

FINAL TECHNICAL REPORT / RAPPORT TECHNIQUE FINAL

MAPPING GENDER AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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1. Executive summary

The overall objective of this project is to “support the IDRC Networked Economies programme to improve gender-related outcomes, strengthen gender analysis and inclusion in its research projects, and strengthen the field of gender and ICTs with the development of a gender-focused network.”

This research project mapped the terrain of research and knowledge production in the field of gender and digital technology that has taken place in the last decade (since 2006), surfaced recent trends, gaps, emerging areas and critical questions in the field and to inform future research agenda.

The project activities included following milestones the building of the research team and project commencement; scoping down of research problem through consultations and survey; mapping of trends and issues in past and current research in the field through literature review; exploring challenges, gaps, priorities and emerging areas in current research through interviews with key actors; release of GenderIT.org edition; exploration of models, success factors and key challenges of research networks through case studies, interviews and conversations; validation of mapping exercise findings and outlining feminist research agenda through expert group meeting “Research landscape in gender and digital technology”; release of final research report.

Since its inception, the research raised the attention of many key actors in the field. One of the key points that emerged through this mapping project is that research initiatives framed around feminist methodology, ethics and analysis goes beyond gender-disaggregated data by gender, but rather, centres questions on a larger politics of change, and look at power dynamics not only in terms of gender, but also race, class, and other intersectional factors. Feminist research ethics is also at the centre of their design.

The project findings will inform the next phase of the project, which - in consultation with IDRC - is framed around a launch of feminist research network that aims to strongly integrate feminist research and intersectional analysis in policy, discourse and research in the field of digitally-networked technologies. The majority of key actors consulted for this project responded very positively to the idea of setting a research network organised around a common shared feminist framework in the field of digitally-networked technologies.

2. The research problem

Gender and ICTs have been an emerging and maturing field that has seen many changes in the last few decades. Since the early '70s, feminist scholarship have critiqued the role of mainstream media and more recently, digital technologies as being deeply implicated in the discrimination of women in society. At the same time, digital technologies were explored as instruments for transformation to serve gender justice, women's rights and empowerment.

This research mapped the terrain of research and knowledge production in the field of gender and digital technology that has taken place in the last decade – from 2006 – 2017. Our intention was to surface recent trends, gaps, emerging areas and critical questions in the field, to better understand knowledge building in this area and to inform future research agenda.

The original understanding of the problem evolved throughout the different stages of the project to scope and narrow down the vast body of existing literature and to identify key research participants in discussions, interviews and review. In this process, we debated on the rationale for prioritising particular bodies of knowledge over others, and decided to

focus on action-based or activist-driven research taking place or about middle and low-income countries in the last decade (2006-2017) for the reasons outlined below.

With the project's strong focus on rendering gender research visible and nuanced in the field of digitally-networked technologies, research led by feminists and/or contributing towards the advancement of women's rights and sexual rights was prioritised. This resonated with the values and politics of the research team as individuals as well as a team, located within a feminist standpoint. It clearly signalled towards outcome and impact-oriented knowledge building that can affect the lives of research subjects. Further, feminist action and participatory research contends with ethical questions of the relationship of the knowledge-project with the object of the study, and the fact that research must engage research participants as active knowledge subjects and must contribute towards larger goals of inquiring underlying systems of inequality.

We prioritised work of researchers who are working in middle and low-income countries (or whose research focussed in these contexts) and whose work has a 'global South' perspective or is located within these realities. This is to understand and privilege a relatively less dominant perspective in this field. It was found that there were fewer knowledge-building projects and research coming from these contexts, and many researchers found the frameworks and analysis of Western researchers dissonant and largely irrelevant to their lives. Researchers from middle and low-income countries often bring in different framing of issues; for example the grounding of issues from expressions to algorithmic discrimination through the principle of access.

Lastly, we prioritised work of researchers who undertook an intersectionality lens and interrogated disparity and discrimination based not only on gender, but also gender expression, sexuality, ethnicity, race, class, caste and ability. As explained by one of the researchers in [EROTICS](#) network¹ interviewed for the project, "When researching a space like the internet, which is both global and local, public and private at the same time, it becomes all the more important to observe how these dichotomies (of caste, skin colour, ethnicity etc.) play with and against each other. Without paying attention to that, it will be very hard to actually work with the communities or policy makers."

3. Progress towards milestones

Project implementation activities involved following milestones:

3.1. Project commencement (December 2016 – January 2017)

3.2. Scoping down of research problem through consultations and survey (February – March 2017)

3.3. Trends and issues in past and current research in the field mapped through literature review (April – June 2017)

3.4. Challenges, gaps, priorities and emerging areas in current research mapped through interviews with key actors (June – August 2017)

3. 5. Release of GenderIT.org edition: ["We cannot be what we cannot see"](#)

3. 6. Models, success factors and key challenges of research networks explored through case studies, interviews and conversations (August – September 2017)

1 APC launched the Exploratory Research on Sexuality and the Internet (EROTICS) network in 2009 to undertake a research and advocacy project in India, Brazil, Lebanon, South Africa, the United States and Indonesia that looked at internet-related challenges facing LGBT and other sexual rights communities. Today, the EROTICS network is a global network of more than 50 activists, academics and organisations working on sexuality issues. Since its inception, the network has worked to bridge the gap between these two movements by building the capacity of sexual rights activists to engage in debates on internet governance policy, as well as building the awareness of internet rights organisations to include sexual rights in their advocacy.

