RESEARCH ARTICLE

GENDER STATACTIVISM AND NGOs
Development and Use of Gender Sensitive-Data for Mobilizations and Women's Rights

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ABSTRACT: Historically, NGOs and civil society organizations have engaged actively in the development of new forms of gender categorizations, gender-sensitive data and gender analysis, mainly within a human rights framework. But, what is the actual space for NGOs to promote mobilization on women's rights and, more specifically, how do NGOs develop and use gender-sensitive data for social mobilizations? Mainly based on the study of 5 worldwide NGOs and 3 networks of human rights experts, operating at different levels, the paper investigates the different ways these organizations intervene in gender issues, focusing on how they strategically produce and use categorizations and data. An initial typology is presented by analyzing «gender statactivism» of NGOs. Four phases of mobilization are identified: (a) knowledge and framing processes, (b) policy analysis, policy design and policy implementation, (c) action (campaigning and advocacy) and (d) monitoring and evaluation. The paper concludes by discussing potentiality, controversies and issues related to gender statactivism by NGOs, and stresses implications for the debate on the Post-2015 Development agenda and the potentiality for integrating «gender statactivism» into a framework of particularly transnational intersectionality.

KEYWORDS: gender statactivism, gender equality, NGOs, women's rights, social mobilization

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1. Gender (in)equality and women's rights: what to measure and by which indicators?

Women's movements, associations promoting women's rights and feminist scholars worldwide have been key agents of mobilization and social change in proposing a new model of society and development based on gender equality and empowerment. New categorizations and technical tools have been designed to reveal inequalities between men and women, to investigate the gender relations prevailing in different contexts and to bring topics of greater relevance to women to the top of national and international research agendas. The development of gender statistics can be viewed as the establishment of a 'quantitative rhetoric', a tool of persuasion or argument in favor of policy or action on gender issues (Moulin 2011). In particular, since the growth of women's rights between 1960s and 1990s and the importance of the women's movement and NGOs in the national and international arena, these actors have become a critical, driving force for developing gender statistics and promoting gender equality policies.

In this scenario how do statistics and new indicators contribute to tackling gender issues and gender inequality, and more generally, promoting cultural and institutional change? This paper investigates use of data by civil society organizations, with specific reference to NGOs, in promoting equity and women's rights.

Historically, civil society organizations and NGOs particularly working in Global South and Developing Countries, have engaged in the construction of women's rights and motivated change at international level and have been involved in decisions on what measures and by which indicators (Joachin 2007). However gender issues and women's rights have become part of European and international gender agendas and official statistics through synergies and sometimes through 'conflicts over meanings and shared understandings that lie at the heart of the definition of new issues and interests' (Barnett 1997, 19). The history of quantification in the field of gender offers the opportunity to reconstruct dynamics related to different social representations of gender (of the genders) and gender issues, and can also reveal strategies of the different actors involved in the negotiation of meanings. Gender statistics arise from complex systems of interaction between different actors such as social movements, scholars and academics, donors, governments, international, intergovernmental and European organizations. The development of gender statistics is therefore directly linked to social policy research in a gender perspective and, more generally, to the use of the category of gender within political science (Mazur and Goertz 2008). Historical synergies, collaboration and, in some cases, overlapping activities can be traced between NGOs and feminist scholars on one hand and NGOs and other international and developing actors on the other.

Gender sensitive data and feminist social sciences
So the history of gender statistics interacts with social sciences and gender policy analysis. It concerns the history of quantification and the adoption of the vocabulary of gender in social sciences. Since the 1970s, those feminist scholars critical of quantitative methods as a gender-blind practice of male domination have contributed to placing gender sensitive data and analy-

sis in the public domain and have encouraged governments to introduce politics of gender statistics. Work by «Femostats»[1], 'those professionally involved in the generation, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics… *as a political act* of some kind' (Bruegel 2000), furthered the development of gender policy analysis and brought improvements to social theory and gender studies.

Early feminist critique of official statistics concerned statistical categories seen as 'exemplars of the masculine bias of social science methodology'- an example is the term 'head of household'- while empirical research in the 1970s on secondary data mainly focused on women and the labour market, and more generally between women and the economy. Developments in gender statistics and gender sensitive policy analysis followed similar patterns over the years. There have been synergies between feminist social scientists, feminist movements and civil society organizations as well as independent and original paths of action. Key issues for gender statistics included opening up the household, investigating household dynamics and measuring unpaid work, analysing the relationships between household dynamics and policies, integrating and matching statistics collected at individual and household level (ibidem). The introduction of the term 'household reference person', measuring and analyzing time use and unpaid work, and the availability of data to measure the impact of welfare and labour policies on women and on men separately (Murgatroyd 2000) were among the first important developments in gender statistics and policy analysis. Feminist policy studies also drew attention to the underlying logic of apparently 'gender neutral' measures and policies, how different factors, such as structural, personal, socio-cultural, political, and institutional, influence women's life courses. This led to the use of indicators and data able to capture factors affecting women's choices besides the labour market, which was a new challenge for gender statistics and policy analysis. Other factors include women's gender structures of intimacy (masculinity and femininity representations) and citizenship ('who have voice in defining problems and solutions') (MAGEEQ[2]; Walby 1990; Connell 1987; Verloo and Roggeband 1996). New statistics and policy has to take account of configurations of inequality, where identities are shaped by intersecting axes like class, generation, and migration background as well as gender (gender identities and sexual orientations). The intersectional approach has emerged over the last fifteen years. Rather than focusing on 'what appears to be the dominant one background as the benchmark, [the intersectional approach suggests taking] the theoretical and actual social and political problem that the various inequalities of race, gender, class and so on intersect with each other (Crenshaw 1989 in Lombardo and Verloo 2009, 6). Inequalities might be considered as 'intersecting them rather than simply add-

[1] Femostat is a term often used in comparison with femocrat. A 'femocrat is a civil servant, usually female, who is hired because of her feminist credentials. According to Yeatman… the maintenance of their class position depends upon their ability to participate appropriately in the highly masculinized techno bureaucratic culture of the modern state and at the same time to remain accountable to the women's movement' (Booth 1998, 119; Yeatman 1990).

[2] See http://www.mageeq.net/

ing them up and/or taking them separately' (Fernández de Vega, Lombardo, Rolandsen Agustín 2008, 8; Walby 2007). Applying the intersectionality theory to quantitative analysis is today one of the most challenging issues for feminist scholars. Identifying indicators and analysis for the three levels (or styles) of intersectional analysis, namely, social structures, constructions of identity and symbolic representations (Winker and Degele 2011) has become controversial and challenging.

Alongside the evolution of feminist movements and the adoption of the vocabulary of gender in social sciences and official statistics, the history of gender statistics and gender policy analysis is also closely linked to legislation protecting women's rights[3] and the integration of gender into development discourse[4]. The interaction between feminists, women's rights activist, governments and international organizations over the years has led to a gradual extension of public domains and indicators to measure women's rights fulfillment and configurations of inequality so as to capture dynamics within multiple levels of analysis (individual, household, institutional, political, policies and socio-economic macro level). The increasing importance of NGOs in the international arena and their participation in a series of United Nations conferences in the early 1990s provided 'opportunities for NGOs to introduce and circulate their ideas [considering relevant] the General Assembly's agenda for its collective legitimization function' (Joachin 2007, 24, 27). Globalization has diversified the roles played by NGOs, at both international and local level, and there has been a proliferation of ways framing policy. The presence of NGOs across different locations is also varied, as is their involvement, with other civil society organizations, in local patterns of development (Bebbington 2004, 727). At the same time improvements in legislation (treaties, international conventions, declarations, resolutions) on women's rights have impacted on civil society organizations and NGOs. In some cases, e.g. by the CEDAW Convention (1979), NGOs are required to monitor implementation of legislation in specific contexts using quantitative indicators.

Since the 1960s civil society organizations and NGOs have directly and indirectly contribute to the institutionalization of some public domains related to gender issues. We need to stress

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[3] Examples of international standards on women's right are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), (1981), the Convention Against Torture UN (1987), Resolution 58/147 'Elimination of domestic violence against women' (2004), Special Rapporteurs on Violence Against Women (since 1994), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Examples of European Union Treaties and Resolutions protecting Women's Rights are the Resolution on Violence against Women (1986), the Resolution on the report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the state of women's health in the European Community (1999), Declaration 19 of the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) and the resolution on the Elimination of Violence against Women (2009).

