

AFRISIG 2018

Gender and internet governance: what are the issues and why do they matter to an inclusive internet and good internet governance.



Presented by:

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Experts discuss "The India Outlook" at Davos. (India's 600 million women were unavailable.)

Photographer: Jason Alden/Getty Images

Saudi Arabia launches girls' council - without any girls

🕒 14 March 2017

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QASSIM GIRLS COUNCIL

There were a total of 13 men (not all pictured) on stage to launch the Qassim Girls Council in Saudi Arabia

It was an encouraging initiative for a country not known for giving women a platform in public life.

But when Saudi Arabia wanted to show off its inaugural girls' council in al-Qassim province, they overlooked one thing: the women.

Pictures released to mark the first Qassim Girls Council meeting showed 13 men on stage, and not a single female.

The women were apparently in another room, linked via video.

Last month, Goldman Sachs hosted a conference in London on disruptive technology. Out of 76 speakers at the event, five were women. That was hardly an anomaly: At a 2016 event in Davos organized by the company Mercer, for example, all of the speakers on a panel about helping women thrive were men. (The moderator, at least, was female.) Similarly, one count of events at six leading think tanks in Washington found that 65 percent of their panels were all-male.

All-male White House health bill photo sparks anger

🕒 24 March 2017

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There is a familiarity about this photo, and it could have been taken in many boardrooms around the world - men gathered around a table making plans and cutting deals.

But the lack of women here, among a group of conservative Republicans discussing their healthcare bill with the vice-president, struck a particular nerve.

That's because one of the points under discussion was whether the new bill should mandate that health insurance plans provide "essential benefits" including maternity services.

WHAT IS GENDER?