3. 7. Validation of mapping exercise findings and outlining feminist research agenda through the expert group meeting Research Landscape in Gender and Digital Technology (October 2017)

3. 8. Release of final research report (January 2018)

3.1. Project commencement

Project commencement activities involved a mix of administrative, operational and co-ordination functions, including building the research team, and fine tuning the research design. As noted in the our previous technical report, this phase was extended until April 2017 since the research consultant we had identified for the literature review and successfully collaborated with in past was not available until that date.

The core research team consisted of Namita Aavriti, in the role of key researcher and main writer and editor of the research report; Anri van der Spuy, in the role of research consultant and author of the literature review; Katerina Fialova in the role of project coordinator and research advisor; Jac sm Kee in the role of research advisor. The research team included others from APC at different moments who acted as advisors, peer-reviewers, interviewers, facilitators or logistic support, namely Anriette Esterhuyesen, Daphne Plou, Jan Moolman, Jennifer Radloff, Sara Baker. We also involved partners and external experts, either as experts, peer reviewers, advisors or the authors of case studies, in-depth interviews and analytical articles for the GenderIT.org. For the full list of partners and experts engaged in the research refer to "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report.

3.2. Scoping down of the research problem through consultations and survey

Initial information on key actors, issues and existing literature were collected through scoping consultations and survey. They provided an overview of the body of literature available, priority issues and guided us in the scoping exercise and identification of key actors. Five scoping interviews were conducted with key actors in the field at the Internet Governance Forum (Mexico, 6-9 December 2016).

Scoping survey on trends, issues and gaps in the research was distributed using the snowball method through our networks of partners and organisations and their networks, and targeted outreach through through social media. In total, 170 responses were collected. This includes only complete or usable responses. The majority of replies were from civil society organisations that do research, and a relatively lower number of responses came from academics and women in technology fields, though both are well represented. For more details on survey and its respondents refer to the chapter "Methods and limitations" in "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report. (The sample of the survey can be found in the Appendix 2 of the Report)

3.3. Trends and issues in past and current research in the field mapped through literature review

The literature review was based on literature gathered through the scoping survey and interviews from partners and their extended networks. In addition, APC gathered and reviewed related background literature to deepen and unpack the survey findings. The exercise was generally restricted to literature published between 2006 and 2017– i.e. since the second phase of WSIS². In total, over 200 resources and initiatives were reviewed in four priority areas: access to the internet; economy, labour and skills; women's embodiment and expressions; women's rights movements and women's participation in governance and decision making pertaining to ICTs. The thematic areas

2 This is at the point when the WSIS conferences (2003 and 2005) have concluded and the multistakeholder model for internet governance involving state, corporates and civil society is initiated through the Internet Governance Forum (2006 – now).

also spoke to the Feminist Principles of the Internet 2.0 – a set of evolving and iterative principles that were collaboratively developed by a intersection of activists and academics from the field of sexual rights, internet rights, feminism and women's rights.³ For each of the thematic area, available literature was described and the major issue, trends and gaps were highlighted to allow for further research and work. The literature review can be read in the chapter Mapping trends and issues: literature review in "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report. (The full list of mapped resources can be accessed in the Appendix 1 of the "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report)

3.4. Challenges, gaps, priorities and emerging areas in current research mapped through interviews with key actors, researchers and academics

The in-depth interviews was to further deepen the understanding of complexities and nuances of critical issues in the field of gender and digital technology identified through the literature review. In total, we interviewed 23 experienced researchers and key actors in the field of gender and digital technology. 4 research participants' work is based in Africa, 6 in Latin America, 4 in MENA, 3 in Asia, 4 representing global initiatives and networks and 2 working on intersectional issues addressing gender and caste/ethnicity. The interviewee findings can be read in the chapter "Mapping challenges, gaps, priorities and emerging areas: interviews with key actors" in "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report. (For the list of interviewees refer to p. 52 of the report, the graphic "Interviewees for Mapping Study")

3. 5. Release of GenderIT.org edition

GenderIT.org's edition "[We cannot be what we cannot see](#)" was released on 10 September 2017 . This bilingual edition synthesised preliminary findings from our mapping study of the gender and digital technology field, focusing on emerging areas and gaps pinpointed through the literature review and interviews. In particular, the edition aimed to provide space for groups and people who find themselves marginalised in institutions and ecosystem of knowledge making. Their personal essays were particularly powerful as they provided a rich and textured insight into specific dimensions of the issue. Another gap met through the GenderIT.org's edition were the perspective of young women and how they are changing the structure and landscape of the information society. Implications of big data and algorithmic decision making around gender and sexuality was additional gap this edition addressed. It was difficult to find research that looks comprehensively at this, especially in the context of middle and low income countries, where projects of national identity cards, biometric voter IDs, surveillance projects are at their beginning stages. (see the list of published articles in the Appendix 1)