[4] For an overview of 'the changing themes in the dominant development discourse, particularly since the early 1970s, that legitimated an increased role for development INGOs and NGOs in international development' see Chabbott (1999, 238-9).

two facts. On one hand experts from associations, civil society organizations and networks are often university graduates with knowledge of gender statistic acquired on degree courses in sociology, political science and economics. On the other there has been synergy as well as conflict between actors of different types holding different mandates. Various national, European, international and intergovernmental organizations have produced a wide range of indicators to assess the level of gender (in)equality in different areas of society and across countries, and changes in gender regimes have been mapped (Acker 2006, 2009). Indicators now go over and beyond GDP in measuring progress and include gender sensitive measures and valuing unpaid and paid care work [5]. In other cases these organizations have provided, and still provide, advice to international organizations and European agencies on survey methodology, and women's rights and discrimination. The main role of governmental organizations and international donors in comparing gender equality across countries and assessing government commitment to women's is still however to provide macro-quantitative indicators and synthetic measurements. This might because of the ongoing development of benchmarks and performance indicators to measure the impact of equality policies and more generally benchmarking in public services.

The Gender Equality Index developed by EIGE (2013) presents the most recent synthetic measure of gender equality. It capitalizes the tradition of attempts to measure gender equality through composite indices where domains of gender equality are work, money, knowledge, time, power, health, intersecting inequalities and violence. The evolution of gender equality indices can be traced back to the Human Development Index (UNDP 1990) which was adjusted to build the Gender-related Development Index (Bardhan and Klasen 1999) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (ibidem). Other gender indices and indicators have since been proposed by World Bank, OECD, United Nations Agencies, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). These include and in some cases different policy domains, dimensions and levels of analysis.

Indices provide country scorecards on key gender issues but do not reveal whether women belonging to different social groups experience multiple inequalities, or how these identity aspects interact and affect political strategies and equality. Some authors find that measure gender equality, and the implementation of gender equality policies, by means of indices entails however the risk of the objectification of 'gender inequality' and weakens the potential for mobilization power of categorizations and social statistics.

Applying the term 'statactivism' (Bruno and Didier 2013) to the field of gender equality and women's rights, the main aim of this paper is to investigate the different ways NGOs intervene in gender statistics and gender equality policy, focusing on how they strategically produce and use categorizations and statistics.

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[5] See, for example, the Social Progress Index designed to overcome 'data apartheid where the world has one set of statistics for poor countries – the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – while rich countries compare themselves through measures created by the OECD' (Green 2013 on the hub 'Post.2015.org').

2. «Gender statactivism» and contemporary mobilizations for NGOs

Framing ideas about gender and offering political solutions by obtaining official statistics to cover new or underrepresented public areas (what to measure), requiring gender sensitive data (what kind of indicators) and providing gender social and policy analysis are forms of social mobilizations that we have called here «gender statactivism».

Activism by NGOs and civil society organizations for gender equality does not simply concern new data, indicators and gender relevant criteria. It also implies new approaches, frameworks for linking phenomena and a new vision, and it also requires social action. The current statactivism of civil society organizations and NGOs in a way is fighting gender inequality and promoting women's rights as a specific form of social change and mobilization process. It is useful at this point to state what we mean by 'civil society organizations associations' for the purposes of this paper. Here, civil society organizations

-        are a broad category. Different definitions exist; we refer to actors of different nature such as think tanks, research networks, women's movements and third sector organizations focusing in particular on NGOs because they are considered relevant 'signifying agents' (Snow and Benford 1998);

-        are historically driving forces and enable actors for innovation processes related to gender equality and women's rights. Although their contribution is widely recognized, there is little evidence of it;

-        consider data as an emancipation tool primarily addressing social objectives (social justice, equality, social inclusion, human development) with social impacts on different levels and actors (social structures, cultures, organizations and individuals and their interactions).

When focusing on NGOs, attention needs to be focused on contextual factors influencing development and gender equality discourses. These include: 1) the spread of neo-liberalism[6] and the recent economic and financial crisis that has reduced resources allocated for gender and development programmes; 2) the implications of recent socio-demographic changes; 3) women's migration processes; 4) structural changes in welfare state arrangements of western countries and issues relating to the affordability of the welfare state model, 5) the transformations in political opportunities structures. These last are 'changes in political alignments and conflicts… such as the end of the cold war…the relative accessibility of political institutions…the presence of influential alliances' [to which NGOs belong] (Joachin 2007, 32). Moreover, the effectiveness of NGO actions and their capacity to facilitate the circulation of new frameworks is subject to certain dynamics.

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[6] Some authors discuss the implications for NGOs of the 'disjuncture between the two agendas of neoliberalism and democratization' caused by the rising importance of economic institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (Kamat 2004, 163-4).

There are two systems of relations: relations between the NGO sector and local contexts and the relations between NGOs, international and supranational organizations, donors and governments.

Several issues are raised by analyzing dynamics between NGOs and the local contexts where interventions, directly or indirectly targeted at women, have been implemented. The issues are the participation of local women's associations, social movements, social relations and prevailing patterns of sociability as well as national politics and have led to academic debated on globalization of the category of gender (Lacombe, Marteu, Jarry-Omarova and Frotiée 2011), the institutionalization, de-politicizing and professionalism of NGOs (Alvarez 1998; Hammami 1995; Kamat 2002; Miraftab 1997; Schilds 1998; Lacombe *et al.* 2011) and the position of NGOs within the service provision market. In general, the most extreme critique of NGOs is that they incorporated into a neoliberal model of society and do not have a political function of mobilization (Kamat 2004). In contrast other authors stress emerging practices of resistance and adaptation by NGOs and women's movements. This view emphasizes their role in deconstructing mechanisms of internationalization and globalizing the concept of gender' (Bayard de Volo 2011).

Equally important are the relations between NGOs, including international and supranational organizations, donors and governments. They raise the issues of donor monitoring, accounting systems and 'use and misuse' of performance measurement (Perrin 1998). There is also debate on difficulties in measuring women's empowerment and conflicting notions of empowerment which include empowering for social justice and the neo-liberal notion of empowerment. The neo-liberal concept implies 'a focus on individual capacities' (Kamat 2004, 169) and an individualization of the process of empowerment accompanied by the privatization of the notion of public interest. It gives no basis for collective action or mobilization.

The system of relationships briefly described above has evolved over time: mandates and practices of some development actors have changed. There are new actors, for example networks of specialists, new partnerships and new governance modes in the global context. At the same time, in response to the destructive effects of neo-liberalism, alternatives to NGOs have appeared in social movements (Horn 2013) and left-wing political parties.

In this context, the main aims of the this paper are:

(a) identify the different ways NGOs currently intervene in gender statistics and gender equality policy, in particular focusing on their strategic use of statistics for mobilization and change. It considers the main dimensions of the concept of statactivism for gender equality, focusing on the situation of women, and how it might be conceptualized as a particular form of social mobilization. Because NGOs are not 'just carriers and transmitters of mobilizing ideas and beliefs' (Joachin 2007, 19) but act in accordance with their own vision of «what is a good society», the conceptualization of gender statactivism needs to be included within pre-existing human rights frameworks developed/adopted by NGOs;

(b) analyze the main use of gender-sensitive data for mobilization carried out by NGOs. Case studies and examples of actual uses of statistics are discussed with reference to their impact on people's lives, policies, institutions and their ability to activate social change;

(c) discuss conditions and settings under which the use of gender statistics by NGOs and civil society organizations is a tool to obtain women's rights of women along with other resources.

Table 1 – Organizations analyzed and main features

Organizations	Year of foundation	Self-definition	Country coverage (n. of countries)
Save the Children International	1919[7]	Global movement	120
Oxfam International	1995[8]	International confederation	94
Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF)	1960	Non-profit organisation	94
Amnesty International	1961	Global movement	150
ILGA (International Lesbian and Gay Association)	1978	Worldwide federation campaigning	117
Action Aid International	1989	International organisation	45
The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)	1996	International public interest law org.	15

Source: NGOs official websites

These aims are achieved using information found online and empirical evidence gathered by influential NGOs and human rights networks. This is supplemented with examples and short interviews with officials responsible for gender issues and/or advocacy of some of the organizations investigated. We focus on those NGOs which have spearheaded the inclusion of gender on the United Nations and European agendas. Selected organizations (Table 1) were mainly founded in 1990s and continue today to exert influence on international and European actors. They take part in various aspects of humanitarian activities: the implementation of humanitarian and development projects, advocacy, campaigning and lobbying. We also include associations and networks such as Human Rights Watch, the European Roma Rights Centre and the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex association (ILGA).

