

# THE INTEGRATED POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIP

## The Way Forward for the Progressive Agenda

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*The Power of Partnership*, Riane Eisler (New World Library, 2002)

**We have been taught** to think of politics in terms of elections and governments, but politics is basically about how power is defined and exercised, and by whom. This is something we learn, starting in early childhood. The new social categories of the *Partnership System* and the *Domination System* provide an integrated picture of society that encompasses the social construction of not only “public” institutions such as politics, economics, religion, and education but also the “private” sphere of parent-child and gender relations where children first learn what is normal or abnormal, moral or immoral, possible or impossible.

The categories of Partnership and Domination transcend conventional ones such as religious vs. secular, East vs. West, Right vs. Left and Capitalist vs. Socialist. The degree to which a society orients to either end of the Partnership/Domination Scale affects all of our relations, from intimate to international.

People who believe that top-down domination systems are the only option, recognize the foundational importance of early human relations, making the “traditional” family that is authoritarian, male-dominated and highly punitive a priority in their political agenda. Progressives, by contrast, have marginalized parent-child and gender relations as “women’s and children’s issues”, leaving available the base upon which Domination Systems keep rebuilding itself.

**The Integrated Partnership Political Agenda** focuses on the four cornerstones of *family/childhood, economics, language/narratives, and gender*, cornerstones that regressives have successfully focused on as the foundation of their Domination politics. Rebuilding these four cornerstones with the values of Partnership, building a foundation that supports more equitable, sustainable and caring societies, is long-term work that must start now!

**In the following charts you will find:**

- Core configurations of Domination Systems and Partnership Systems
- Key elements of the Domination and the Partnership Political Agendas
- Suggestions for reclaiming emotionally charged words such as *family and values*.

**TABLE 1**

**THE INTEGRATED POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIP  
THE DOMINATION & PARTNERSHIP SYSTEMS**

*The Domination and Partnership Systems are new categories that describe social configurations that transcend conventional classifications such as religious vs. secular, Eastern vs. Western, or right vs. left. No society is a pure Partnership or Domination System but the lens of the partnership-domination social scale reveals patterns that are otherwise not visible. Cross-culturally and throughout history, brutally repressive and violent societies – whether secular, like rightist Nazi Germany in the West and Kim Jong Un’s leftist North Korea in the East, or religious, like ISIS in the Middle East and Boko Haram in Africa – exemplify the core configuration of the domination system. More equitable and peaceful societies – whether ancient such as Catal Huyuk and other prehistoric cultures, or modern ones such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland – adhere more closely to the partnership system’s core configuration.*

<b>Component</b>	<b>Domination System</b>	<b>Partnership System</b>
<b>1. Family &amp; Social Structure</b>	Authoritarian structure of ranking and <i>hierarchies of domination</i> in both family and state or tribe. Children grow up in authoritarian, punitive, male-dominated families where they observe and experience inequality and inequity as the norm.	Democratic structure of linking and <i>hierarchies of actualization</i> in both family and state or tribe. Parenting is authoritative rather than authoritarian and egalitarian and equitable adult relations are the norm.
<b>2. Gender Roles &amp; Relations</b>	Ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half, as well as rigid gender stereotypes, with traits and activities viewed as masculine, such as “toughness” and conquest, ranked over those seen as feminine, such as “softness” and caregiving.	Equal valuing of the male and female halves of humanity, as well as fluid gender roles with a high valuing of empathy, caring, caregiving, and nonviolence in both women and men, as well as in social and economic policy.
<b>3. Economic &amp; Social Relations</b>	Top-down control of economic resources, and high degree of fear and violence, from child beating to abuse by “superiors” in families, workplaces, and society.	Caring economics, and low degree of fear, abuse, and violence, since they are not required to maintain rigid rankings of domination.
<b>4. Narratives</b>	Beliefs and stories justify and idealize domination and violence, which are deemed inevitable, moral and desirable.	Beliefs and stories present empathic, mutually beneficial, nonviolent relations, as normal, moral, and desirable.