3. 6. Models, success factors and key challenges of research networks explored through case studies, interviews and conversations at the Expert group meeting

Throughout the project, the research team also prioritised opportunities to speak with groups and people who could inform our study in relation to the efficacy and value of research networks. Aside from surfacing experiences and insights on research networks as part of the in depth interviews, three case studies/profiles of existing feminist/gender research networks were collected - Fembot Collective, Research ICT Africa, and the EROTICS network - with particular focus on their process of knowledge production and organising. The findings from explorations of research networks can be find in the chapter "Research networks" in the "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report.⁴

3 See: <https://www.feministinternet.net>

4 See the fulltext version of research network profiles in the Appendix 5: Research network profiles of the "[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)" report.

3. 7. Validation of mapping exercise findings and outlining feminist research agenda through the expert group meeting

A 3-day expert group meeting, “Mapping the research landscape of gender and digital technology” took place in Port Dickson, Malaysia on 29th September - 1st October 2017. The meeting brought together 20 activist and academic researchers working on gender and digital technology across different regions and issues. The participants provided feedback on the preliminary draft of research report mapping study as a form of review process. This meeting was also grounds for sharing varying range of interests and trends in the field, including question of research methodologies, difficulties faced by researchers, and especially those doing it through multi-country networks. The critical conversations from the meeting fed into the final draft of the research report. The participants list, the meeting agenda and synthesis of the meeting conversations can be read at the “Report on the expert group meeting: Research landscape in gender and digital technology”.

To build on themes and ideas that were explored at the expert group meeting, two analytical articles were commissioned out. This included explorations on the breadth of feminist digital economics by Becky Faith, and reflections on creativity and play in feminist research methodology by Catalina Alzate.

3.8. Release of final research report

The “[Mapping research in gender and digital technology](#)” report was launched in January 2018. It is the final output from this research project and consolidates findings from the literature review, the interviews with key actors, the research networks experience mapping as well as the feedback and inputs from the expert group meeting. The report was published in electronic version under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 license and circulated to all contributors, to the APC networks, ranging from members to the Feminist Internet partners, and to relevant research communities via GenderIT.org, relevant mailinglists and individual emails.

4. Synthesis of research results and development outcomes

This project was meant for mapping:

- Trends, issues and changing contexts, based on literature review
- Key issues, challenges, gaps, priorities and emerging areas, and providing a brief overview of the key actors/initiatives contributing to the work in the sub/regions
- The value of research networks in this field, what would contribute to their success or impact, and key challenges faced

4.1. Trends, priority issues and changing contexts

The APC Women’s Rights Programme places itself within the trajectory of the women’s rights and of engaging with and within the issues of digital technology since [the early 1990’s](#). It has worked intensely to drive more attention, advocacy and policy reform towards women’s access and networking, online gender based violence and women’s expression and associations, including sexual expressions and associations, or women’s rights and sexual rights advocates participation in internet governance. It has also worked towards a wider framing of the various issues involved through formulations of [Gender evaluation methodology for ICT projects](#), [Feminist principles of the Internet](#), and continuous feminist research and [reflections](#) on parallel emerging issues in the field. Over

the course of this research, our understanding of the terrain of gender and digital technology has further unfolded.

During the project, it was particularly difficult until we arrived at the point of structuring the report. Initially, based on survey findings and the literature review, the themes were divided as: access, ICTs and empowerment, and ways in which ICTs hinder or restrict women's rights. As we delved deeper into the research, we found that this earlier structure flattens the terrain of difference over time and geography, and particularly does not indicate the meta shifts in discourse and language. The original division of themes also reflected current bias in policy work that pushes access as a more significant issue than e.g. economic conditions of women's participation in engagement with and use of ICTs or movement building. For the reasons above, we decided to re-center our research around **access, economy and labour, embodiment, expression and movement building** - five key areas of [Feminist Principles of the Internet](#) (FPIs) in which intervention for research, advocacy and activism were [collectively formulated](#) by women's rights, sexual rights and internet rights activists from six continents since 2014. Since the FPIs were developed through an iterative process that engaged a cross-sector of activists, academics and advocates from very local to global levels working on the intersection of feminism, sexuality, women's rights, internet policy and governance and human rights, it provided a more contemporary, actor-centric and reflective framework for the study.

Here are some key findings that emerged from this research process (see more details in the full research report Mapping research in gender and digital technology):

4.1.1. Access

The research mapped diverse dimensions of access to the Internet from a feminist perspective, ranging from the conditions of meaningful and substantial access for women; barriers to access, cultural and social barriers in particular; to the issue of education as a conduit for providing meaningful access; or the issue of access and disability.