As noted above, the use of data as a resource for mobilization and raising awareness of human and women's rights by NGOs and other groups needs to be analyzed according to the theories of change underpinning their activities and their vision of society and power relations. So, before analyzing the strategic use of statistics by NGOs and constructing an analytical framework based on the concept of gender statactivism, it is necessary to outline how these organizations frame and set the principles of gender equality and women's rights.

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[7] In 1940 there was the First Programs Overseas.
[8] The name "Oxfam" comes from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, founded in Britain in 1942.

3. Gender issues framing process and NGOs: women's rights in a human right perspective

NGOs dealing with gender issues, mainly since the 1990s, usually base their action on a conceptualization that places gender issues and women's rights in a human rights perspective, often linking them to a human development discourse[9]. It is therefore important to outline their human rights framework and identify implications of placing gender normative principles into already-existing human rights frameworks and international norms and standards.

These points are particularly important in the light of the ongoing debate on the Post-2015 Development Agenda[10]. Two aspects need to be mentioned. On one hand, the recent New York Multi-stakeholder Roundtable (7th March 2013) points out that the new agenda 'must be grounded in human rights. Goals and targets are only meaningful if they are underpinned by the fundamental recognition of women's, men's, girls' and boys' human rights...' (IDS 2013). On the other hand, the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Panel Report on the post-2015 development agenda (2013) has identified five transformative shifts that will drive the global agenda. These include «leave no one behind» and call for a 'data revolution for sustainable development, with a new international initiative to improve the quality of statistics and information available to citizens' (ibid., 9). The Report follows a number of proposals for future development goals and different interpretation of the data revolution put forward by civil society organizations, associations, NGOs and networks[11].

A preliminary operation to give insight about how NGOs approach such issues with specific reference to gender is to show specific aspects of their human rights discourse. Table 2 compares association and NGO frameworks with that of the European Union Agency for Fundamen-

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[9] Different definitions exist and overlap between gender equality and women's rights, as well as other topics concerning welfare, governance and development. Three main arguments can be identified in the literature for using measures of welfare, governance and development as human rights indicators: (a) their separateness, (b) their sameness and (c) they are proxies. In favour of treating them as proxies, 'if the concept of human rights, development, governance and welfare overlap, then measuring the latter could be used to measure some elements of human rights' (Landman and Carvalho 2010, 112).

[10] The Post-2015 Development Agenda is a United Nations (UN) project aiming to define the global development framework. It will replace the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which run only up to 2015. The UN System Task Team was established by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to support UN system-wide preparations for the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. It comprises 60 UN agencies, as well as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. An inclusive dialogue on post-2015 is a mandate given to the UN by Member States.

[11] The Overseas Development Institute is tracking all proposals (with goals, indicators and targets) on the hub post2015.org. See also the Post-2015 Policy & Practice knowledgebase at http://post2015.iisd.org/. This knowledgebase is managed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Reporting Services and contains information about UN and Intergovernmental Post-2015 Development Agenda Activities.

tal Rights (FRA) – the research agency which assists EU institutions and EU Member States. It also compares the Capability Approach[12] and Rights Based Approaches as set out by the Research Networks, mainly based in UK, composed of the ESRC Research Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). Among different frames currently influential at European and international level those based on the interaction of theoretical contributions, empirical research and legislative production have been selected (De Rosa 2013).

Distinctive aspects of the HR frameworks are: their epistemological underpinning, the operative definition of human rights, the use of human rights as an analytical tool, and the role of legislation on the frameworks (Table 2).

As noted, for civil society organizations and NGOs, human rights is a set of values and principles as well as an analytical framework for action and knowledge. Thus, women's rights, gender equality and equal opportunities between men and women are conceptualized as fundamental human rights where human rights constitute: (a) a 'tool for information-gathering and fact-finding prior to campaigning on behalf of those whose rights are being denied' and are (b) 'part of an ongoing and empowering process of building and capacity of people to realize their rights themselves' (Ling, McGee, Gaventa and Pantazidou 2010, 15). What is distinctive in the HR approaches of NGOs is the political function. This entails critically contesting 'standard-setting', politicizing gender issues acting against women's rights violations and promoting change in hierarchical organizational power and roles associated with patriarchal gender ideology. Gender categorization and using of gender sensitive-data as tool of mobilization take place within this frame.

The first step in considering the implication of gender categorization within different HR approaches is to examine how NGOs and groups set formal principles, key commitments and missions in their official documents and communications.

For the organizations under investigation, the analysis shows how motives for mobilization and action 'can be framed in different ways. They can be couched in moral or normative terms…however, a call for action can also involve reference to already-existing international norms and standards' (Joachin 2007, 21). For instance, Oxfam's commitment is based on five broad rights-based aims (the right to a sustainable livelihood; the right to basic social services; the right to life and security; the right to be heard and the right to an identity). That of Amnesty International on the other hand states it 'is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in

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[12] The capability approach is inspired by the work of the development economist Amartys Sen, Honorary President of Oxfam. The Human Development and Capability Association (HDCA) is a global community of academics and practitioners which seeks to build an intellectual community around the ideas of human development and the capability approach, and refer these ideas to the policy arena. The Association's main activities include the publication of the quarterly peer-reviewed academic Journal of Human Development and Capabilities journal, which publishes articles on evaluation of development projects among other topics.

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards'. International norms, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, constitute the conceptual framework and also guide the activities of the Terre des Hommes and Save the Children The new mission of Save the Children is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. The commitment of Action Aid with women's rights involves directly improving the lives of the women, men, youth and children living in poverty. Its aims 2012-2017 are access to land, food security, improved public services, more accountable governments, quality education, resilience to disasters and shocks, freedom from violence and economic rights (Source: official NGOs web sites).

Table 2 - Comparison of three human rights frameworks by type of organization

	Civil Society (NGOs)	Academic Research Networks (Capability Approach and Human Rights)	European Research Institutions (FRA)
Epistemological Foundation	Organization's core values, mission statements and International HR Conventions	Capability Approach and Human Rights	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
Human Rights (which definition and analytical category?)	Principles, argumentation, tools of action, aspects of programmes or projects	Guide for the identification of individual substantive freedoms and pragmatic starting point for the development of a capability list	Research fields and themes of action (freedoms, equality, citizen's rights, justice)
Legal/Normative dimension (which role within each framework?)	Tool to recognize and promote human rights	Comparative factor and analytical element for research	Theoretical element and field of analysis

Source: De Rosa, 2013 (re-adapted)

In order to identify how NGOs develop gender categories and use gender sensitive-data, it is necessary to investigate the various uses they make of data as well as underlying principles. Taking into account their potential for bringing about social change and assuming that «gender statactivism» involves both new indicators and/or sex-disaggregated data and as well as original use of indicators and data already available we therefore identify a set of four main areas of use. These are: framing process and knowledge production (section four), policy analysis, policy design and policy implementation (section five), action (section six), monitoring and evaluation (section seven). Although the performing component is essential for all of the macro-categories, a specific category for action is also supplied.

4. Gender sensitive data for knowledge and framing gender issues

Participating in the framing of gender and women's rights agendas NGOs strategically develop new form of categorizations, indicators and consciously use data to make gender issues, cultural models and assumptions on gender roles underlying social structures visible.
It is recognized worldwide, for example, that NGOs have been fundamental international actors in the introduction to international and national agendas of the issues of violence against women and reproductive rights (Joachin 2007). A further change led by civil society in the sexual and reproductive field, for example, has been 'HIV and AIDS treatment action groups and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer groups (LGBTQ)… in promoting a rights approach to SRHR [Sexual and reproductive health and rights]. The LGBTQ movement… has also argued against the binary concept of gender as male and female, which dominates development discourse' (Action Aid 2012b, 28) and led to some NGOs questioning whether gender is seen as a spectrum of different possibilities and sexualities'. In some countries, the articulation of genres and the focus on the condition of lesbian and bisexual women is an issue which has gained public exposure almost entirely thanks to the efforts of NGOs.

