old male politicians is simply like from a different planet. Similarly, the dinosaurs fail to comprehend what makes their youngsters tick. The response of the politicians has often been to demand the old values to be taught to the next generations. The favourite of the conservative politicians has been to demand “moral education” to schools. The model apparently is the prewar moral education with its stress on uniform behaviour and respect of authorities and existing power relations, but in present elementary schools individualism has taken a strong root and there is no return to simple forced conformism for masses in the sense of prewar “harmony”.

**Japan and Finland and cultural understanding of domestic violence**

Gender-based violence has long history in Japan as in many other societies. The power allocated to the heads of households was and is all too often interpreted as a licence to use physical violence to control the members of the family by the “ruling” male. The systemic setting can easily translate to a kind of systemic violence against women, where some men perceive it as justified to treat women as inferior to them. The unequal treatment of women in public sphere, including working life, provides the background to the treatment of some women in domestic situations. Furthermore, the economic dependence (caused by gender inequality) of some women on their spouses makes them particularly vulnerable if their spouse turns
violent. Although women’s participation in labour market has rapidly increased along with educational careers of women there is still much to be done to attain gender equality in Japan. That equality would make it much easier for women to protect themselves and would also force a reinterpretation of gender relations in Japan at social and individual level. In other words, emancipation would mean that there would be far less room for manipulation and control by different forms of power and violence. Moreover, by then it would finally become clear to everyone that violence against everyone is totally unacceptable and that no notion on ‘natural’ hierarchy among people can be used to legitimise any form of violence.

Moreover, there is the classic issue of political representation: can Bill Clinton (not to mention George W. Bush) ever represent the Black Americans as he has never experienced or can never experience himself racial discrimination; can men ever represent women and/or truly understand issues such as DV or rape? Women are hugely underrepresented in the Japanese political system and public life and this undoubtedly serves as an obstacle to start open discussion and immediate action. Although there are differences among the attitudes of Japanese male politicians and bureaucrats on such issues as the DV, the reality is that the political system clearly does not identify the issue of DV as a political priority and there is a good reason to assume that things would be different if women would be duly represented (in 2007 women made 51.23% of the population, Japan Statistics Bureau). In March 2002, women comprised 10.2 percent of the Japanese parliament members (Diet), seven percent of all prosecutors and 11 percent of all judges. Women account for 1.3 percent of senior posts in the national public service (Schneider 2004 citing Japan’s Cabinet Office data). In terms of economic, political and educational equality, Japan ranks 91 out of 128 countries, according to the World Economic Forum's 2007 Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum 2007).

The Anti-Prostitution Law of 1956 first established women’s guidance
centres in each of the prefectures and it was these centres that first met with
the need to provide emergency temporary centres for women who needed
urgent protection. The awareness of the public need to protect women
against domestic and other forms of violence apparently is tied with the rise
of the feminist movement in Japan in the 1970s. As related issues,
pornography, commercial sex, rape and sexual harassment, and attitudes
toward them, have been discussed, but it seems that in Japan most often
domestic violence is understood in rather narrow sense as “husband’s
physical violence” against the wife (Cf. Hada 1995: 265-266).

The Japanese DV discourse uses rather stereotypic image about the
possible variations of violent relationships taking place in a family setting.
Apparently the stereotypes of gender roles are very strong in Japan and the
discourse has this far mostly tried to increase awareness of the problem and
used the rather stereotypic situation of wife as a victim. It seems that in
Japan the priority, indeed, is to get more public support to the victims of
DV and that then it is most effective to narrow the definition of DV to
apply to stereotypic cases of monster husbands battering their innocent
wives. In Japan it is also a strategic choice to start where the problems
seems to be most urgent and using images that work best with the public. In
the portrayal of a more nuanced picture of the domestic violence there is
always a danger that some people feel that some victims are less deserving
than others. The most usual excuse to do nothing to improve the situation
deals with the notion that domestic matters are best to be left to families to
deal with. Some violent individuals understand this reluctance of the public
sector to protect individuals in need as a permission to act violently. It is
not unheard in Japan that police officers refuse to become involved in
situations of domestic violence and simply tell the victim and perpetrator of
crime to sort things out themselves.