The literature review documented a paradox of the issue of women's access to the Internet. Despite the fact that it has drawn attention of a plethora of actors in recent years, the [ITU statistic from 2017](#) indicates that gap between men and women accessing the Internet is widening, especially in least developing countries. The lack of gender-disaggregated data that is available for further analysis and knowledge of barriers to and impact of lack of access on women was one of the major concerns raised by research participants in the in-depths interviews and at the expert group meeting. Further, a significant proportion of the research and data available is global in focus and does not differentiate between the type of access, such as mobile phone access through free basic compared to broadband connection. There is a need to collect more specific and nuanced data on factors such as the type/quality of access, location, race, religion, class, geopolitical location, health and/or bodily diversity to enable a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying context-specific and intersectional factors that continues to act as significant barriers to women's access and use of ICTs.

The research participants highlighted missing data on a whole range of other issues, including datafication, surveillance, or gender-based violence online. Sometimes, data collection are based on incorrect assumptions and bias that do little to meet target populations needs. The type and form of data needed requires a critical approach as different data may need to be collected about the same phenomenon in different contexts.

The research further points to the importance of surfacing power dynamics and imbalances that hinder or restrict access in different contexts. Such studies need the full scope of women and gender non-conforming, non-binary and transgender people's communicative ecologies that affect their use, production, creation, and design of ICTs, including gendered distribution of labour in homes and outside; and the role of race,

caste, ethnicity, gender expression, bodily diversity, and other aspects in impacting on meaningful access.

4.1.2. Economy and labour

Some of the themes surfaced in the thematic area of economy and labour included: gendered labour and empowerment; gendered labour in technology spaces; women in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM); open source and free software movements and gender; and work cultures in technology spaces.

One of the key trends in this area that emerged in a number of interviews with the key actors as well as the expert group meeting is disillusionment with the promise of ICT4D, and ICTs as vehicles of women's empowerment. Goal 5 of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁵ sets targets for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including a target to enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular ICTs, to promote women's empowerment. But in fact, datafication, network economy and surveillance enabled through technology have made existing inequalities around caste, race, and gender even more acute. Market economy-driven approach that dominated many of the ICT4D and women's empowerment initiatives severely limited empowerment to entrepreneurship and basic ICT skills, and marginalized communities to consumers and economic actors, leaving out other aspects of their life – e.g. sexuality, culture politics. Women's empowerment initiatives are often depoliticised and rarely takes into account foundational principles of empowerment including autonomy, mobilization and participation and power to confront existing structural inequalities⁶. In response, participants highlighted the importance to further research the genesis, processes and outcomes of the language of women's empowerment by developmental projects of state, corporate and civil society in the context of neoliberalism, post-colonialism and globalisation. In particular, those focusing on access and basic digital literacy and training. They also stressed on the need for the inclusion of feminist analysis of power structures and a rights-based framework (including economic, social and cultural, rights) in research and evaluation projects concerning ICT4D, SDG and women's empowerment.

A number of key actors interviewed for this research also raised the question how to provide a feminist analysis and response to new models of labour and the impact of digital technology-driven enterprises. This links to the broader question of what constitutes a feminist analysis of the digital/networked economy, including a critical look at the sharing economy, gig economy, platform cooperativism, digital infrastructures and the 'externalities' of internet use, and the privatization of digital/online commons. When unpacking these issues from feminist perspectives, it is important to draw on the wealth of existing knowledge and research on feminist economics.

In particular, there is a need for more sustained research to understand the hidden costs associated with women's and more broadly gendered labour in the network/digital economy (taking into account domestic work, carework, affective labour and many other forms of gendered labour). How low-paying gendered labour is used at the lowest rungs in mines, electronic assembly plants and back-office jobs (contract workers, precarious labour, unsafe conditions, long working hours), and how this will be impacted by machine-learning and automation that is expected to wipe out whole industries, including business process outsourcing in Asia and Africa. Automation will also fuel shadow work, such as creating content and/or to moderate misogyny and sexism online.⁷ A lot of this

5 UNGA. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/Res/70/1). (2015b, October 21). Available online: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1andLang=E.

6 As defined in Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework in 1990; <https://www.scribd.com/doc/71539033/Longwe-s-Women-s-Empowerment-Framework>

7 Nakamura, L. (2015). The Unwanted Labour of Social Media: Women of Color Call Out Culture as Venture Community Management. *New Formations: a journal of culture, theory, politics*, 106-112.

individualised and invisible work is today produced by marginalised communities (for example, the expert group meeting participants shared concern how Black content producers on Twitter are exploited by the platform which is simply reproducing their content and making money from it.). These new forms of labour limit labour rights,⁸ and lead to increased violations of women's privacy via obscure algorithms and data mining practices⁹ that define platform business models.¹⁰

In this regard, participants at the expert group meeting also spoke about research ethics and a politics of reflexivity built into feminist analysis, which caution against seeing people as informants or objects of research, but as active subject-participants who are part of the knowledge-building process, since they are the experts of their own lives. This will enable a more accurate, nuanced and grounded understanding of the multiple dimensions that impact on the area of enquiry.