The process of knowledge production and gender framing stimulated and carried out by NGOs can start with new theoretical and operational definitions of social phenomena, relevant in a gender perspective, challenging the use of traditional categories. Oxfam, for example, gives a definition of poverty closely linked to the issue of power and gender equality: poverty is about 'lacking opportunities and power, as well as having problems with things like making a decent living' (Oxfam official website[13]). Constructed gender roles and traditional attitudes are considered potential factors affecting a person's ability to access and control resources. Definitions have implications which tend to be political rather than purely technical. Defining, measuring and analyzing women's poverty and gender inequalities is not simply a technical or accountability exercise: 'the decision to measure progress towards gender equality [or specific dimension of gender equality] is political…in deciding what to measure we must first establish key objectives and goals; secondly, identify the changes that are required to achieve these goals; and thirdly decide what kinds of indicators will best enable us to measure progress towards these desired changes' (Moser 2007, 1).

NGOs frequently bring new or emergent gender issues up for discussion by carrying out action research or through secondary data analysis. Gender categorization in fact influences the whole circle of knowledge production: the selection of key research questions, methodological approach, methods of data collection and analysis and, in particular, evaluation of which data to collect and how to collect it and access the target population. Gender sensitive research also embraces a critical understanding of relationships between NGO researchers and participants, funding bodies and others with an interest in the topic in overall consideration of ethical issues arising in applied social research and violations of women's rights. Most NGOs pay attention to

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[13] http://www.oxfam.org/en/node/1935/

similarities and differences between conditions and viewpoints of men and women when drawing up analysis on pre-existing data. They usually use or combine a plurality of resources like the databases of international organizations and governments, as well as qualitative data produced by other organizations or analysts.

To illustrate approaches to knowledge and framing gender issues, we now briefly focus on two NGOs showing main gender themes/topics. We also present examples of research highlighting the methodological approach and how evidence has been obtained (Table 3).

In general, it appears that gender sensitive indicators and data are used by NGOs in order to gain new knowledge and insight with the overall aim 1) of identifying new public domains important for gender implications and 2) supporting those domains that have a direct or indirect impact on women's enjoyment of rights but are neglected or underestimated by public policies, particularly in fields where clashes between interests and values are involved. Such public domains and themes constitute the dimensions in which gender is conceptualized and research areas where there is a gap in knowledge. At the same time these dimensions constitute fields of intervention.

For analytical purposes, further lines of distinction might be drawn within the broad category "data for knowledge and framing". Whereas in practice these often coexist and are closely connected, in focusing on the main objective of adopting gender-sensitive categories and data it is possible to distinguish three main uses:

(a) *Investigating structural inequalities among recognized social categories or groups showing power relations systems and tracing responsibilities*.

Data and reliable information is often used by NGOs to support investigation into structures of inequality and patterns governing the gender division of responsibilities within households and migrant households. This is to identify gender inequalities and cultural models that may hamper the opportunities of both girls and boys, and to capture the context and time-dependent nature of structures of inequalities. Emphasis is placed on one hand on social identities and hierarchies, and on the interplay between economic, political, cultural, symbolic dimensions in understanding local, national and global inequalities on the other.

Evidence from Oxfam, for example, helps us to reconstruct how cultural models and social constraints might reduce the ability of women in rural Africa to influence their own lives. In particular Oxfam highlights how cultural models and economics might be closely linked: 'when a crop becomes commercial, it changes gender and becomes a man's crop, as it is men who control its production, marketing, and, most importantly, the use of income accruing from its sale' (Oxfam 2013, 9). Therefore gender categorizations and integrating a gender dimension into data analysis reveals more clearly the social dimension and the value of women's activities, including household and unpaid work. Moving from the assumption that invisibility of unpaid care in national statistics contributes to making it less valued, Action Aid, for instance, has planned a serious of projects to make women's contribution through unpaid care work both visible and valued.

Investigating inequalities also reveals how relationships particularly power relations, among social groups, are changing, as well as causes and dynamics of inequalities. A reference to the

root causes of inequality structures as well as obstacles to meeting women's needs and rights is, for example, contained in the Mother's index developed by Save the Children. The index, made up of 5 indicators (Maternal health: a woman's risk of maternal death; Children's well-being: under-5 mortality rate; Educational status: expected years of formal schooling; Economic status: gross national income per capita and Political status: participation of women in national government), operationalised a broad definition of health and made explicit the link between the well-being of mothers and their children. Besides micro-level data, NGOs also gather information at macro-level revealing structural causes of inequalities and discrimination.

Table 3 - Two selected NGOs: gender themes/topics, case study with research questions, data sources, indicators and objectives

NGO	Theme/Research topics Field of action	Data sources, indicators, research questions, gap covered
Human Rights Watch	Women's rights (and children's rights); Domestic Violence; Domestic Workers; HIV/AIDS; Migrants; Refugee and Internally -Displaced Women; Reproductive Choices and Sexual Autonomy; Sexual Violence; Trafficking of Women and Girls; Women and Security; Women in State – Custody; Women's Status in the Family and Legal Status	Case: 'Canada: Investigate Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women' (2012) Data sources: Local NGOs and movements investigations and reports, own research Research questions: How the police respond to reports of violence and disappearances involving indigenous victims in northern British Columbia Indicators (e.g.): N. of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada Rationale/objectives: The government cut funding for the organization's database and has yet to launch its own database. Integrate government studies on the topic
Action Aid Intern.	Women's rights: Violence against; Women and Girls; Economic alternatives for women; Sexual and reproductive health and rights; Women and the City; Young Urban Women	Case: 'Young Urban Women in India, South Africa and Ghana' (2012) Data sources: Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights data (UNICEF) and official statistics on labour market Research questions: Which are the conditions and pathways of women's empowerment in poor urban areas Indicators (e.g.): Births by five year age group of mothers 1995-2010 –and Estimated crude birth rate, HIV prevention among young people (aged 15-24) in Ghana, India and South Africa Rationale/objectives: analysis of the political economy of urbanisation through a gender lensis; challenge the direct positive link made between empowerment and women's participation in paid employment through urbanization; analysis of data on youth labour trends

Source: Our elaboration based on official NGO and CSOs documents

This is the case of the data collected by ILGA in its annual survey of laws on criminalisation, protection and recognition of same-sex love. Changes in legal and institutional systems are monitored through indicators of decriminalization of consensual homosexual acts between

adults, hate crimes based on sexual orientation considered as aggravating circumstance, incitement to hatred based on sexual orientation and marriage and partnership rights for same-sex couples and joint adoption by same-sex couples (2013). More challenging, for all NGOs investigated, is 'developing and/or applying indicators or indexes that measure changes in qualitative impacts, including both perception scoring data and observable changes in behavior' (Garbarino and Hollande 2009, 15), in social positions within systems of power relations and inequalities and the removal of barriers from active decision-making. This relates to 'the structural and the identificational levels, and their possible connections' (Anthias 2013, 128).

(b) Investigating illegal or unreported phenomena, making estimates, engaging hard-to-reach populations or undocumented women, capturing new configurations of inequalities focusing on intersecting social positions.

A frequent and original use of data by NGOs is to investigate situations difficult to document because they are shrouded in secrecy, illegal, or at the limit of legality, like exploitation and trafficking of women and girls, undocumented migration by women, child soldiers and abuses connected with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. This kind of development and use of gender-sensitive data may serve to overcome the limits of official statistics or to supplement them.