TABLE 2

THE INTEGRATED POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIP

The FOUR CORNERSTONES

AGENDA	DOMINATION	PARTNERSHIP
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b> <b><i>Family/Childhood</i></b></p>	<p>Promote punitive, fear-based parenting to teach unquestioning obedience to authority. Present “spare the rod and spoil the child” as necessary and moral. Condition people to emotionally depend on those on top, rather than develop their own powers of thinking and creating.</p> <p>Oppose funding for universal healthcare, good nutrition, and other measures that protect children and help them develop their potentials.</p> <p>Dismantle public education and re-impose rote teaching-to-the-test to rank and humiliate children, teachers, and schools. Squeeze out education that teaches gender-balance, multiculturalism, peace, and environmental sensitivity.</p> <p>Give little or no economic value to the “women’s work” of caregiving in families. Oppose support for childcare, paid parental leave, and other caring policies.</p>	<p>Delegitimize violence against children as immoral and dysfunctional. Unite behind campaigns to end violence and abuse of children. Promote partnership (authoritative rather than authoritarian) parenting that empowers rather than disempowers children.</p> <p>Ensure healthcare and good nutrition for all children. Show the personal, economic, social and environmental benefits this brings.</p> <p>Support and improve public education and promote gender-balanced, multicultural, environmentally conscious education to help young people learn to respect themselves, others and the environment and co-create a healthy future.</p> <p>Demand high quality childcare and training. Award high status and economic benefits for the essential work of caregiving, whether done by women or men, in families or the marketplace.</p>

AGENDA	DOMINATION	PARTNERSHIP
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b> <b>Gender</b></p>	<p>Reinforce cultural beliefs that women must be controlled by men as heads of families and as policy makers. Re-enforce the masculinity-domination link and the femininity-subservience link. Oppose funding for programs that offer protection from violence to girls and women and the LGBT community.</p> <p>Reinforce social priorities that value activities stereotypically associated with men over those associated with women. Denigrate men who are nonviolent and caring as “sissies” or “wimps.”</p> <p>Reinstate curricula that focus on the male half of humanity, reinforcing mindsets that one kind of person or gender is more valuable than another.</p> <p>Fill policy-making positions with men (and token women) who support those who have economic control and want to take away rights to family planning and reproductive choice.</p>	<p>Change cultural beliefs that the male half of humanity is entitled to control the female half in families and societies. Unlink masculinity from domination and violence, and femininity from subordination and obedience. Unite to stop violence against girls and women and protect the LGBT community.</p> <p>Change social priorities so that activities stereotypically associated with women are valued as highly as those associated with men. Teach that caring and nonviolence are essential in men, women, and social policy for a more peaceful, just, and caring world.</p> <p>Bring gender-balanced education into schools to change mindsets that value one kind of person more than another. Unite to support partnership education as foundational to ending sexism, racism, and other dominator “isms”.</p> <p>Promote women in decision-making, and unite to bring partnership-oriented women and men from diverse racial and ethnic groups into policy-making positions to support more caring and empathic policies, including family planning and reproductive choice.</p>

AGENDA	DOMINATION	PARTNERSHIP
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b> <b><i>Economics</i></b></p>	<p>Pass on costs of environmental and health damage to consumers, taxpayers, and future generations; oppose socially and ecologically responsible business standards under the guise of a “free market” and “globalization”; develop organizations, rules, and policies that demand lack of empathy, such as agencies that cut back social services and maintain top-down economic control.</p> <p>Oppose meaningful political campaign financing reform to maintain control of laws and social and economic policies by powerful economic interests.</p> <p>Maintain the devaluation of the “women’s work” of caregiving, and oppose caring policies.</p> <p>Oppose changes in measures of economic productivity that protect socially and environmentally irresponsible practices.</p> <p>Perpetuate old economic theories such as capitalism and socialism that came out of early industrial times; ignore realities of our post-industrial age when jobs are increasingly replaced by automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence.</p>	<p>Enact environmentally and socially responsible business standards and rules; work for Partnership Charters for domestic and international corporations as well as in economic and environmental treaties; reward pro-social policies and practices with tax breaks and other benefits and penalize irresponsible ones.</p> <p>Enact public campaign financing and other means of ending economic control of politics to free policy makers to work for an equitable, environmentally sustainable, and caring economic system.</p> <p>Show the economic value of caring for people and nature; ensure it is adequately rewarded.</p> <p>Use new measures of economic productivity, (Social Wealth Economic Indicators), that focus on quality-of-life, human development, and environmental sustainability.</p> <p>Form coalitions to support a caring economics or <i>partnerism</i> to meet the unprecedented technological, economic, and environmental challenges of our time of technological, social, economic, and environmental challenges.</p>