4.1.3. Embodiment and expression

As noted in the interim technical report, the theme of embodiment - grounded in bodily experience and the experience of people and their relationship with technology - has been the basis of feminist analysis and its understanding of the multiplicities of human experience. A focus on body and subjectivity becomes important particularly to feminist research in science and technology due to several critical factors. This includes the objectification and homogenization of bodies by technology, and associated critique of value-neutrality and objectivity in science. As such, feminist research in this field has shifted to a more phenomenological approach. Many researchers in our interviews pointed to the importance of knowledge that stems from lived experience to form the basis of research, advocacy around law and policy.

When this research project was commenced, it was expected trends in the theme of embodiment to be dominated by the topic of surveillance and datafication, which seemed to be most critical emerging area within the field of research on gender and digital technology, and the field of digital technology broadly. However, as evident from the recent mobilising around #metoo and other movements, gender-based violence as an experience forms the basis of feminist movement building and remains a critical area of study in feminist research.

This project documented great interest in the area of knowledge production on online GBV. Academic and civil society research initiatives worked hard to establish legitimacy of online GBV in international and national law. One of the shifts concerns terminology and a moving away from 'violence against women' towards 'gender based violence'. This shift implies that though violence against women specifically remains prominent, there is increasing awareness and urgency to understand violence on the basis of gender that is more fluid, specific and expansive in framing - including violence against transwomen, transmen, third gender, and gender non-conforming persons. It is important to translate this into action and ensure that trans, gender non-conforming, non-binary and intersex people are included in knowledge making projects and research significantly, not only as a [footnote](#). There is also lack of research on online GBV intersection with other social divisions and exclusions on the basis of ethnicity, religion, caste, race, body-ability and class. In the immediate term, two major research goals in this area are: a) to build evidence to inform policy making efforts around online GBV, b) to bring together scholarship on internet rights and feminism. Along with internet policy groups, feminist researchers need to go deeper to map experiences and real needs of people who are at the margins of the discourse around gender-based violence, and look at questions of criminalisation; internet platforms providers liability; links between state propaganda,

www.politeianet.gr/magazines/-xena-periodika-new-formation-issue-86-253800;

8 Gurumurthy and Chami, 2017. Op. cit. (pg. 14).

9 Ibid, pg. 2.

10 Nakamura, 2015. Op. cit. (pg. 107).

nationalism and online GBV; and to understand the motivations, ecosystem and tactics of aggressors, including the linkage between gender-based violence, dominant/hegemonic masculinities and the patriarchal value systems enabled through digitally-networked technologies. .

Implications of dataveillance and datafication of multiple aspects of our lives enabled by digital technologies have dominated conversations among scholars, policy makers and privacy activists in recent years. Since gendered and feminist analyses look specifically at the impact on embodied experience of women, unpacking dataveillance still poses certain methodological questions that have to be worked through. This is the quandary faced by most researchers in the field. This is most likely the reason why we did not come across much feminist research unpacking how datasets of women, transgender gender non-conforming person (body's virtual iteration) are used, analysed and reconfigured through various algorithms and processes, and what are the impacts of dataveillance on their lived experiences. Within feminist research, there is a need for interdisciplinary and creative research methodologies that include and centre communities and people in their diversity.

Another pressing question expressed by many of the interviewees concern the development of digital national identity projects which are ongoing in different countries, especially on developing contexts, with little regard for principles of privacy or safeguarding citizens from surveillance and arbitrary policing. While there is growing research on these systems, there has been minimal examination of the implications on gender, in particular, genders that are not currently legally recognised. Moving forward, research participants suggested to further interrogate the drive towards national identity cards and biometric voter cards through the lens of gender to help identify what a feminist approach to digital identification systems would look like if it enables and supports the exercise of rights particularly by groups of people who face most discrimination or disparity through invisibility, such as meaningful control over their data and engagement with public services.

Within the theme of embodiment, the topic of expression was also explored. The majority of research studies in this area focused on one of two sub-themes: how laws for online GBV are used to control forms of sexual or political expression; the paradoxical ways in which moral panics and patriarchal control over the body of the woman play out through state-led projects of censorship built around paternalist notions of protecting women and children, that restrict the expression of diversity of women and genders at the same time. The research participants stated that there is still insufficient research on the use of the internet by young women, transgender communities and lesbian queer activists to exercise their rights of expression, associations and knowledge that informs policy making and movement building, especially in middle and low income countries where homosexuality and/or transgender people are still criminalised. In relation to research, it is also important to complicate enquiries by taking into account desire and pleasure, themes that are often overlooked by the focus on violence in gender-based research.