For instance, criminal statistics and administrative data used as indicators provide only a partial view of violent crime and often require supplementation by qualitative data collected in the field through interviews. An Oxfam report on police-women in Afghanistan (2013b) starts with administrative data stating that 'only 1 per cent of the Afghan National Police is female [observing then] although female police are vital for Afghan women to be able to report crimes and access desperately-needed justice, few women in Afghanistan will ever encounter one' (official web-site). The use of specific surveys is encouraged by NGOs to counter the distortion of official figures caused by underreporting of crime and of legitimate initiatives aimed at changing attitudes within communities and the police force. Underreporting is common also for child sex-abuses, with just a tiny proportion of cases reported to the police. Human Rights Watch, for example, tries to overcome the limits of scarcity of data sources by conducting detailed case studies and illustrating inadequate responses in cases of abuse in India, within family, community and at school, failures of the Justice System, abuses in institutional facilities (2013). Human Rights Watch suggests that for NGOs, field work is a key strategy to overcome the limits of official data and institutional sources of information. The practice of carrying out a survey on a small number of respondents, is also widespread, mainly because of financial constraints. Such surveys often cover areas difficult to reach by official statistics, and the surveys are frequently supplemented with information gathered from a broad range of other sources. Although not always statistically sound, data and information collected this way are usually particularly relevant to capture women's perception and the degree to which they exercise control, autonomy and self-determination.

Another function of NGOs is to provide figures or estimates on female genital mutilation (FGM) and the number of women and girls at risk. In Europe there is no representative survey

or harmonized approach to collecting data, and few countries have attempted to give an esti-
mate. The task is further complicated by the need to take into account women and girls not
registered with the authorities, and those of the second and third generation. NGOs (e.g. Terre
des femmes for Germany) are sometimes able to supply sensitive data to assist governments
and local authorities in making estimates. Data are often integrated and enriched by stories
from the frontline of the fight against female genital mutilation from organizations like Action
Aid.

Overall there are two assumptions linked to the commitment to address undocumented or
unreported gender inequality and overcome limits of official statistics through small-scale sur-
veys or case studies. First, the urgency of investigating a phenomena and decision about what
information is relevant does not depend on the number of people involved. Social justice and
protection of individual dignity ideally are the guiding and operational principles to stimulate
gender sensitive research questions (Leduc 2009). Secondly, these principles lead to the recog-
nition of complex individual belonging and attribution, translocational positionality (Anthias
2008, 2013), heterogeneity of women's history and experiences of discrimination within a
broader social and power relation system. The principles imply a recognition that social catego-
ries are contingent, changing and boundary-making. Increased emphasis on social location
might be an answer to the risk of depoliticization of gender issues and 'objectivation' of gender
categories. However the degree of awareness and explicitation varies between NGOs while in-
tersectionaliy and transnationalism vocabulary is rarely adopted.

*(c) Reporting women's rights violations that often occur in conflict areas and emergency sit-
uations.*

Besides inequalities and discrimination, another way which NGOs use gender issues is to
provide testimony and report human rights violations. As noted above, the international recog-
nition of violence against women as a human rights violation is the result of years of dedicated
campaigning by NGOs, women's rights activists, feminist movements and survivors of violence,
who have played a crucial role in including this issue on the national and international political
agenda. Since the 1990s, progress has been made in considering violence against women both a
human rights violation and a type of gender-related violence, which has its roots in a long-
prevailing discrimination of women, socio-economic gender inequalities and cultural prejudices
on gender roles. Currently, this issue is addressed both as a human-rights violation and as a spe-
cific gender-related form of violence, linked to women discrimination. NGOs have over many
years, reported facts about Gender-Based Violence[14] worldwide, collecting victim testimony and
interpreting gender-based violence as a violation of women's human rights. For instance, the

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[14] Usually data are collected during the routine administration of public services, such as the policing of
violence; and in surveys of the general population that ask a representative sample of people about their
experience of such violence.

most recent data from Amnesty International (2013) reports women's rights violations in over 20 countries, and episodes of violence against women and girls in about 40 countries.

Rather than being involved in the process of developing indicators (or proposals) for indicators of violence against women, the contribution of NGOs is more in terms of events and people mapping, counting, estimating, and comparing figures in using participatory methods and field research. Knowledge and experience of working in conflict areas often allow NGOs to reach inaccessible areas and to ascertain violence including the rape of women and girls. Events-based measures ('who did what to whom') are specific types of human rights measures (Landman and Carvalho 2010) used by NGOs to report women's rights violations among other types. Events-based measures are currently in use, in particular by Amnesty International, to collect data on extra judicial killing, disappearances, detention, torture and rape, violations such as electoral intimidation, social and economic discrimination. Human Rights Watch[15] also follows this approach and also offers a plurality of points of view and indentifying factors underpinning impunities. In this way they aim to meet the challenge for events-based measure; 'to broaden the horizon of rights beyond extra judicial killing, disappearances, detention, torture and rape, to include violations such as electoral intimidation, social and economic discrimination, among many others' (ibid., 129), might to be addressed.

5. Gender sensitive data for policy analysis, policy design and policy implementation

NGOs often carry out gender policy analysis with the aims of disseminating awareness of new frames, showing the gender implication of existing policies and government choices, and designing policies to address intersectional inequalities and promote women's well-being.

More generally, the main NGOs uses of gender-sensitive data for policy making are aimed at:

(d) Critical analysis of government spending, contest criteria for services and resource allocation, gender budget analysis and policy gender-based analysis to make explicit the gender dimension of the logics of policies.

There are cases in which NGOs protest against official indicators of wealth and encourage the use of alternative indicators of well-being, and additional indicators, in order to achieve greater transparency in resource allocation and priorities set by governments which might affect men and women differently. A critical analysis of government spending following a gender perspective often entails the development of new analysis tool as gender budget analysis. Gender budget analysis are applied by NGOs to different fields of policy: drawing on secondary data and United Nations sources, NGOs analysis of gender-responsive budgeting for HIV shows 'the

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[15] Examples includes studies on: 'Abuses against Sex Workers in China', 'Child and Forced Marriage in South Sudan', 'Abusive Policing and Failures in Protection of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Columbia', 'Obstacles to Health, Justice, and Protection for Displaced Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Colombia'. Reports available on-line at http://www.hrw.org/

number of countries with a specific budget for HIV activities related to women is low: 46% of reporting countries[16], (UNAIDS 2010, 132). In a study of the role of women farmers in seven African countries (Burundi, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia) Action Aid stress 'in agricultural budgets women are largely invisible… there are most no budget lines specifically targeted them' (2013, 39). The Open Budget Index (2013) was drawn up by the International Budget Partnership to measure the degree to which citizens are provided with information on national budgets by governments.

Critical analysis of government spending and choices also means identifying challenges for gender integration. 'Governing climate funds. What will work for women? (Gender Action, 2011), a report commissioned by Oxfam and Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), illustrates how gender integration in global finance mechanisms is possible. The report describes major climate finance mechanisms. There are also cases where NGOs contest government and local criteria for service and resource allocation, such as the critique by Amnesty International of the criteria used by local authorities in Romania for allocation of social housing (2011) which negatively affected the Roma population.

Furthermore, NGOs use feminist policy studies to point out that policies are not gender neutral: the gender assumptions policies are made explicit and data reveal the impact of current policies and service delivery mechanisms taking into account the gender dimension. For example, Human Rights Watch, using data on HIV and AIDS, shows the different impact on women and men, stressing particular groups such as migrants (e.g. Deportation of HIV-Positive Migrants and Human Rights Abuses Affecting Migrants Living with HIV studies of 2009) and children (e.g. Treatment Access for Children Living With HIV in Kenya of 2008 and Gender-Based Abuses and Women's HIV Treatment in Zambia of 2007). Data is also used to uncover abuses that obstruct women's ability to start and adhere to HIV treatment regimens, including violence against women and insecure property rights.

(e) Integrating gender into policy design and policy implementation.

When enabling factors are operating and there is financial availability, NGOs have demonstrated their capacity to respond to gender challenges by tailoring intervention and preventive measures to specific needs of women in different contexts, and adapting approaches to better meet the needs. NGOs have specific expertise in analyzing and designing policies (program/project) that integrate identification, analysis and treatment of gender differences and inequalities. This expertise exists in both analysis and design gender policies (both specific and mainstream interventions) and various other policies and interventions, not necessarily aimed at gender equality, from a gender perspective.

In some organizations a gender approach explicitly informs all phases of policy intervention. For instance, Terre des Hommes recognizes gender as an important cross-cutting issue and integrates a gender approach into the project cycle of all its projects. It implies 'above all the individual willingness to change the way we look at reality in order to read it through "gender-

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[16] Source: Country Progress Reports 2010.

tinted glasses", i.e. to see it in its masculine and feminine dimensions and the relations between the two' (1). Gender guidelines - 'made up of typical questions which can be asked at each stage in the process: situation analysis, planning/implementation/follow-up, evaluation' (ibidem) - are given. Table 4 gives an overview of questions and reasons behind integrating a gender approach by Terre des Hommes with specific reference to planning/implementation/monitoring phase.