AGENDA	DOMINATION	PARTNERSHIP
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p><b><i>Narratives/ Language</i></b></p>	<p>Reinforce fragmented thinking through old categories such as religious vs. secular, Eastern vs. Western, and so forth.</p> <p>Preserve cultural beliefs that human nature is selfish and violent, and hence that people must be rigidly controlled through fear and force. Discredit partnership-oriented beliefs, attitudes, and narratives as “fantasy,” and present self-interest and concern for others as opposites rather than as interconnected.</p> <p>Use media monopolies and social media to discredit partnership possibilities.</p> <p>Use schools and media to make rankings of domination seem normal, natural, and divinely ordained.</p> <p>Reinforce the belief that ranking male over female is divinely or naturally ordained, as well as gender stereotypes requiring men not to be like “inferior” women and never to embrace “soft” or “feminine” traits and activities like caring, caregiving, and nonviolence.</p> <p>Promote, often under the guise of religion, a “morality” of fear, scarcity, intolerance of the “other,” violence, punishment, and the necessity for strongman saviors.</p>	<p>Use and spread the new social categories of partnership and domination systems, and narratives that promote partnership.</p> <p>Discard narratives that promote domination. Strengthen the understanding that human nature is flexible and includes a powerful capacity for empathy, caring, and creativity; show that self-interest and concern for others are not opposites but mutually supporting.</p> <p>Ensure that the voice of partnership and diversity is heard, and counter false stories in social media.</p> <p>Offer schools and media tools to recognize beliefs, myths, and stories that promote domination or partnership. Help them understand the consequences of each system.</p> <p>Create and disseminate narratives that support men and women worldwide in regaining their full spectrum of human capacities and possibilities; recognize the value of caring, caregiving, and nonviolence in both women and men.</p> <p>Promote partnership morals and principles. Nurture the spiritual courage that will be required to make Partnership a reality.</p>

**TABLE 3**

**THE INTEGRATED POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIP**

**THE VOCABULARY OF DOMINATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

*To build more equitable, sustainable, and caring societies, we need new thinking. This requires new words, as words channel our thinking. The categories of the partnership system and the domination system transcend religious vs. secular, Eastern vs. Western, rightist vs. leftist, and others we have been taught. These old categories fragment our thinking. Societies in all these categories have been unjust, violent, and repressive. All focus almost exclusively on the so-called public sphere of politics and economics from which women and children (the majority of humanity) traditionally have been barred. They fail to take into account findings from psychology and neuroscience showing that what children experience and observe early on impacts how their brains develop – hence their beliefs, feelings, and actions, including voting.*

*Here are examples of alternatives to emotionally charged phrases used to reimpose domination systems. When you use this chart, remember you will be most successful if you don't use blame or shame to make your points. Appeal, instead, to the yearning for love and respect we all share.*

<b>DOMINATION/CONTROL</b>	<b>PARTNERSHIP/RESPECT</b>
Family values Educational accountability Capitalist economics Free market Compassionate conservative Traditional values Globalization Traditional morality Women's work Politically correct	Valuing families Educational responsibility Caring Economics Fair market Caring democracy Humane traditions Global responsibility Moral sensitivity Caring work Personally caring

You can add your own ideas to this short list.