4.1.4. Movement building, women's participation and decision-making

In relation to movement building, there were two important tracks explored – one that looked at participation in policy reform and policy making by women especially but also other marginalised and vulnerable communities, and the second track looked at how movements and resistance against prevalent social, cultural and legal norms builds momentum online. Within the second track, some of the important concerns raised were around digital security and effective use of ICTs, impact of such movements and long-term change. A corollary of the above was also research around strategies and tactics of varied movements and campaigns online, including those that are conservative, right-wing, and generally opposed to progressive ideas around gender and sexuality, but are also using the internet as a forum of building audience and community.

One of the key themes to emerge in relation to participation in policy making and reform was the continuing efforts to ensure women's participation in relation to ICT spaces and governance, but at the same time the struggle to convince behemoths of civil society organising and the women's movement of the value of ICT policy-related research and activism as included within their efforts. This remains a problem in the context of the 'global South' still, though the picture might slowly be changing.

A key trend to emerge in relation to online movements and campaigns that are complex and large, was the need for research on the relationship between technology, infrastructure and movements; how to contextualize research and online activism while keeping in mind, social and cultural dimensions, intersectionality, local histories and context. As captured by the mapping study, movement building is a misnomer of sorts, because it is not that we build movements as much as there is context that pushes towards people organising. The questions that require more research around movement building include – what forms a movement or a cause; how does it move online and offline; shifting power relations and structures of accountability enabled through networked organising in a digital age; and the shape and form of "communities" including digitally networked global-local democratic and participatory 'citizenship'. While there was relatively less research on movement building especially from a feminist perspective, it is evident from existing findings that online and offline/onground are interlinked, and these two allegedly separate domains are in communication and form the hybrid spaces for movements.

4.2. The value of research networks in this field and key factors contributing to their success or impact

One of the objective of this research was to surface values and key factors that contribute to the success of research networks in this field.

In both the literature review and the interviews documented, a large portion of the research done is produced by research networks - this includes regional and global research networks, networks around thematics and methodology, networks around specific location, such as the academic community, 'global South' or civil society networks and so on. Experiences and insights of key actors on research networks were further surfaced as part of the in depth interviews, and three case studies/profiles of existing feminist/gender research network (Fembot Collective, Research ICT Africa, and the EROTICS network) with a particular focus on their process of knowledge production and organising.

In general, the research participants attached a lot of value to their experience of being part of research networks. The mapped experiences of Research ICT Africa and also Privacy International networks (which are topic-based networks with limited integration of gender analysis) versus Fembot Collective or the APC's EROTICS network – documented that research network organised around feminist values and a common political goal work better in terms of integration of feminist analysis. For example, Chennai Chair shared in an interview how it is not easy to integrate a feminist analysis within their already existing regional networks, and how not having such a framework makes it difficult to determine power and gender dynamics at play in the data they get from regional partners.

Not surprisingly, research networks organized around feminist ideology and values also respond better to feminist researchers needs. Radhika Gajjala and Kaitlyn Wauthier from Fembot Collective further shared how a majority of feminist researchers are constantly working on the margins of their institutions and how it is essential for them to have a network where members share similar ethos and ideals around feminism to both deepen analysis as well as providing a 'safe space' for knowledge building work. This is especially relevant in light of the emerging narratives of sexual harassment and violence in all institutional spaces including academia. The majority of interviewed people also responded

very positively to a possibility of setting a network organised around a common shared feminist framework and values that would inform the research of researchers in the field of digital technology. They were excited about the idea where they could tap into the network of like-minded people for discussions, ideas and feedback.

Among the key success factors that contribute to the success of research networks named by the research participants are: openness and accessibility to balance inequality embedded in the formalised academic culture; pursue a combination of strong theoretical framework and experience in activism; importance of availability of local teammates so they can consult each other; autonomy of all members in relation to the research process and topics; mutual agreements on ethics and accountability to avoid tensions within members and build trust; and face-to-face interaction was listed as contributing to the trust building.

A common thread across conversations with key actors on a research network was the question of methodological approach and keeping closeness to the grounds of research. A number of research participants stressed the importance to engage in less extractive research methodologies, such through participatory research approaches, and preserve dialogic process between object and subject of the research, including adaptation of research methodologies to different communities needs, and creating a feed back loop of knowledge produced with the community.

Among the limitations most cited was financial precarity linked to the difficulties of sustaining research networks, and a lack of clarity on expectations and roles. (see more details in the report on the expert group meeting, the chapter Research networks: Exercise and discussion)

4.3. Impact and uptake

The research project pushed researchers and other knowledge producers who engaged with it to take feminist analysis more seriously, or become more comfortable with their feminist location. One of the key points that emerged through this mapping project is that research initiatives framed around feminist methodology, ethics and analysis goes beyond gender-disaggregated data by gender, but rather, centres questions on a larger politics of change, and look at power dynamics not only in terms of gender, but also race, class, and other intersectional factors. Feminist research ethics is also at the centre of their design.

Since its inception, the research has raised attention of many key actors in the field. On request, the interim findings were shared with number of research initiatives, such as [EQUALS Research Group: Advancing Research for Gender Equality in the Digital Age](#), or Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, UK who is considering set up of Global Gender and Digital Development Research Network to look at digitalised economies and information societies.