(f) Establishing priorities, developing policy options and making recommendations.

Documents, research, programmes and projects carried out by NGOs using a gender-sensitive approach are often aimed at communicate policy positions, providing policy options, presenting and discussing practical recommendations for actions valid at international or national level, and influencing policy-makers and funders. What is distinctive about NGOs is that establishing priorities, developing policy options, making recommendations and giving feedback are closely linked to the identification and execution of key actions.

Table 4 – Guide-lines for integrating a gender approach into projects by Terre des Hommes

Aim:	Gender-sensitive questions	Reasons
Ensure that the data collected in the situation analysis concerning female/male, boy/girl relations are integrated into the project	-Have men as well as women been involved in planning the project? -Are the activities planned and implemented in a way which will allow the participation of men as well as women, of girls as well as boys? -Do women as well as men, boys as well as girls, benefit from the project? Do the indicators make it possible to measure the impact of the project on men and women, boys and girls?	-To take into account the different points of view and priorities of the different groups -To allow the participation of everyone by taking into account the disaggregated data collected during the situation analysis and planning process concerning timetables, responsibilities etc of men and women, girls and boys -To make sure that it is really the target group which benefits from the project To choose indicators in a way which makes apparent the different impacts on men, women, boys and girls

Source: Terre des Hommes

Recommendations can come from collaboration between organizations as in the report 'Born too soon. The Global Action Report on Preterm Birth' (Howson, Kinney and Lawn 2012). In order to guarantee maternal and child health, March of Dimes, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), Save the Children and the World Health Organization suggest the use of several indicators. These are preterm birth rates estimated by gestational age and region; newborn care availability and coverage of antenatal care and increasing coverage of facility births. They also make a series of recommendations which include efforts to improve the data, and use them to address preterm birth.

NGOs frequently make explicit their own policy positions and recommendations. Amnesty International did this regarding human rights in Afghanistan in demanding that 'all parties must respect international human rights and humanitarian law' (2013b). Policy positions and recommendations were based on statistics based analysis. Data collected by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission report were used and further information was directly

gathered by AI. Recommendations were to: 'include gender parity in all negotiating teams and ensure that any peace or reconciliation agreement affirms the constitutional guarantee of equality for men and women' (ibidem). Policy positions and recommendations were followed by designing a wide range of activism resources such as events, film screenings, working with the media, legislative action and drafting an open advocacy letter to presidents Obama and Karzai.

6. Gender sensitive data for action

In the phase of mobilization gender sensitive data and information is used in combination with other resources and tools . The phase involves specific data which reinforces and supports previous steps in the framing process: the diagnostic process when a problem and its causes are identifiedand the prognostic process during which solutions are found. It also reinforces and sustains the motivational process (Rein and Shon 1994) where the aim is to provide a rationale for action. Gender-sensitive data for action might include the following uses:

(g) Pushing institutions toward institutionalization of systems and standard procedures for recording data, mobilization against official indicators, pressure on government to address several issues.

Most NGO strategies stimulate and introduce innovation into the architecture of the official information system and their experience and knowledge is enhanced in a specific field. This, for example, is taking place in Italy with regard to mistreated children. After years of requesting a system for monitoring mistreatment of children, Terre des Homme Italy and CISMAI (Italian Coordination Services against the Childhood Abuse and Maltreatment), have, carried out the first (pilot) quantitative-qualitative investigation that produces homogeneous data on this phenomenon, for the Italian government. The national survey 'The Mistreatment of Children: How many victims in Italy?' is part of a campaign by Terre des Hommes, and was conducted by a questionnaire on a sample of 31 Italian towns (reaching a population of approximately 5 million inhabitants) throughout the country. The survey gives a picture of the situation on 31/12/2011: 'Around 100 thousand children in Italy are victims of mistreatment and abuse: more than an half are female' (2013, 1). Infographic data and quantitative data show how 'the lack of the material and/or emotional sphere is the predominant type of mistreatment (52.7%), followed by witnessing domestic violence (16.6%), emotional abuse (12,8%), sexual abuse (6.7%), problems in care (6.1%) and physical abuse (4.8%)' (ibidem) which are the main forms of abuse. Where there is a lack of official data sources, institutionalization of systems and standard procedures to record data, both locally and at national level, it is useful to provide a knowledge basis on which to design, monitor and evaluate appropriate prevention initiatives and policies. According to several NGOs, this would be particularly useful to investigate the multiple discrimination of and human rights violations Romani women and children. As stressed by the European Roma Rights Centre in its plan for 2013-2017: 'lack of data about Romani communities remains the biggest

obstacle in conducting a thorough assessment of the human rights situation and developing effective social inclusion policy' (2013, 24).

(h) Providing fact-finding to campaigning, advocacy and lobbying activities.

Mobilization involves campaigning, and campaigns address complex multidimensional gender issues and gender discrimination, and require new technology-driven tools to mobilize action, advocacy and lobbying activities. Data is not only an instrument of investigation but also of legitimacy for campaigning and an element of communication strategy. In Syria, for example, 'Since March 2011, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government has overseen a brutal crackdown on dissent that has left more than 6,000 people dead, including more than 200 women and girls'. Amnesty International (2012) has asked the wife of the Syrian President, Asma al-Assad, to use her influence for Syrian women human rights defenders (campaign 'Stop the silencing of women activists in Syria'). Often NGOs use data in campaigns to reveal gender stereotyping in different fields such as the economic and labour market, in political decision-making, in education, in the media and advertising. This enables them to stress the negative influences of gender stereotyping on individual choice and control in everyday life generally. In particular, data and information are reported in order to raise awareness of the extent to which individual perception is based on socially constructed norms, practices and beliefs which reflect and perpetuate underlying social groups, power relations and cumulative disadvantages for specific groups of women. Nevertheless, for most of the organizations investigated, data are just one tool; campaigns are based on a variety of resources like collecting histories and using technologies.

Social mobilization also involves advocacy and lobbying activities. Lobbying and advocacy are components of NGO, association and network strategies by which they , communicate, interact and communicate with formal structures, governmental and international agencies, supranational institutions and inter-governmental organizations. Advocacy by NGOs often relies on 'researched data and reliable information, and on personal testimonies to persuade its audience. Those who are undecided on an issue, or even opposed to it, are frequently convinced by statistics that support an advocacy position… Collecting information helps to properly identify the issue advocated against/for [and] the problem is not to be confounded with the symptom' (Terre des Hommes and Bonvalo 2002, 6). Some NGOs base their advocacy strategy on an evidence-based approach; an example is Save the Children for which research findings and data feature in advocacy activities accompanying all intervention, before, during and after its implementation.

Advocacy activities are closely connected with the capacity to establish networks and build and coordinate alliances. Factors which enable effectiveness of NGO programmes and campaigns are the partnerships with state/market/civil society stakeholders who play a key role in gender equality policies and promoting women's rights.

(i) Contributing to create solidarity, mutual-help logic, empowerment of women involved in NGO projects and programmes to mobilize community resources.

NGOs often apply existing research tools to the investigation of phenomena in a local context by readapting them and giving greater emphasis to the participatory learning process. Moving from the assumption that invisibility of unpaid care in national statistics contributes to make it less valued, Action Aid, for example, has planned a series of actions to make women's contribution through unpaid care work both visible and valued. Specifically, the multi-country programme in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya 'was inspired by the efforts of some national governments to measure time use and make visible women's overall workload including their work in their own households' (2013b, 4). The intention was to transform the time use surveys from a statistical tool into a time diary tool to be completed by the women and men involved in the programme with the aim that 'in using the tool women and men would begin to see the time and energy required to do unpaid care work and the effect this has on women's wellbeing and fulfillment of their human rights' (ibidem, 12)[17]. The uncertainty of existing power relations is a big barrier to women's opportunities. So another use of data by NGOs is to support and empower marginalized women under the assumption that mobilization of community resources contributes to processes of change impacting on institutions, organizations, cultural models and individual lives. This is particularly important in a context where women have few opportunities to express their ideas and point of view.

