Integrating Gender In Social Research and Social Work Education

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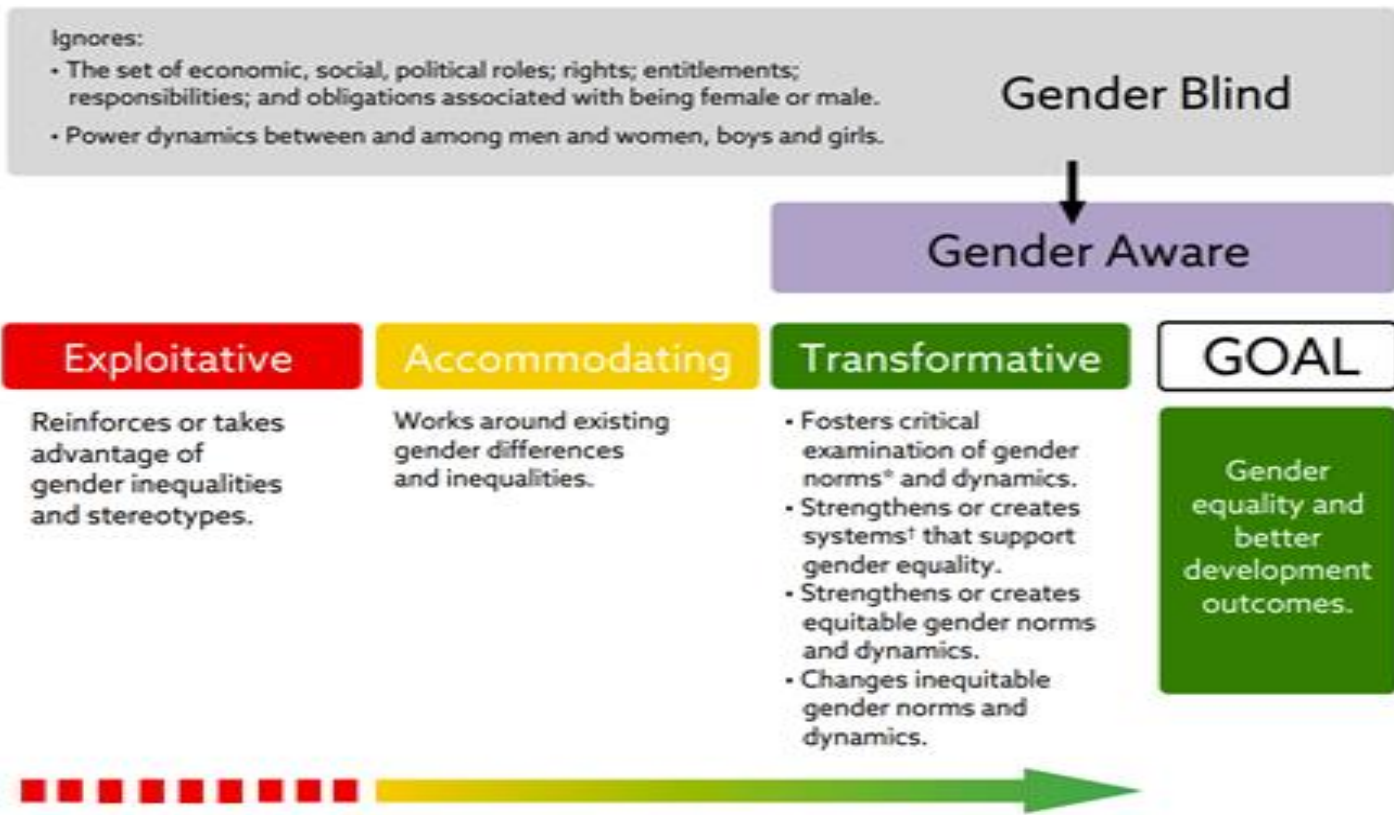flora.muhanguzi@gmail.com

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- Key concepts

- Theoretical foundations of gender focused research (GFR)

- Rationale and justification for GFR

- Characteristics of gendered research

- The how of integrating gender into the research process

- Ethical considerations in gender focused research

- Gender and social work education

- Key points to remember

Key Concepts

- Gender Focused Research

- Feminist Research

- Gender Sensitive Research

- Gender Responsive Research

- Gender Transformative Research

- Sex and Gender

- Gender Issues

- Gender Stereotypes

WOMEN? THEY ARE TOO BUSY TO DISCUSS WATER!