The research findings will be also be used to inform the next phase of the project which is currently under design and discussion with IDRC. In the in-depth interviews, key actors were given space to select what they considered an important issue to discuss. The topics covered can be thereby thought of as indicative of at least some of the key issues for future research agenda. The findings also give us better sense what work not to duplicate, especially regarding feminist research on new and emerging issues. There are also limitations to the research informed by the goals of this project and its developed methodology and approach as noted above, in particular, debates in North American and Western Europe in this field.

The research findings are used as inputs for framing of APC WRP plans in other strategy areas, in particularly policy advocacy work.

5. Methodology

The mapping study for research in gender and digital technology covered the terrain of research that has taken place in the last decade (since 2006) through the literature review, and pointed to trends, emerging areas, challenges and urgent issues through both the interviews with key actors in middle and low-income countries and the meeting with experts and researchers in this field. The methodologies included survey using snowballing technique to reach out to partners, researchers and others in the field of gender and digital technology, literature review based especially on inputs from the survey, interviews with key actors including articles, analysis and inputs commissioned from key actors, and an expert group meeting with over fifteen researchers, writers and key actors in the field of research in gender and digital technology.

In the literature review and the interviews, organisations or researchers were prioritised who are actively engaged in feminist analysis and research, particularly those working in middle and low-income countries (or whose research is in such contexts), or those that have a 'global South' perspective and are grappling with existing inequities based on ethnicity, caste and, race in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the, Middle East.

We recognise the limitations of using snowballing for scoping survey in not being able to entirely step beyond interlocutors whose research in gender and digital technology is known to us, and as a mapping of the field this was not an exhaustive attempt. However, we note here APC's extensive network given our history, standing and steeped work in the field that has provided an advantage in the starting point in terms of a strong networked capital.

The mapping study and the survey was constrained by the literature that was available in the public domain and came to us through our networks of partners, academics and researchers i.e. open access research and civil society research that is publicly available; thus academic research that is taking place largely in Europe and the United States but is not directly linked to realities in middle and low-income countries was not the focus of the mapping study.

The limitations in the survey and literature review were addressed through our interviews with academics and researchers and the expert group meeting with researchers whose work has had an influence on civil society research and policy work, particularly in the realm of feminist analysis of technology. We took on board the criticism that often such studies foreground only existing partners, campaigners and key actors and an effort was made to connect with and include a few people outside of the "usual circle", and also those who are addressing relatively new areas, such as the impact of datafication in relation to gender and sexuality. At the same time we are aware that we have omitted certain familiar voices from the interviews (though they are present in the literature review) and this was done so as to identify emerging areas, gaps and challenges in this field.

Even as we attempt to maintain consistency across this mapping study, the differences in ideology, location and perceptions of each author is evident. Rather than paper over these, we have allowed space for encounters with different viewpoints. The mapping study holds together the work of many researchers, writers and activists, and here by "hold" we mean – to have as a privilege or position of responsibility, to have and maintain in grasp, to support – rather than to enclose or restrain.

In relation to research methodology, we attempted to remain reflexive and open to questions raised in relation to feminist ethics, questions around the practices, intentions and position of the researcher in terms of their awareness of history, location and their own status in society. Within the practices of feminist research, the emphasis has been on centring communities and people, and to not appropriate or extract knowledge. We focused on gleaning from the experience of researchers and academics who critically

engage with the need for building of ethics of research balanced with knowledge production.

6. Project outputs

The following key outputs have occurred during the project:

- The finalisation and publication of the research report "Mapping research in gender and digital technology" (see: <https://www.apc.org/en/node/34498/>)
- The publication of GenderIt.org's articles (see the Appendix 1)
- The expert group meeting: Research landscape in gender and digital technology (see the Appendix 2, and the "Report on the expert group meeting: Research landscape in gender and digital technology")

7. Problems and challenges

IDRC centres on the inclusion of gender analysis in all their funded projects, but as reconfirmed by this research project, it is not the same as ensuring and pushing for a feminist analysis that lays bare power dynamics and addresses gender inequity. This question of difference between gender inclusion and feminist research was unpacked throughout the project. In the scoping exercise for this research, we had hesitated to focus merely on work done by women, trans, intersex or feminist researchers, as we were worried on missing out of important work. Throughout the project, our confidence to prioritize feminist researchers and their knowledge production work grown. While research initiatives incorporating a gender perspective might point out the differences in impact in relation to men and women (or other gender expressions), what a feminist analysis seeks to show is how power dynamics operate around sex and gender.

What in particular makes a research agenda feminist, was also one of the key questions discussed at the expert group meeting. Participants agreed that feminist research has the following characteristics, some of which are not unique to this type of initiative: addresses differences around gender, sex and power; aims to bring a larger/structural politics of change; is located within feminist perspective/standpoint, specifically anti-patriarchy, and anti-capitalist; takes into account more complex realities and the history of inequality and discrimination; strong research ethics, addressing issue of reflexivity, positionality, methodology, and the politics of knowledge.