This raises the issue of adopting methodologies that empower citizen engagement in designing tools and producing data and the need to overcome the digital divide for women. Accessibility of open data should be accompanied by initiatives aimed at empowering citizens to use data critically and in a proper institutional environment.

7. Gender sensitive data and evaluation

A gender sensitive approach considers gender differences and inequalities during monitoring and evaluation of interventions/projects/programmes/policies. Data are produced and used by NGOs in both monitoring and evaluation. NGOs are also often involved in international human rights monitoring. Overall, the main challenges for evaluating programmes/projects following a gender approach are related to (i) the difficulties in revealing changes in women's, girls', men's and boys' lives and changes in attitudes and social norms, (ii) reconstructing mechanisms/processes that have an impact on gender structures and gender roles able to connect individual and collective data; (iii) establishing a rigorous enough relationship between impacts and interventions (claiming causation through intervention) and producing knowledge about 'what works'. Various developments and uses of data can be distinguished according to the type of evaluation strategy adopted :

[17] Walker, Berekashvili and Lomidze (2014) describe the use of gender statistics and time-budget analysis in Georgia, following a capability approach and a gender perspective.

(j) Evaluation as a participatory activity within a social change process and gender-sensitive data to promote a learning and thinking-action approach.

There are numerous cases in which NGOs favor a learning approach and a participatory evaluation of projects focused on gender issues which include the involvement of the target group of women. Gender sensitive data and information are often part of tool-kit specifically tailored for NGO project' implementation and represent a way for participatory evaluation, monitoring and mobilization.

Consultation with local people and the adoption of a participatory approach is not limited to designing and selecting indicators or generating population estimates. Its overall aim is to promote empowerment and change patterns of women's lives. Evaluation itself contributes to social and individual change and is often interactive: when exploring 'the parameters of an innovation and, as it takes shape, [contribute to change] the intervention as needed (and if needed), adapting it to changed circumstances, and altering tactics based on emergent conditions' (Patton 2011, 5 and 39). This occurred, for example, with group and collective discussions on the findings from the time use diary of rural women involved in Action Aid schemes in Africa (2013b) mentioned above.

(k) *Key performance indicators and mixed methods to monitor and evaluate interventions and programmes contributing to women's well-being and empowerment.*

Specific women's target groups and key performance indicators have been defined by NGOs to evaluate the extent to which policies and intervention (educational policies, youth employment policies, work-life balance policies) allocate resources equally to women and men, address the different needs of women and men and reduce gender disparities in different social systems. Under pressure from the international community (OECD, European Union) and donors to use evidence-based policies, some NGOs have restricted monitoring and evaluation to key gender performance indicators and accountability. But limiting evaluation in this way, NGOs lose their ability to give an original and political interpretation of gender issues and become simply transmittersof institutionalized and neutral categorization of "gender" in development and aid policies.

Some NGOs have however invested in rigorous monitoring and evaluation over and beyond collecting sex-disaggregated data. They also ask clear questions about male and female roles to uncover intended and unintended positive and negative impacts, and design indicators to track changes in key gender gaps from baseline to endline. They use qualitative as well as quantitative methodologies (E.g. Oxfam America). The adoption of gender impact assessment tools is in fact crucial, not only in the planning phase but also in monitoring and evaluation phases. These produce data for gender-responsive monitoring. Fundamental evaluative questions are: 'Are women's lives really changing?', 'Is women's empowerment increasing?'.

(l) Theory based approaches and theories of change.

Another specific strategy for facing challenges in evaluation is to make explicit theories of programmes and theories of change underpinning projects and programmes (e.g. Oxfam, Save

the Children). Such theories in fact guide the choice of evaluative methodology and indicators. Oxfam for example proposes a rights-based transformative approach, incorporated into its programmes, to strengthen women and girls in their efforts to end violence. For instance, to reduce gender based violence in Indonesia 2012-2014 Oxfam developed a program theory (a model that combines the theory of change with a visualisation of the planned activities) inspired by a model for gender mainstreaming by Aruna Rao and David Kelleher[18]. Specifically, Oxfam supports women's empowerment at two levels, individually and collectively, and operates considering two levels of action (Individual/Systemic and Informal/Formal). A total of four strategies are therefore planned: changing women's and men's consciousness; increasing women's access to resources; challenging norms and exclusionary practices and influencing formal institutions, laws and policies (2012). The programme theory not only develops a new model of action for specific gender purposes but also serves as a basis for collecting and analyzing data and information, for quality monitoring, evaluation and advocacy. Theories of programmes and change guide the choice of indicators. These at the same time are the object of evaluation. The capacity of the programme/project to put this theory of change into practice is in fact part of evaluative objectives.

However, not all NGOs follow theory based approaches to evaluation. One reason might be that 'the standard evaluation template is focused on measuring performance (program inputs and outputs), rather than change' (Beardon and Otero 2013, 8). This is stressed, for example, by the evaluator of the 'Raising Her Voice' (RHV) programme, a 5 year global portfolio of Oxfam Great Britain projects to promote women's rights and capacity to engage effectively in governance at every level. 'Raising Her Voice' was developed under the UK Department of International Development Governance and Transparency Fund (DfID GTF). It includes 19 projects across four continents. Based on the approaches and learning emerging from the ground, the external midterm review in 2011 introduced a unifying theory of change for the programme which led to reframing outcome areas and indicators in relation to the three spheres of the theory of change. These are - personal, political and social spheres – 'which all influence women's opportunities to participate in governance, and which need to change in order to strengthen women's voice' (ibidem, 3). However, the relatively fixed parameters provided by the donor did not support a 'theory of change' approach.

In conclusion, it is important to note the extent to which NGOs working in this field take part in the debate on monitoring statistics, performance measurement and evidence-based policies. NGOs' main contribution has been to favour the recent recognition by international organizations and development agencies of the validity of qualitative approach in impact evaluation, ad-

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[18] Aruna Rao and David Kelleher are two feminist academics who wrote 'Gender at Work: Organizational Change for Equality' in 1999. Since 2004 Aruna Rao has run the NGO 'Gender at work' which was founded and works in collaboration with several partners such as Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now UN Women) and Women's Learning Partnership (WLP).

vantages in combining quantitative and qualitative methods and the importance of participatory research, evaluation and case studied analysis. Evidence of this can be found in a recent publication by the Department for International Development (2008) on impact evaluation where it is stated that 'an impact evaluation that combines qualitative and quantitative methods can generate both a statistically reliable measure of the magnitude of the impact as well as a greater depth of understanding of how and why a programme was or was not effective and how it might be adapted in future to make it more effective' (Garbarino and Hollande 2009, 5).

8. "Gender statactivism" and NGOs: potentiality, controversies and challenges

Applying the newly coined term «statactivism» (Bruno, Didier and Vitale 2014) to gender issues, the term 'gender statactivism' has been proposed to indicate development and use of gender sensitive-data for mobilization and women's rights. Producing, collecting and using gender sensitive-data includes different activities among which are framing ideas about gender, offering political solutions by demanding official statistics to cover new or underrepresented public areas and formulating gender-sensitive research questions (*what to measure*), requesting sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive data (*what kind of indicators*) as well as providing policy analysis, advice and evaluation following a gender approach.

Developing categorizations and using data as resource for mobilization is not new. However, today's geo-political situation and political opportunity structures for NGOs, and civil society organizations, have changed and the availability of data sources and new ITC instruments of mobilizations and shared platforms are different. So, how much space is there today for NGOs to promote mobilization on women's rights, and in what way are their actions specific? These questions, to which this paper has tried to give response. They are currently key aspects of the international debate on gender equality and performance measurement, and have important implications for the current debate on the post-2015 development agenda, in particular with regard to the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Panel's calling for measuring with a rights-based approach and a data revolution (2013).

Mainly based on a study of 5 worldwide NGOs and 3 networks of human rights experts, operating at different levels, the paper analyses «gender statactivism». It distinguishes different phases of mobilization, namely: knowledge and framing processes, policy analysis, policy design and policy implementation, action (campaigning, advocacy), monitoring and evaluation.