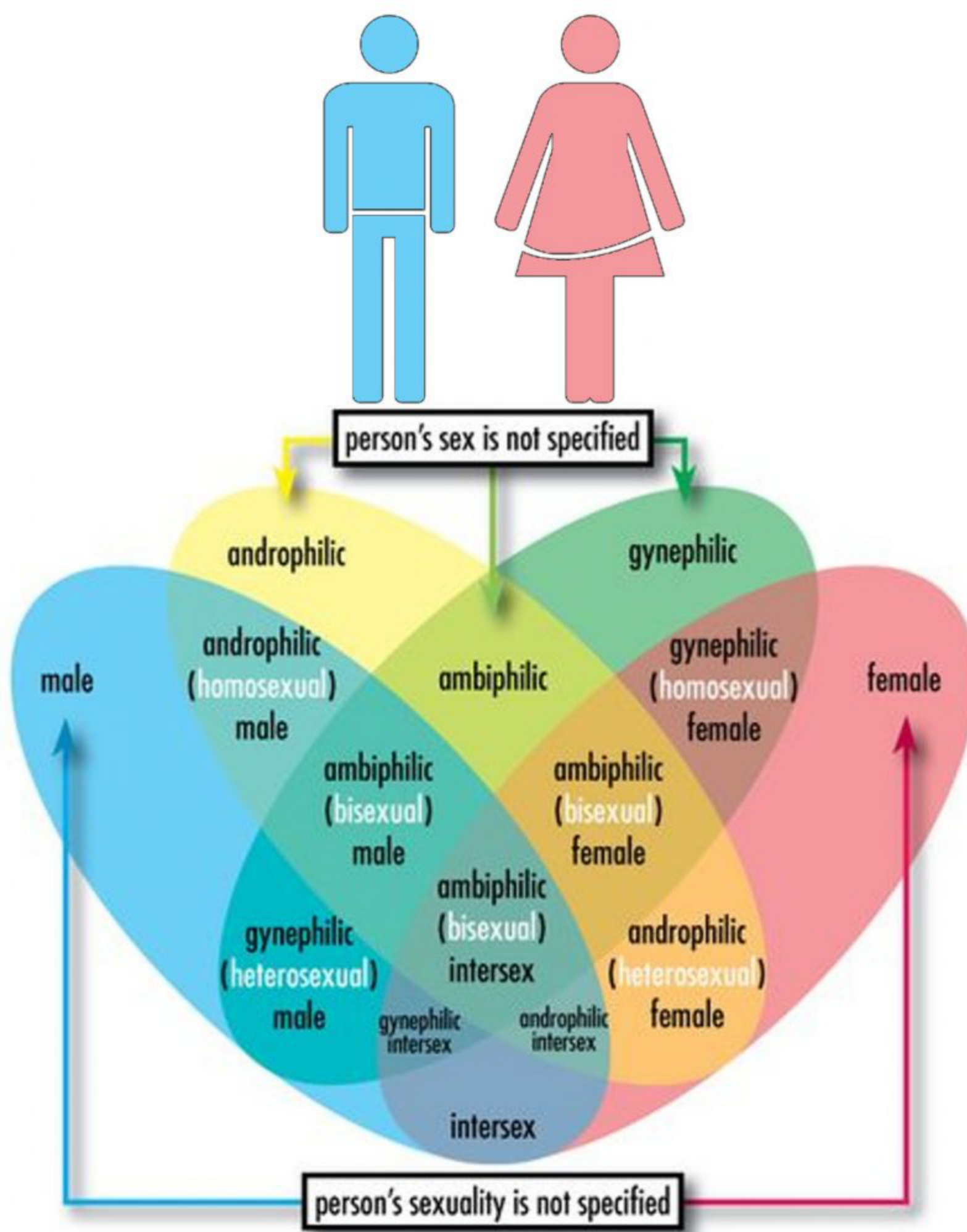


What we think gender is.



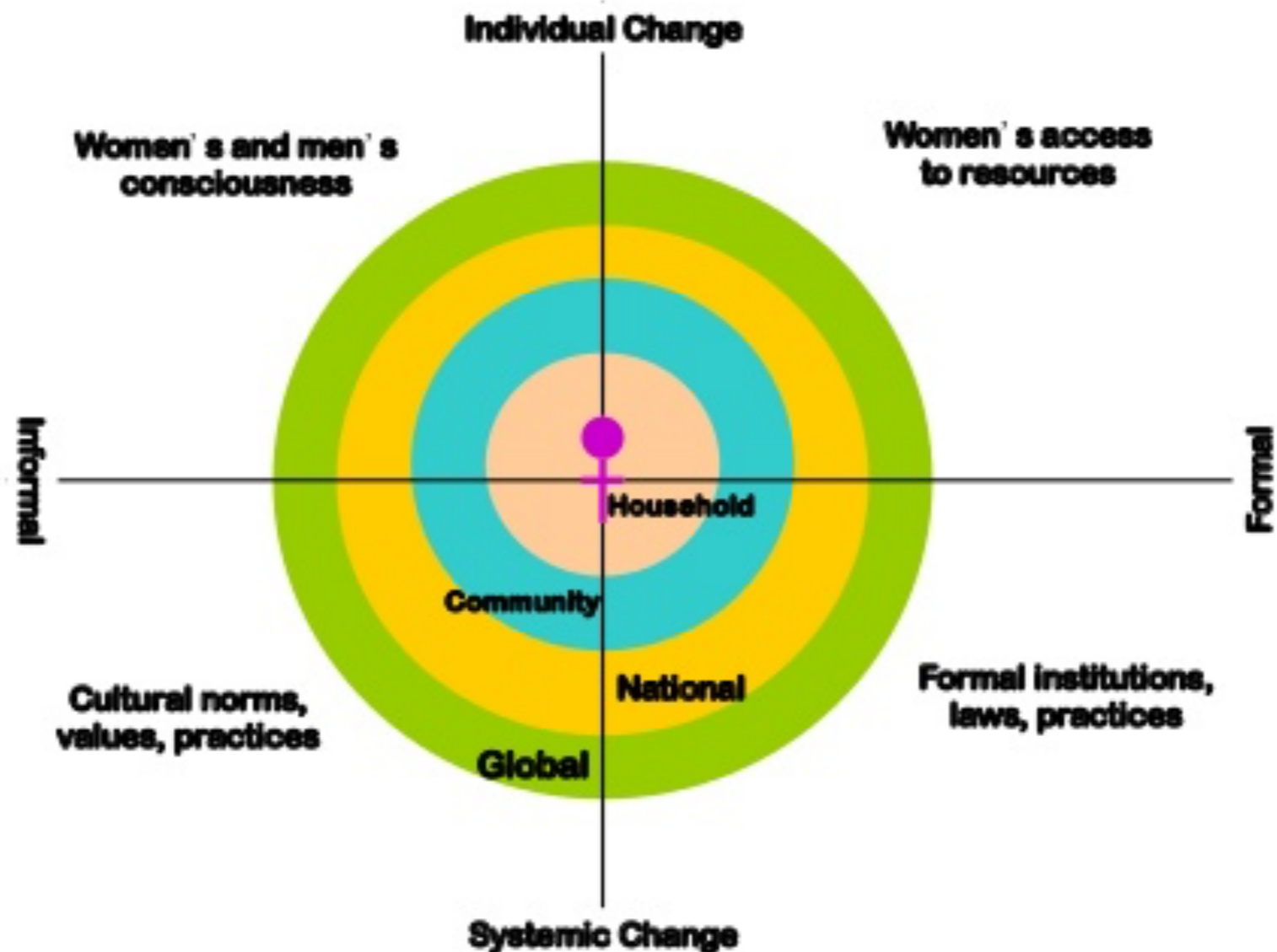
What gender really is.