As a contrast it can be noted that in Finland studies on domestic violence
usually try to analyse also cases of violence against children - by both men
and women - and acts of violence committed by women against men. In the Anglo-Saxon research there are also increasingly studies that point out that domestic violence where the women are the perpetrators is often paid less attention (see e.g. Carney, M., F. Buttell, and D. Dutton, 2007: 108-115). In Finnish cases of violent acts involving partnerships and registered by police in 2005 there were 4109 victims; 3195 women and 914 men (Tilastokeskus, Perheväkivalta 1997-2005. 2006: Helsinki). Women make up the majority of victims but the number of men is also significant in these cases where there tends to be strong evidence of physical injuries. It is also often pointed out that in many cultures men feel ashamed of reporting to authorities their failure to protect themselves against their partners and often find it difficult to talk about their family problems even with their friends or relatives. The Men’s Crisis Centre in Finland (serving the Helsinki area, for its homepage see Miesten kriisikeskus) has noted that very rarely its clients want to report the violence they have experienced to the authorities (Pulli 2004).

However, there is very big problem as the statistics do not clearly differentiate between the situations where women’s violence is a response to her partner’s violence and where the woman resorts to physical violence first and situations where only one side used violence. In the Finnish case it would be very interesting to get more detailed data whether the male victims of DV really are as innocent as they claim. Swan and Snow (2006) have criticized the “gender-neutral approach” to the DV and have tried to develop a contextual model to show that the context where women’s violence takes place is qualitatively different. They cite American research findings indicating that the types of violence committed by women are more moderate than those of men. Their data is largely collected among the African American and US Latina women. It is obvious that the sociohistorical context of violence is always different and gender specific. Apparently some women in different contexts use violence to response to the violence of their partners, because they believe that violence is an
effective way to counter violence and because they do not believe that they can get help from anyone else.

The priority should always be to protect the victim of crime and to improve the legal system and public services so that they can effectively help the victims and identify acts of violence fairly. The principle of zero tolerance of violence is very important as sends the message that resorting to physical violence is always wrong and that resorting to violence first does give the victim certain rights to protect her/himself. If the public sector is perceived to provide maximum support to the victims of violence, especially the DV, there is a good reason to expect that fewer people would commit acts of violence. Using “moderate” violence to counter violence is not something that should be seen as a solution to DV by anyone although one should always be given a right to self-defense. I assume that in most cases it is not too difficult to draw a line between acceptable self-defense and active violence and that should not be the focus of DV discourse. In the recurring cases of DV it can be suspected that using “moderate” violence to counter violence is a very dangerous strategy and may even contribute to escalation of violence.

Furthermore, in the violence against children the violence by women seems to be far more widespread in Finland than that by men and usually it is committed in the name of “disciplining” (Ojala 2005: 42-44 and Helsingin Sanomat 26 September, 2007). In the case of children as victims, at least, there can never be any excuse to justify violence. Also in Finland there used to be a popular perception that women are not likely to commit violent acts, but several studies that have been published in recent years and subsequent media attention has challenged this notion and surprised many. Apparently the Finnish women are even more likely than men to publicly condemn violence, but some of the same women can resort to it themselves when they loose their temper. However, it needs to be noted that it is very difficult to get very reliable data about domestic violence in
the majority of cases where they are not reported to any authorities.