A first emerging specificity is found to be the political and practical dimension of NGOs and their emancipator function in using data, for citizens, communities and institutions. Specifically, a variety of gender categories, data and collection methods (primary, secondary data, survey, case studied, focus-group) are adopted by these organizations. In all mobilization phases, data can be used to tackle gender issues and promote equal opportunities. But in order to be an efficient tool of mobilization it has to be accompanied by other means (recourse to law, lobbying, petitions, demonstrations, alliances, networks) and strategies. These mainly involve participa-

tory practices and tools that on one hand empower people and combine quantitative and quali-tative data on the other.

A gender approach can inform and be stronger in some of the phases or be closely integrated into all NGO activities. The importance of taking a gender approach in all stages of mobilization and policy cycle differs for the various NGOs. Overall, despite the criticism of institutionalization from some of them, NGOs continue to produce social framing processes where the availability of data is closely linked to political analysis, political action (Bruegel 2000) and citizen engage-ment. Although it may not always be statistically sound, perhaps because of financial con-straints, data and information directly collected by NGOs are usually particularly relevant to capture women's perception, changes in the capacity of women to exercise control, autonomy and self-determination and qualitative impact of programmes and policies. NGOs also have a specific expertise in promoting gender statistics and gender-sensitive information. They can therefore be key actors in pushing progress (to provide more disaggregated data, to cover new areas relevant for gender implications, collect data at sub-national units) in particular contexts like rural countries or in conflict-affected countries. To this end NGOs may rely on previous in-terventions and existing networks built over the years.

NGOs have been extremely influential in acknowledging gender differences in various fields and improving existing information. They have produced knowledge of the root causes of gen-der regimes in different contexts and proposed tools to monitor and tackle the reasons for gen-der inequalities and multiple discrimination in a variety of areas from access to jobs, to social services, etc.. In this sense NGOs and associations have extensive resources in terms of local knowledge, proximity to emerging events, issues, needs and the real life of people. They are ac-tive in reporting violations of women's rights and leading governments, institutions and supra national organizations to face up to their responsibilities. At the same time, where NGOs are called to give advice to international and European organizational and agencies on survey methodology and women's rights and discrimination, proposing new indicators and knowledge might imply a cost for NGOs in terms of institutional recognition and resources. It may also put them at risk in certain contexts, for example, challenging official government figures on topics such as the police or military violence against women.

We find clearly that decisions on what to measure and what kind of indicators to use is a po-litical and context-dependent choice, as are decisions about who participates in producing data and who has access to data. Asking certain gender sensitive questions and developing and using certain types of data can be a tool for mobilization in certain contexts and in certain circum-stances. But gender statistics are not always a 'weapon' to defend the rights of women and girls. There are many obstacles leading to partial and unreliable data or data not useful for local populations and national policy makers. These include a series of contextual factors (political, economic, cultural, institutional) and endogenous mechanisms (NGO market oriented strategies for resource allocation, focus on accountability for expenditure and development results, pres-sure by the international community to use evidence-based policy and sophisticated economet-ric methods). As pointed out by Jerven (2013), for example, many poor countries currently have weak institutional and statistical systems, so an external demand for data to developing econ-

omies may produce uncoordinated and often disruptive effects on the regular supply of data. Unexpected effects need to be taken into account in conceptualizing statactivism. There is also the need to bring into focus local demand for data, consultation and deliberation, and the need for an institutional environment allowing citizen participation and accountability. These constitute some enabling factors for effective changes by means of data mobilization and are preconditions for transforming gender-sensitive data into a public good.

NGOs are distinguished by how gender issues are categorized, the quantity of data measured and how it is made available to the public. The type of data is also particularly important. For some organizations, data mainly comes from its program experience and case studies and serves to legitimize and support testimony and qualitative information. For others, the availability and collection of strong evidence is a goal in itself. NGOs interpret the concept of evidence in different ways, ranging from a more qualitative to a more quantitative approach in intervention on debate on evidence-based policies, performance indicators and benchmarking. A characteristic of some NGOs is making explicit theories of change which underpin their intervention. Using such theory to guide data collection and evaluation is a on one hand a strategy to oppose the international tendency to invest mainly in performance indicators and restrict impact evaluation into a narrow range of mainly experimental and statistical methods. On the other hand, the opportunity to place data within a framework increases transparency and accountability, and potentially improves evidence-based decision-making and policies. It also makes it easier for external actors to distinguish between empty rhetoric and effective mobilization through data.

Finally, useful insight can be gained from an intersectionality framework, particularly a transnational intersectionality framework. Our study reveals that NGOs have often adopted an intersectional approach, even without awareness. This is important in addressing gender differentiation and conducting more complex analysis identifying changing power relations and stratification, and preserving the emancipatory power of gender-sensitive categorizations and statistics. It helps to avoid the risk of 'objectivation' of gender categories and gender equality indices, and the risk of being too context sensitive and ignoring the transnational dimension. «Gender statactivism» would therefore benefit from more dialogue between feminist scholars and NGOs and debates on intersectionality and transnationalism.

Appendix I – Gender Indicators with a focus on women used by supra-national organizations classified by concepts/policy domains and level

Female population (group level)		General context and policies (macro/society level)	
Concept/Dimension	*Indicator/Variable*	*Concept/Dimension*	*Indicator/Variable*
Identity and intersecting inequalities	-Data disaggregated by age, citizenship, disability, ethnicity, marital status, religion and sexual orientation *** -Gender gaps in employment rates for people born in a foreign country, for older workers and for persons living in a household containing a single adult with one or more children ***	Labour market structures	-Gender gaps in full-time equivalent participation*** -Gender gaps in employment in the Education and the Human health and social work activities sectors***
Economic position	-Access to economic resources: ratio between the estimated income received by women and that received by men▪ -Duration of working life by sex*** -At-risk-of-poverty rate by type of household and sex, including at-risk-of-poverty rate of single parents with dependent children**	Education system	-Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education° -Proportion of female graduates and male graduates of all graduates in mathematics, the sciences and technical disciplines (tertiary education) **
Education status	-Gender gaps in population having attained first and second stage of tertiary education***	Social welfare system	-Access to health: Gender gaps in individuals without unmet medical needs***
Health and Physical Integrity	-Good or very good self-perceived health by sex*** -Percentage of women aged 15-49 who have undergone female genital mutilation, as defined by the World Health Organization*	Cultural norms	-Missing Women: gender bias in mortality due to sex selective abortions, female infanticide or insufficient care given to baby girls* -Fertility Preferences: gender bias in fertility preferences using the share of males as the last child*
Social relations and roles	-Gender gaps in involvement in the care and education of children and/or grandchildren, every day for an hour or more***	Discriminatory Family Code	-Early marriage: Percentage of women married between 15-19 years of age*

	-Involvement in cooking and housework, every day for an hour or more, by sex*** -Gender gaps in involvement in sporting, cultural or leisure activities at least every other day***		
Power and political voice	-Share of members of Regional Assemblies by sex (%, 18+ population) ***	Gender equality and equal opportunities policies, anti-discrimination policies	-Personnel resources of the designated body or bodies for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men**
Violence against women	-Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous partner, or by any other person since the age of 15◊ -Long-term psychological consequences of the most serious incident of violence since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator◊ -Contacting services and talking to other people about the most serious incident since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator◊ -Women who have avoided at least sometimes a certain places or situations in the 12 months before the survey for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted◊	Symbolic representations (masculinity and femininity)	-The proportion of women and men in decision-making posts in media organisations in the EU
		Policies to address Violence Against Women	-The number of private and public enterprises which have a preventive policy regarding sexual harassment at the workplace, as a percentage of the total number of employers**
		Power and political voice	-Economic participation and the associated decision-making power: the percentage of women among legislators, senior

			officials and managers, and by the percentage of professional and technical positions occupied by women)▪ -The proportion and number of women and men among chiefs of executive boards of the top 50 firms publicly quoted on the national stock exchange** -Proportion of women and men in climate change decision-making bodies at the national level in the EU Member States**
		Global inequalities	-Women's access to agricultural land* -Women's access to bank loans and other forms of credit*

* OECD Development Centre – SIGI (2009). Updated to 2012. For non-OECD or non-European Union countries
** BPfA- EU Council –EIGE (1999). Updated to 2013
*** EIGE (2013). For EU Member States
▪UNDP- GEM, Gender Empowerment Measure
° Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
◊ FRA (2014), Violence against women:an EU-wide survey

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