REFLECTING ON GENDER

A framework for looking at gender and power



Adapted from Gender at Work

GENDER, THE INTERNET AND POWER

Riddle, riddle:

A father and son get in a car crash and are rushed to the hospital. The father dies. The boy is taken to the operating room and the surgeon says, "I can't operate on this boy, because he's my son."

How is this possible?

POWER AND THE INTERNET

Four types of power that manifests within and around the Internet (and by extension technology) that influence access and representation:

- 1. Structural power*
- 2. Discursive power*
- 3. Economic power*
- 4. Embodied power*

STRUCTURAL POWER

If the internet is about connecting end-users, then this tells us that access presents the issue of structural power.

Who has the power to lay the cables, the satellites, the drones?

Who decides about the last mile or the cost of services?

Who has the say in setting tariffs, and what kind of access comparing broadband and flat rates vs data and wi-fi?

How easy is it to innovate?

Who has access to the necessary skills, tools, resources, opportunities that allow us to influence or participate in how structures are set up?



African women are often presented as beneficiaries of the internet and not creators or contributors to it and the technology that makes it possible.



Content relating to women on the internet also shows gender bias and a leaning towards gender stereotypes: e.g most online content that speaks to politics is written by men, and most content relating beauty is made by women.



Whereas men are depicted as the more technically skilled, more innovative (and innovating) gender.

People or groups of people that don't fall into the man/woman binary don't exist as part of dominant narratives around and about the internet/innovation/technology, especially in Africa.

DISCURSIVE POWER:

Discourse is more material than ever and internet gives us “the capacity to create our own truths. Our own knowledge. Have unknown histories and practices be collectively shaped and known. From indigenous communities to queer communities”.

If we think retrospectively it was very difficult to find women, especially African women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), but nowadays there are timelines, stories, books, comics of women from all over the world innovating and contributing to this field.

The internet enables the “ability to participate in influencing discourse, shaping culture, which is arguably one of the most important shifts in power. Because it’s about what is invisible: our understanding, attitudes, beliefs, that then influences our practices.”-hvale

(Source)- IN PLAIN SIGHT, ON SEXUALITY, RIGHTS AND THE INTERNET IN INDIA, NEPAL AND SRI LANKA. [GenderIt.org](https://www.genderit.org/articles/plain-sight-sexuality-rights-and-internet-india-nepal-and-sri-lanka)
<https://www.genderit.org/articles/plain-sight-sexuality-rights-and-internet-india-nepal-and-sri-lanka>



AFRICAN WOMEN IN TECH

**Rose Dieng-Kuntz
(1956-2008)**

A Senegalese scientist and one of the first scholars to understand the importance of the Web and to map how it would evolve, specialising in artificial intelligence and knowledge management;



AFRICAN WOMEN IN TECH

**Grace Alele Williams
(1932-)**

The first Nigerian woman to earn a doctorate, awarded in mathematics, she has been at the forefront of mathematical education in Africa – and was inspired by the Sputnik programme!



AFRICAN WOMEN IN TECH

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Ellen Eglin
(1880s)

Is an African American woman who invented a highly successful clothes wringer but did not patent it. She sold it for a small amount because she believed that white women would not use the wringer if they knew it was created by a black woman.

DISCURSIVE POWER QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel like your thoughts, ideas, feelings and beliefs are reflected on the internet? What are some examples of spaces that show this?
2. How have you managed to use the internet to shift an idea or begin change?
3. Have you ever managed to shift power whether private or public issue using the internet?

ECONOMIC POWER

The power of generating economic models and revenue, from the first ebay to the last start up. The internet has changed how we influence, contribute to and shape economies.

Do we continue to work with, within and around a capitalist, based structure that generates high profits and controlling an entire market e.g the F.A.N.G

or should we start developing different economic models such as crypto-currency (bitcoins) with collective mining, eliminating the traditional intermediary,

or should we start using and developing open and free source software where the technical solution, the code is open and, collective intelligence becomes the common pond for a mutual exchange between the individual and the community?



