Gender Analysis in ICT4D Research: A matter of fairness, quality and representation

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Is GENDER a new concept?

	1970	1980	1990
ACADEMY	• **Women Studies** (Liberal, marxist and socialist feminist frameworks) • Women and Development	• **Gender Studies** • Cultural radical feminist frameworks • Women in Development	• **Queer Studies** • Black, Chicano, Latin-American feminist Studies
ACTIVISM	Women's rights, education and participation in economic development (debates on productive and reproductive roles)	• Struggle for democratization in some regions. • International conventions , treaties and action plans (CEDAW).	• Grow of women's NGOs. • Emergence of ICT based women's networks • A landmark: Beijing Conference (1995) • Women governmental machineries • Equality/equity policies

"If history has taught us anything, it is that "feminism" takes diverse forms. Therefore, referring to a singular feminist perspective oversimplifies or "essentializes" multifaceted theoretical positions".
Marilyn Plummer and Lynne E. Young

2000….
New challenges?

ACADEMY

- Wide dissemination of Gender Studies Centers, academic programs and research projects all over the world
- Intersectionality
- Decolonizing feminist perspectives
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Post- structuralism: interpretation of subjectivities, gender, power
- WED

ACTIVISM

- Raise of women participation in political life
- Empowerment, leadership and women organization and participation in multiple fields
- MDGs: a controversial matter
- Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health
- Explosion in the use of ICT within a multidimensional crisis.
- Ciberactivism

One definition among many

The concept of gender refers to structural inequalities that can be seen in the unequal access of women to material and non-material resources. It is not limited to "roles", behaviours or incomes; gender relations permeate all social institutions, structures and political processes.

It is an organizational principle of social life.

- *Gender and Global Governance 2000-*

Another perspective

Gender Order	It refers to a set of regulations, to formal and implicit rules, that are built and reproduced in social institutions, especially in schools, families and working environments, setting positions, mandates and different sanctions for men and women.
Gender regime	They are the everyday practices that develop in these fields. A certain gender order is embeded and perpetuated in them, such as the fact that it is seen as "natural" that women take care of the domestic work and upbringing of children.
Gender Ideologies	Representations that, both in a symbolic and imaginary level, justify a certain gender order, thus establishing a link between the social and the subjective. They can be seen in common sense beliefs as much as in religions, and in "scientific" discourses. Throughout history, gender ideologies have "naturalized" the differences between men and women, attributing them to biological matters, and thus justifying them as universal and unable to change.

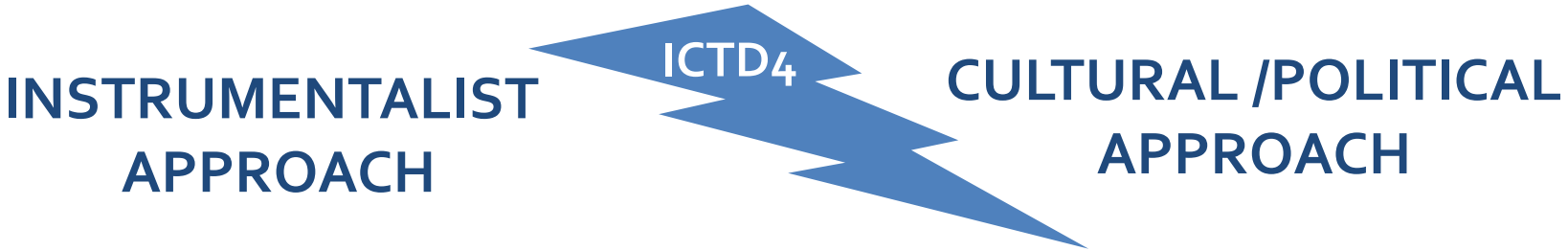
R. Connell, 1987

Gender, a category…

DESCRIPTIVE	Its common use has problematize biological and universal explanations of social inequalities between men and women..
ANALITICAL	Set of concepts and methodological resources that allow to unveil and explain the differences and inequalities in men and women's living conditions, the factors and processes that intervene in the construction of their subjectivities, their roles and behaviours ,their positions in different fields and hierarchies.
ETHICAL-POLITICAL	It mobilized agendas, influence legal and institutional reforms, orients strategies and set goals to achieve gender equality/equity as a matter of human rights, inclusive development and full democracy.