Therefore, it can not (yet) be analysed with much certainty how widespread the domestic violence committed by women is in Finland, but at least there are indications that it should not be ignored, although it may well be different from the violence committed by men. At least, there is no reason to narrow the domestic violence by definition to apply to the acts of violence by husbands against their wives. Having said this I assume that there are differences in the types of domestic violence where men and women are perpetrators. When comparing Finland with other countries it would be misleading to suspect that Finnish women, who have a reputation of being emancipated, would somehow use that power in a violent way. Quite the contrary, emancipation means by definition gaining control of own powers and fulfilling potential, usually in cooperation with others. Violence signifies a failure of equal and respectful relationship. Violence by definition is a part of dysfunctional relationships. The eradication of violence from families will require more emancipation and more equal and respectful relationship, in Finland and elsewhere.

Using violence in human relationships is wrong and there are always non-violent alternatives. There is also a reason to suspect that acts of domestic violence have a tendency to concentrate and escalate in families where the zero tolerance on violence is not maintained as a non-breachable principle. There is also ample evidence that in Finnish cases of domestic violence, both by men and women and in wide range of cases leading to serious physical injury, the consumption of alcohol plays a role at least in many of the cases that lead to losses of life and serious physical injuries. It is of utmost importance that the legal system shows no understanding to any forms of violence in domestic or non-domestic situations. Of course, it is unlikely that all cases of domestic violence will ever be reported to the law authorities, but the possibility and likelihood of swift action surely will have a major impact on social norms. Furthermore, in countries like
Finland there is a good reason to have a serious debate on the need to decrease alcohol (and drug abuse) consumption, as there is at least some correlation between the alcohol use and domestic (and other) violence. In Piispa’s study there are examples like: “We drank too much, started to argue, he lost his temper and hit me.” Piispa tells that in the descriptions of young women, the incident was quite often associated with arguing and intoxication, and the women emphasized their own role in what had happened (Piispa 2004: 36).

However, as some researchers have pointed out, in the Finnish case it is difficult to show that some specific life situation factors (such as having children, cohabiting, low educational level, and financial dependency on the male partner) would neatly explain the DV. Minna Piispa in her research, that uses extensively the Statistics Finland data, concludes that in the reporting of domestic violence there are major generational differences among Finnish women. The younger women are more prone to report and talk about the DV of varying degrees of seriousness and can identify the DV also when there are no physical injuries. Furthermore, the younger women apparently find it much easier to talk openly to researchers about the domestic violence and about sexuality and problems in their relationship with their partner while this obviously is not the case with older generations (Piispa 2004: 30-48). This kind of research findings suggest that the Finnish culture has changed significantly and it is difficult to use the same research methodology to study different age cohorts. Of course, it would also be too simplistic to generalize about the mentality of different generations, but already these observations serve as a warning to make sweeping generalizations between different cultures and social contexts when it is so difficult to find patterns within one culture.

As for the cases of domestic violence in homosexual relationships/families there are claims that violence in these relationships is as widespread or even far more widespread than in other relationships, involving as many as
some 30-40% of relationships and applying as often to lesbian and male homosexual relationships (http://www.rainbowdomesticviolence.itgo.com). Apparently this is a field where there is still much research to be done or about relationships between homosexuals/bisexuals and heterosexuals. As I am not familiar with reliable studies (and would be very skeptic about any exact percentages covering a wide range of relationships), I just note that also the rainbow relationships should be analysed in the same context as domestic violence in heterosexual human relationships.

Finally, there is a need to note that violence against animals is also a form of violence and often takes place in very domestic surroundings. People, who at young age, often at home, witness cruelty to animals and start to believe that it is ‘normal’, lose an ability to put themselves in the situation of the victim of violence. There are American research findings indicating that severe physical violence is a significant predictor of pet abuse. Women residing at domestic violence shelters were nearly 11 times more likely to report that their partner had hurt or killed pets than a comparison group of women who said they had not experienced intimate violence (Ascione et al 2007: 354-373).