IF MEN WERE WOMEN, WE'D INSURE THEM.

BUT THEY'RE NOT. So they don't get to pay substantially lower car insurance premiums.

1st for women
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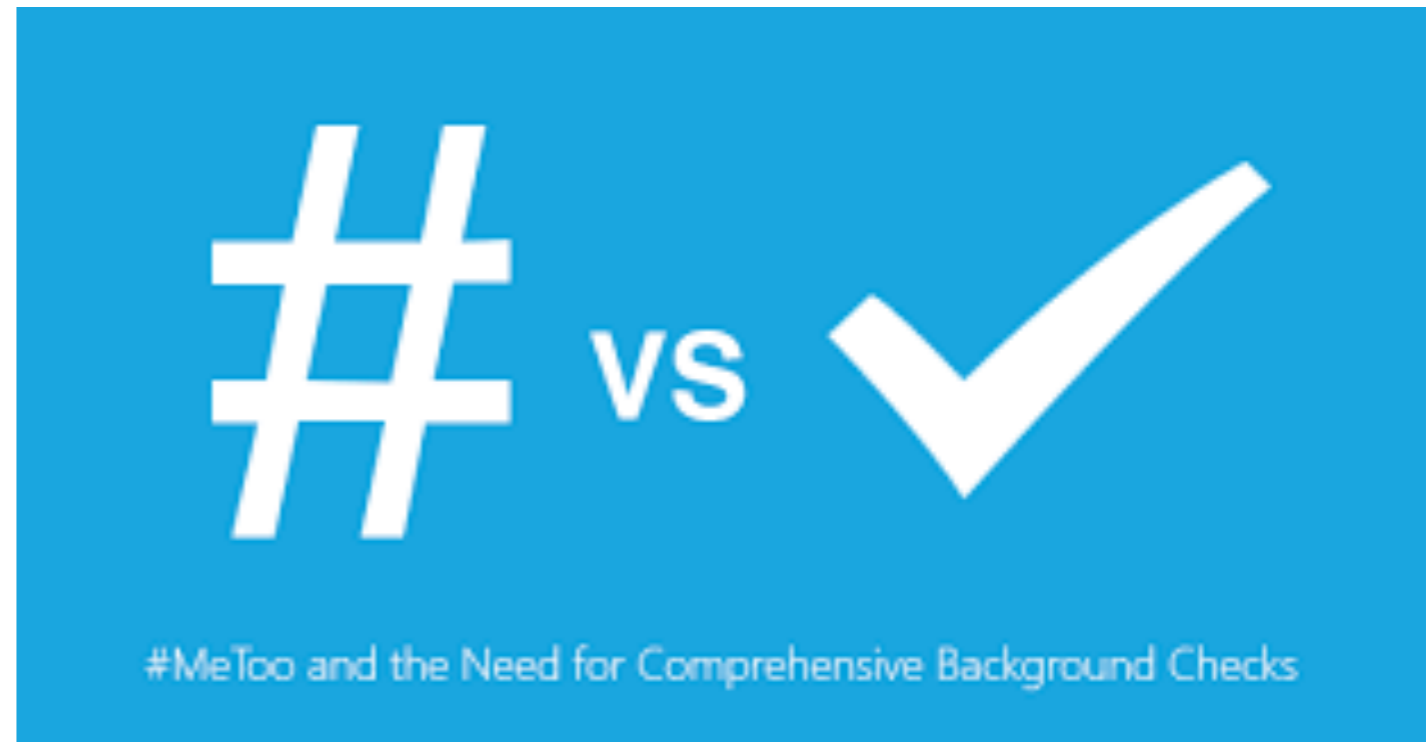
ECONOMIC POWER QUESTIONS:

1. Does the internet and/or other digital technologies facilitate more access to economic power? How? What are some examples of digital technologies in your countries that you feel economically empower you?
2. How accessible are these technologies to women, LGBTIQ people and people with disabilities? What are hindrances are there?
3. Do you have any ideas on how new/different ways of using or accessing digital tech can be harnessed by women, LGBTIQ people and people with disabilities towards better economic access and participation.