Questioned assumptions on ICT4D

Globalization of ICT	=	Improves the wellbeing of all societies and the interdependence of all social groups and cultures.
Access to ICT	=	increase of socio-educational, occupational and economic opportunities for all
More information	=	more knowledge, more power
Intensive use of ICT	=	Global citizenship, explosion of multiple voices, influential social and political networks



"... But what can be observed in those persons, mainly students, children, who are connected, is that a second element of social division appears significantly more important than the technical connectivity. This is the **educational and cultural capacity to use the Internet**. Once all the information is on the web, ... everything is about knowing where the information is, how to look for it, how to process it, how to transform it into specific knowledge for what one intends to do. **That capacity to learn to learn, to know what to do with what one learns. That capacity is socially unequal and is linked to the social origin, family origin, cultural level, educational level. That is, actually, where the digital gap is at the moment."**

Manuel Castells

	Which is the problem?	***Which is the remedial strategy?***
Women *and* ICT4d	Women's exclusion - consequences : -Poverty, Isolation, Lack of opportunities, skills, information and participation in modern dynamics	Access to computers and use of basic applications .
Women *in* ICT4d	-Women's participation is restricted to basic uses of ICT -Poor digital k skills -Consumer attitude -Stereotypes that restrict women active and strategic appropriation and participation in production, decision making	-School and university education in ICT -Promote the creation of new ICT products women's friendly (mobile phones, sites, games) -Measures to increase the recruitment of women into ICT occupations - Networks of professional women in ICT sectors, both virtual and in 'real life'. -Policies and programs for promoting appropriation and strategic uses for achieving economic, physical and political autonomy
***Gender* in ICT4d**	-**The** gendered "nature" of ICT (from contents to production, design, marketing , policies) -Economic and political determinants in and for globalization of ICT	-Awareness of gender representations and practices all trough the definition and development of IS. -New theoretical and political explanations and policies for a social and gender fair IS . -Critical and proactive participation of both genders in the construction of the I/K Society.

Gender analysis starts with the recognition that we live in a gendered society expressed in norms, expectations, formal and informal rules, institutions, discourses, symbols, scientific explanations, everyday practices …

- Women's and men's experiences, needs, interests, opportunities and priorities might be different , but usually such difference do not receive the same social, economic and cultural value.

- Gender representations and relations are not immutable and fixed, they change along history , and cultures. People are not passive recipients of those norms nor they just reproduce it in their behavior.

- Women's and men subjectivities and social behaviours are influenced by gender representations and codes in intersection with their social position, cultural capital, ethnic culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc.

Gender analysis can provide robust findings of similarities, differences and inequalities between gender groups and within gender groups, which can help to avoid incorrect assumptions and stereotypes when planning a project or policy.

How it works?

By promoting gender equality in research, we enhance the quality and relevance of research"
Arvid Hallén, Director General of the Research Council of Norway.

- **Maintain an open, fair and scientific attitude** to interrogate and review in all research problems and projects how they might be affected by gender assumptions, stereotypes, or subtle biases, and correct it.

- **Move beyond descriptions of differences or rhetoric discourses** and search for explanations of the social ,economic, political and cultural factors and processes that contribute to create, maintain or change gender inequalities related with the research problem .

- **Consider how its development and results can influence the lives of both genders and how their particular visions of the problem and the project might enrich it.**

Apply this understanding to policy development and service delivery with the aim of removing discrimination and subordination of one gender over the other. In other words, for achieve social justice and recognition of diversity in equality.

Top Ten Characteristics of Gendered Research

Inspired in Gender Research: A How-To Guide, INSTRAW

1. **Gender roles and relations**: taking gender issues into account throughout the entire research process. Gender relations are power relations which tend to favour men in access to and control over resources and decision-making at the household, local, national and international spheres.

2. **Gender analysis:** systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender, at each stage of the research process. Fundamental to this process is the availability of sex-disaggregated data.

3. **Gender vs. women**: getting the definitions straight. Not equating "gender" with "women" and understanding that "women" are not a single homogeneous group, but are differentiated by class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, religion etc. MEN ARE ALSO GENDERED (MASCULINITY A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION)

4. **Inclusion and diversity**: involving all the actors and composing target groups, survey samples, etc. as diversely as possible. Paying special attention to including the voices of marginalized groups.

Top Ten Characteristics of Gendered Research

5. **Changing the research process**: doing research in a way that empowers women as well as men including bottom-up research techniques. Doing research with people rather than on them.

6. **Critique of standard science and social science research theories and methods**: questioning the concepts of objectivity and universality, valuing experiential knowledge, inclusion of emotion, contextualization, practicality and self-reflexivity.

7. **Inter-disciplinarity**: topics and methods drawn from many different academic fields and an emphasis on the multiple dimensions of social problems.

8. **Analysis of power hierarchies**: taking action to address power inequalities between researcher and research participants as well as among the participants.

9. **"Non-traditional" qualitative research methods**: such as life stories, personal histories, etc. that include the voices of the research participants.

10. **Research as political action:** This last component goes beyond research for the sake of increasing knowledge and information and envisions research as form of political advocacy that should aim to:

- Generate a concrete impact on policy and programme formulation in order to better the lives of women.
- Create social change – including within social institutions, structures, and cultures (all of which are gendered and create their own forms of gendered discrimination against women)