Furthermore, there are some studies linking animal cruelty to serial murder (see e.g. Wright & Hensley 2003: 71-88). In Japan, the 1997 beheading of an 11-year-old boy by a 14-year-old boy in Kobe who, police later learned, had a habit of killing cats, in addition to a record of violence against other children played a part in increasing punishments for cruelty to animals. However, this new law is very rarely applied in Japan and, for instance, the pet industry is very loosely regulated and very little is done to actively protect the rights of animals to be free from violence. Hundreds of thousands of dogs and cats are routinely exterminated annually in Japan after having been abandoned by their owners and Japan lags any effective network of animal shelters, although few such centres exist and are run by volunteers. With animal shelters we see a similar tendency as with refuge
shelters for victims of domestic violence that the public sector is proceeding with a snail’s pace and would rather see volunteers doing most of the hard work.

**Aggression and protection of οίκος**

Aggression, aggressivity and violence does take place both in human and other animal relationships. The struggle for existence in the Darwinian sense does not apply to a struggle between different species or even to different populations of same species but to the competition that takes place between individuals that are in close contact with each other and in many cases are near relations. In terms of evolutionary struggle the ‘eating enemies’ of other species are far less dangerous for species than other species that are competing for the same habitat and life-style. Social animals take every opportunity to attack their ‘eating enemy’ by mobbing together. However, the real struggle deals with the control of one’s own home/territory against other individuals. This aggression and aggressivity that animals project against each other helps them to avoid too dense populations and directs them to spread more evenly and make use of new areas/biotopes. The cats are avoiding direct aggression/violence by communicating their presence by their markings. The wolves have very sophisticated ritualistic rules for behaviour to avoid intra-species violence. Nothing would be further from truth than the saying ‘*homo homini lupus*’: the wolves are far better in keeping their intra-species violence checked. Hidden aggression is always smarter than risking an injury. However, the males of many species do fight over territory and females. However, the sexual selection is in almost all cases by the female. The male behaviour is often explained by an attempt to compete with other males. However, also the females do compete, but apparently with slightly different rationale than the males. Aggression and projecting aggressivity sometimes works, but most animals have been good in finding ways to avoid aggression and violence, for the benefit of whole species (for more on aggression, Lorenz
1966: 17-39, it should be noted that Lorenz is very careful to discuss the whole range of aggressivity and treat aggression as a specific case; in interviews he has later told that the English translation “On Aggression” misses the point of ‘Das sogenannte Böse’ (“the so-called evil”), Koivisto 1982: 50.

The humans are not free from these evolutionary patterns and from carrying aggressivity/capability to aggression in their genes, but the human society has become far more complicated from before and all human behaviour is closely controlled by the society and state. While people learn to live in a society they also learn to control their aggressions and they learn the rules of competition that apply in their own society, also in such social relations as bonding/interacting with their own and different gender. Aggression is tamed by the society, but there are still widely acceptable forms of showing/watching aggression and especially male aggression, including sports/fighting and other forms of silly and reckless behaviour. The gladiators of Rome, matadors of Spain, baseball leagues and the Formula I have much in common. Whether this behaviour still appeals to a great number of modern females is an issue open to controversy. In modern human society other skills than primitive fighting skills are far more useful, at least from the society’s point of view, and the animal rage and violence should be regarded as an evolutionary dead end in any social sense. Or are still some females subconsciously looking for the aggressive protectors of the family and initially mistake signs of aggression for protection?

In the animal world there are many examples of species where there is an absolute inhibition against using violence/biting females. What is interesting is that in these cases the females never seem behave offensively toward the males and, instead, the gender relations seem to be particularly peaceful and tender in these cases (e.g. wolves, Carduelid family including the goldfinch, the siskin, the bullfinch, the greenfinch, and others, and many lizard species). It may even be observed that among both wolves and
bullfinches the non-aggression of males impresses the females and forms an important part of their bonding (Lorenz 1969: 106-107). Of course, humans are not bullfinches or wolves, but they can learn from the life of bullfinches and wolves. Maybe we should do as Jesus the birdwatcher said and look at the birds of the air for clues of behaviour (Matt 6:25).