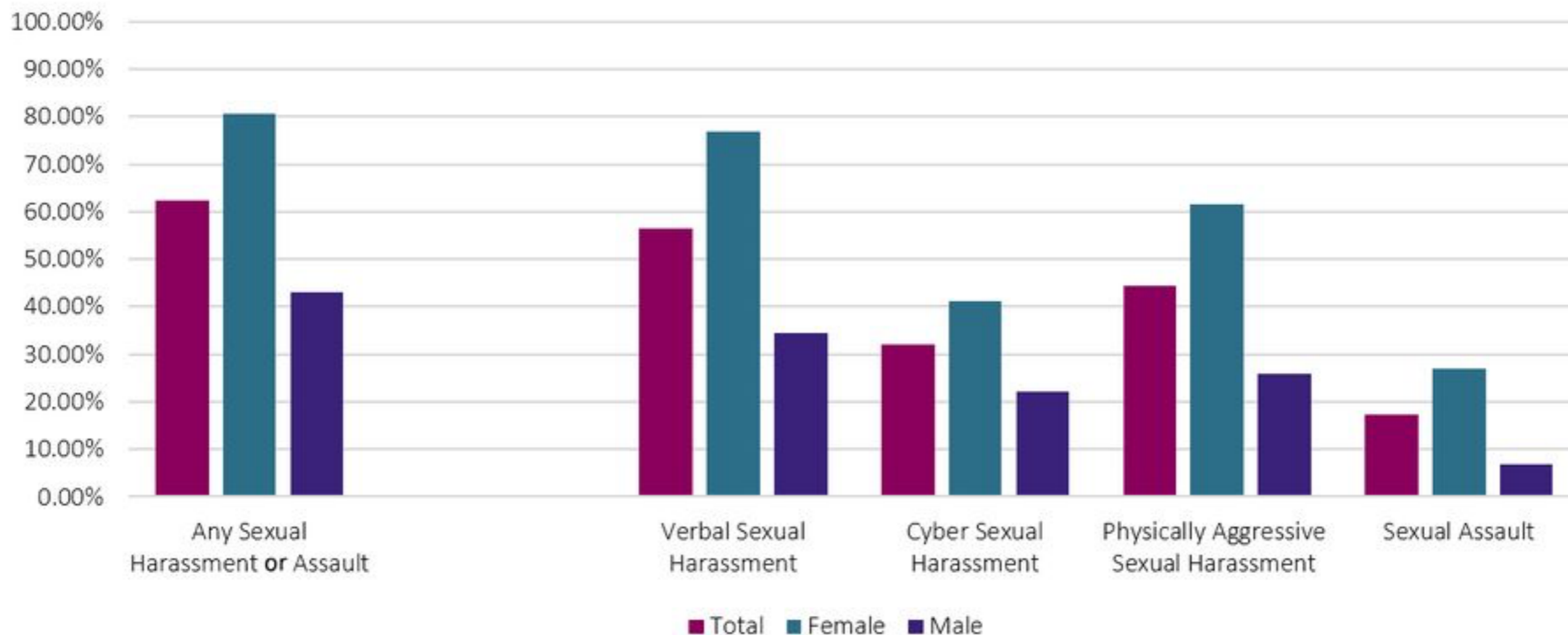
EMBODIED POWER

Internet and pleasure, internet as s/place to overcome limitations of mobility, accessibility from the simple creation of a mailing list, organizing of communities with disability to remote controlled sex-toys to erotics chats. Different ways of experiencing pleasure that trouble the notion of pornography itself: feminist porn awards that celebrates consent, good labour practices in the porn industry, etc.

Anonymity online makes the exercise of autonomy, agency and dignity more possible, allowing for people to explore to seek community, to push the envelope of respectability and of social norms. This is the story of many queer communities around the world. But body on or in the internet means data, and there are extensive national IDs projects and biometrics where individuals become what their data says about them. What is the implication of these multiple data sets, and what mechanisms available or what rights are there when errors are made? How does all this impact the lives of people?



The Prevalence of Sexual Harassment and Assault in the United States



2018 Survey
With 2,009 nationally representative respondents

STOP STREET
HARASSMENT

RALIANCE
Ending Sexual Violence in One Generation

GEH
Center on Gender Equity and Health

BODIES

“The issue of bodies, in all their glory and diversity sits firmly at the centre of many calls for freedom, justice, independence, dignity, integrity and autonomy. It is through our bodies that we experience freedom and oppression, that we demonstrate resistance and resilience, that we encounter what ‘normal’ is assumed to be, as well as what society said- and we accepted - ‘abnormal’ is. Our bodies are at the forefront of all our struggles, by way of how we look, what we say and think, how we choose to experience pleasure, what we choose to eat, spaces that our bodies occupy and the borders through which our bodies are allowed and denied access. There are no conversations in and around social justice and injustice that can be had without considering the power and oppression of the body.”