In the research process, we also struggled with narrowing down the research design, questions, research participants selections or conclusions. In particular, how to balance the scoping down process against certain biases and hegemonies of class, caste, race, ethnicity existing within knowledge production and civil society organising (in different contexts and countries). The challenge has been to identify which of the issues, perspectives should be explored and why, and then to understand the link to power to counter discrimination and oppression. For example, to what extent can this study cover analytical content producers that do some pieces of informal research, and where most current feminist analysis of internet-related issues, especially in middle and low income countries, is situated. For this reason, we expanded the scope to include initiatives around gathering testimonies, stories and collecting resources for a community for specific areas, such as knowledge production on themes of sexuality and gender in Middle East North Africa.

Another challenge which had been already listed in our interim report is language. In some of the themes, only English literature was reviewed. Language was also an entry level barrier for actors from non-english speaking regions and communities. For example we noticed that many respondents from LAC and from MENA have entered names and brief details but not completed the scoping survey. We partially circumvented this

constrain through conducting a limited number of in-depth interviews in Spanish and Arabic. Despite this effort, it is important to consider this gap in the next phase of this project and develop/employ multilingual research design and practices, otherwise we will continue to miss out on certain facets of experience and knowledge.

8. Overall assessment and recommendations

Ongoing consultations with the IDRC team, and the team active participation at the expert group meeting was important, and strengthen our clarity on the directions of the project. In same time, the autonomy over implementation of the project allowed as to adjust project focus and research design based on the interim findings and consultations with key actors in the field.

For the next phase of this project, we recommend to engage multiply language research design and prioritize feminist analysis as these where major limitations of this research.

Appendix 1: The overview of outputs published on GenderIT.org's articles

Title	Reads	Language
[SPECIAL EDITION] Taking the girl's revolution online: Interview with Ghadeer Ahmed	2131	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] Expert on my own Experience: Conversations with Neo Musangi	2045	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] Debrahmanizing Online Sphere: On Larger Questions of Caste, Gender and Patriarchy	2460	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] There is no opting out.: Indigenous women in Malaysia and questions of access	1006	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] Interview with Maggie Mapondera : A feminist internet must always be grounded offline	1859	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] Editatonas: "I edit, therefore I am"	1616	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] Observing our Observers in the Age of Social Media	1663	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] #NiUnaMenos: Politicising the use of technologies	1266	Eng
[SPECIAL EDITION] Mapping gaps in research in gender and information society	1938	Eng
Ni una menos	1679	Esp
Editatona, edito luego existo	1407	Esp
[COLUMN] Access and Beyond (3): Navigating mobile costs in communication	1837	Eng
[COLUMN] Access and beyond (4): Gendered barriers to internet use	1729	Eng
[COLUMN] Access and Beyond (5): How do we address the gender question?	1343	Eng
IGF 2017: bye a los cuentos de hadas digitales (published on January 2018)	201	Esp
[Columna] Ser o no ser anónimo, ahí el dilema	984	Esp
[Entrevista] Una internet feminista debe anclarse en acciones concretas	381	Esp
Why we need a 'feminist digital economics' (to be published in		Eng

February 2018)		
Exploring creative and participatory methods in research around ICTs (to be published in February 2018)		Eng

Appendix 2: The list of participants of the Expert group meeting

Name	Region	Country	Organisation
Anonymous	MENA		
Becky Faith	Global	UK	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)
Bruna Zanolli	Latin America	Brazil	Vadias de campinas, Vedetas (vedetas.org/) and Thydewá.
Caitlin Bentley	Asia/Europe	UK/Singapore	Singapore Internet Research Centre
Catalina Alzate	Latin America/Asia	Colombia/India	Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Chat Garcia Ramilo	Asia	Philippines	Association for Progressive Communications
Chenai Chair	Africa	South Africa	Research ICT Africa
Elena Pavan	Europe	Italy	University of Trento (Italy)
Horacio F. Sívori	Latin America	Brazil	Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro/Sexuality Policy Watch
Jac sm Kee	Asia	Malaysia	Association for Progressive Communications
Jennifer Radloff	Africa	South Africa	Association for Progressive Communications
Jinnie Chae	Global	South Korea	Fembot Collective
Kalyani Menon Sen	Asia	India	Gender at Work

Katerina Fialova	Europe	Czech Republic	Association for Progressive Communications
Mariana Valente	Latin America	Brazil	InternetLab -- Law and Technology Research Center
Matthew Smiths	North America	Canada	International Development Research Centre
Namita Aavriti	Asia	India	Association for Progressive Communications
Patricia Pena	Latin America	Chile	Académica del Instituto de la Comunicación e Imagen, Universidad de Chile
Ruhiya Seward	North America	Canada	International Development Research Centre
Ruth Nyambura	Africa	Kenya	African Ecofeminists Collective
Safia Khan	Africa	South Africa	University of Cape Town/ Development Policy Research Unit
Tigist Shewarega Hussen	Africa	Ethiopia/South Africa	University of Western Cape