The human male aggression has through history been often closely related to misogyny and macho values in society. Ian Buruma has analysed the links between macho values, fascism and male homosexuality. In some societies some men think that domesticated bourgeois society is, by definition, cowardly, materialistic and dull - and that true manliness must never be tainted by the female sex, or the domesticity it represents. Buruma refers to the classic examples of homosexuality in Spartan army and among the Japanese samurai and among his more contemporary examples is Jörg Haider and several SA leaders (Buruma 2006). In short, misogyny, fascism, violence and male homosexuality can sometimes coincide and the armies often represent the social institution that is furthest away from domesticity. Buruma refers to Ōe Kenzaburō’s novel ‘Seventeen’ as an example of Japanese postwar ultra-rightist movement and how young men are drawn to violence, fascism and macho values. Interestingly he did not choose Mishima Yukio, whose life epitomises – to the point of caricaturizing - all these ideas. If only the warfare could be abolished and replaced by some more constructive means of conflict resolution then the societies could more convincingly condemn aggressive behaviour and violent macho values in all their forms.

Violence against women always contains elements of misogyny. Already Marcus Tullius Cicero remarked that the Greeks considered misogyny (misogunia, μισογυνία or misogynaios, μισογύναιος) to be caused by gynophobia, a fear of women (Cicero 45 BC, Book 3: 11). Of course the violent misogyny is often indistinguishable from misanthropy if the same male aggressor has also male victims. Fear and hate seem to be often
feelings that accompany each other: the root of the problems is the inability or unwillingness to understand the feelings of another. However, whole cultures may have misogynist tendencies and it is quite telling when it is socially acceptable to treat women violently or talk about women in a disrespectful manner. Nietzsche is well known for some of the most infamous statements about women and among those is: “Are you going to women? Do not forget the whip!” (Burgard 1994: 11), which reveals his approval to using violence in order to subjugate women. In the Feminist political theory the concept of patriarchy and misogyny were closely linked from the beginning. Kate Millett in her ‘Sexual Politics’ (1969) argued that male domination is reproduced in each generation through family and that the patriarchy’s ideology is deeply misogynist. In short, it is the patriarchy’s social structure that itself is the root of misogyny and the violence at all the levels is one of the consequences. Obviously the solution would be to get rid of the patriarchy and all forms of misogyny and misanthropy.

Some people are aggressive and violent, because they do not control their violence and because the society is not doing enough to protect those who become their victims. Furthermore, some societies have understanding for violent behaviour as it is seen to contribute to its martial success. Non-violence in contemporary Afghanistan or Iraq does not seem to have a to fertile ground among the population. Ugly aggression may be part of human history, but there is no need to resign to the fate: people can set the rules for their social behaviour and educate the whole population on the advantages of more civilized rules. Some societies are more peaceful than others and there is always room to for improvement, to eradicate the structures and practices that contribute to violence. Domestic violence is a form of violence and should be seen in the context of violence, in general.

Ecology, derived from Greek for house oikos (oikos) studies the relations of organisms in their natural surroundings or house. Also the word for
economy (oikosnomos, literally: rules of house) derives from the same root. While the Latin house, *DOMVS*, has in other languages often been seen contrast to the public sphere the Greek *οίκος* is strongly associated as a unit firmly linking an organism with its surroundings and broader context. In practical terms the ancient *οίκος* and *DOMVS* are very similar. However, it can be noted that the architecture of the two does differ especially in the sense that the Greek *οίκος* had a strict separation between male and female spaces: ‘gynaeconite’ (γυναικωνίτης) for women and ‘andronites’ (νδρωνίται) for men. The male space had the guest areas and libraries while the female space was far more “domestic” (for more on Greek houses, Ratto 2008: 256-263).