-Sheena G Magenya

(We Need New Words <https://www.awid.org/fr/node/6527>)

EMBODIED POWER QUESTIONS:

1. How do you use the internet and internet based tech to demand, assert and create space for your erotic and sexual expression?
2. Do you consider the internet an important and safe space for sexual/erotic expression for your community and self? How do you experience this safety?
3. How is online sexual/erotic expression controlled/policed in your country or digital community?
4. Are you careful about how you present yourself online? How do you express this caution?

NETWORKED POWER

This seems to be the most celebrated, the one everyone recognises as the super-power of the internet, the power of connecting and creating networks.

“Most importantly, it (the internet) connects us. Allows us from becoming weird atomized individuals to find others who are interested in, care about, concerned about the same things. Enables us to organise, have conversations, plan for collective action, take things to different spaces, make shifts across the different layers of power, occupy different spaces. Because the characteristic of the internet, is essentially one that is networked. It is about connections. And the freedom to make connections, towards the shift and change we collectively believe in, is an important one”. -Jac sm Kee

WOMEN'S NET

If we don't intervene, the mobile and online social spaces young people occupy will become like our streets (and homes) where violence is rife and sexism predominates ..

transformation is key
:-)

NETWORKED POWER QUESTIONS:

1. How has the internet helped facilitate movement building or collective action in your work/community?
2. What challenges do you face when digitally networking? Are they different to organising offline and how? How have your experiences with social media helped or hindered your work?
3. What do your organisations need in order to better organise online? Do online networks, solidarity and voices translate into offline change for your work/community?
4. What online campaigns have you participated in? Have these campaigns translated into any real (or ideological change) for you or your organisation? #MeToo #FreeStellaNyanzi #HeforShe

IMAGINING A FEMINIST INTERNET (IN AFRICA)

EDUCATION

RACE

SEXUALITY

ABILITY

CLASS

AGE

LANGUAGE

GENDER

CULTURE

ETHNICITY



THE FEMINIST PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNET:

There are 17 FPIs, clustered into 5 key categories:

1. **Access:** Access, Information, Usage
2. **Economy:** Economy, Open Source
3. **Movements:** Resistance, Movement Building, Governance
4. **Expression:** Amplify, Expression, Pornography
5. **Embodiment:** Consent, Privacy & Data, Memory, Anonymity, Children, Violence



**Gender and Internet
Governance: The policy
priorities**

Gender policy priorities: the binary approach

- Traditionally- focus on women and girls
- Access and Affordability
- Skills and opportunities in the tech industry
- Participation of women in policy spaces
- Focus on building evidence through research
- Bring in “more women and girls”

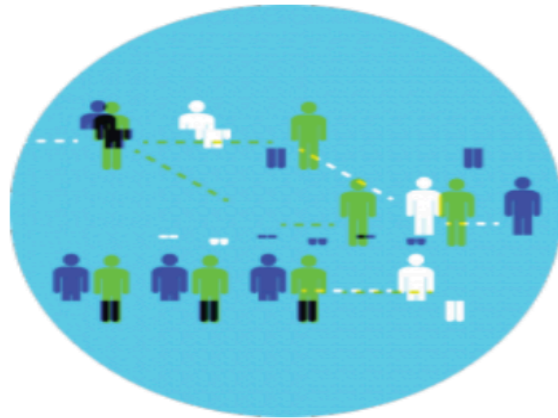


Rector of United Nations University, David Malone, with AfterAccess lead researchers Helani Galpaya (CEO, LIRNEasia), Aileen Agüero and Alison Gillwald at the EQUALS in Tech awards 2018, New York. Photo courtesy ITU



Gender policy priorities: The Feminist

GOVERNANCE



We believe in challenging the patriarchal spaces and processes that control internet governance, as well as putting more feminists and queers at the decision-making tables. We want to democratise policy making affecting the internet as well as diffuse ownership of and power in global and local networks.

- **FPI focus- heterogeneity of women and sexuality groups**
- **Meaningful Access**
- **Capacity, quality and inclusivity in policy making space**
- **Gender research beyond the binary**
- **Focus on power, social and cultural nuances (e.g focus on new technologies or Violence Against Women online)**

LINKS

1. *Feminist Principles of the Internet 2.0: <https://feministinternet.org/en>*
2. *GenderIT: <http://genderit.org>*
3. *Association for Progressive Communication: <https://www.apc.org>*
4. *Research ICT Africa: <https://researchictafrica.net>*