The Greek understanding of *οίκος* in the context of the rest of the world opens a way for a literally more ‘ecological’ understanding of the human relations. The Latin *DOMVS* has become to symbolize the family as the isolated unit, which is free to make its rules even when its behaviour is dysfunctional to all its members. Domestic violence is dysfunctional behaviour that endangers the individuals as well as the family unit, and undermines the social harmony. In families the domestic violence often literally ruins the lives of several generations and the consequences easily become cross-generational. The more ‘ecological’ understanding of domestic relationships would see people as peaceful members of their community, contributing to its network of constantly improving the moral standards of the community. Violence, naturally, would have no place in such a world.

**Power relations and eradication of domestic violence**

On one hand politics is about control and dominance, on the other hand it is about acceptance and legitimacy that is built on justice and rightfulness. Through legitimacy power transforms into authority. Brute force and violence does not produce much influence and seldom leads to any
intended outcome. More modern understanding of power always sees it in a context of relationships, usually networks of quite complicated relationships. The Marxist approaches, including the Gramscian theory, have made the lasting contribution of revealing the role of ideological hegemony, manipulation and indoctrination. The feminist theory focuses on the ideological dominance of patriarchalism (instead of ruling class or capitalists), for a basic treatment of forms of power, Wrong 1979 and Heywood 1994: 78-105).

It has also been pointed out that morality, justice and high principles of universality are not necessarily always higher to private and particularism. In short, the moral skills traditionally displayed by women in the private sphere may be different, but not inferior to, the moral skills in the public sphere. The postmodern and feminist critiques of universal moralism have at least stressed the need to speak clearly about any universal ethical claims. The postmodern strategy of denying absolute ground to others has sometimes been interpreted as a dangerous flirtation with the proposition that ‘anything goes’ (Linklater 1998: 66-71), although that is not really the point in that critique. I would here go back to Ahtisaari’s critique of fundamentalist righteousness: change for better in a society is built on each society’s own experience and “particularism”, which in the end does not necessarily make the existence of universal principles empty, but it may make it difficult to monopolise the meaning/phrasing of that principle.

The modern state has amassed huge powers and uses them to pacify, control and regulate society. While doing so it also has erected system of exclusion directed at women, minorities, sub-national groups and subordinate classes. The modern state system with its in-built principle of state sovereignty fits badly with the universalist moral principles. For instance, universal solidarity is often totally forgotten when the state takes practical measures to reduce domestic social inequality. The cure would undoubtedly involve some variety of cosmo-politan governance and
broadening of the political community. The first steps would be abolishing of traditional understanding of citizenship and the polarization between public and private spheres (Cf. Linklater 1998: 145-212).

The reorganization of political community would involve the emancipation of the excluded groups and individuals. The functions of pacifying, controlling and regulating society would remain, but within respect of the wishes of people. By traditional language the system should be made more representative at all levels, participatory and direct. Most likely the units of decision-making would be rather small while there should also be a need for larger organization that would guarantee that different units would not export harms to others. The European Union can with some imagination be seen to be trying something like this by building simultaneously more democratic local structures and new European-wide institutions. However, the modern Europe still can also be used as an example of exclusion and “power politics”.

Emancipation is a form of power. For Michel Foucault the concept of emancipation implies an inherent human essence waiting to be freed from the shackles of a repressive power and establishment of new non-repressive power relations. Foucault criticized extensively the uses of knowledge by organisations in controlling and repressing people. The examples of Foucault often covered relatively small organizations, such as monasteries, schools and prisons, but the same analysis may be extended to whole societies (see e.g. Foucault 1979 and 1980).

Domestic violence exists and thrives in a society where repressive power relations are allowed to exist. The solution is a emancipation where power relations are, instead, built on social justice, equality and human dignity. As said that kind of society would include reorganisation of existing state system. Furthermore, that would include a whole different attitude towards violence in human relations. As for the domestic violence the starting point
is that domestic violence is essentially evil and with essential evils the case does not depend on the circumstances; one is always wrong.

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