GENDER INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

SOURCE: POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU (PRB), USAID (2017)

Theoretical Foundations of Gender Focused Research

- The research process entails 4 main elements …ontology, epistemology, methodology … Research methods

- Ontological and epistemological principles are organized into **paradigms that guide everyday research processes**

- **A paradigm is** a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived … a philosophical stance that informs the methodology, guides the research process e.g **positivism, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, feminism**….

Theoretical Roots of Gender Focused Research

	Paradigms	
	Positivism	Social interactionism, phenomenology, feminism
Ontology	Realism/objectivism	Constructionism subjectivism
Epistemology	Empiricism	Interpretivism, feminist epistemology
Methodology	quantitative	qualitative
Research design	Experiential research; Survey research	Ethnography, Grounded theory, Action research, Discourse analysis, Feminist stand point
Methods/instruments	Observation, Structured interviewing (questionnaire)	Observation (Participant, Non participant), semi/un structured/in-depth interviewing, Focus group discussions, Case study, Life history etc

ROOTS OF GENDER FOCUSED RESEARCH (GFR)

- Gender focused research is a cross-disciplinary field….

- Rooted in feminism and women studies…. as a part of the international women's movement, seeking to acquire knowledge about women's history, living conditions and experiences.

- Requires researchers to take into account how contexts and relationships shape the production of knowledge and to be concerned with inter-subjective forms of knowing…

- Has a long tradition of questioning, exploring and exposing gendered stereotypes and norms that govern understandings of gender in society.

• Gender is the starting point for analysis, with a focus on how gender, as well as the body and biology (sex) are manifested in culture and society with a critical analysis of various power structures in culture and society.

• Traditionally, gender researchers study societies, lives and experiences of people that are marginalized and have received little scholarly attention...

• Gender research is often positioned at the interface between gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and class….Often referred to as research on intersectionality.

WHY DOES GENDER MATTER IN SOCIAL RESEARCH?

- GFR is an important tool for generating information on various aspects of life for women and men, boys and girls…identify gender issues

- GFR needed to create social change/social transformation e.g influence policymakers and contribute to gender sensitive policies that address both men's and women's needs and thus, leads to more efficient and effective policies and programs.

- Reducing bias …

    - Women (not men alone) as participants

    - Women's and men's experiences within social hierarchies

- Represents human diversity

- Uses methodologies that empower

- Addresses gaps that exist in conventional social research – short comings of gender insensitive research …..

Shortcomings of Gender Insensitive Research

- Exclusion of sex and gender as variables in research

- Assumptions about gender neutrality and the consequent failure to provide gender-sensitive data

- Treating sex and gender as the same thing – sex disaggregation is not enough – there is need to understand the position of women and the conditions of the men and women.

- Failing to disaggregate data based on sex

- Failing to analyze sex-disaggregated data

- Failing to report the results of sex-disaggregated data analyses

- Treating sex like any other variable and failing to put it into context …sexism in social research

SEXISM IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

- Sexism is a belief or attitude that one gender or sex is inferior to, less competent, or less valuable than the other… hatred of or prejudice towards either sex, or the application of stereotypes….

- Androcentricity: system of thought centered around male identity and values.

- Gender insensitivity: ignoring sex as a socially important category/variable

- Over generalization: deal with one sex but present the study as if it were applicable to both.

- Double standards: hypocrisy in action

- Sex appropriation: human traits or attributes are assigned to one sex.

- Familism: treat family as the smallest unit of analysis & that it is uniformly affected by some situation.
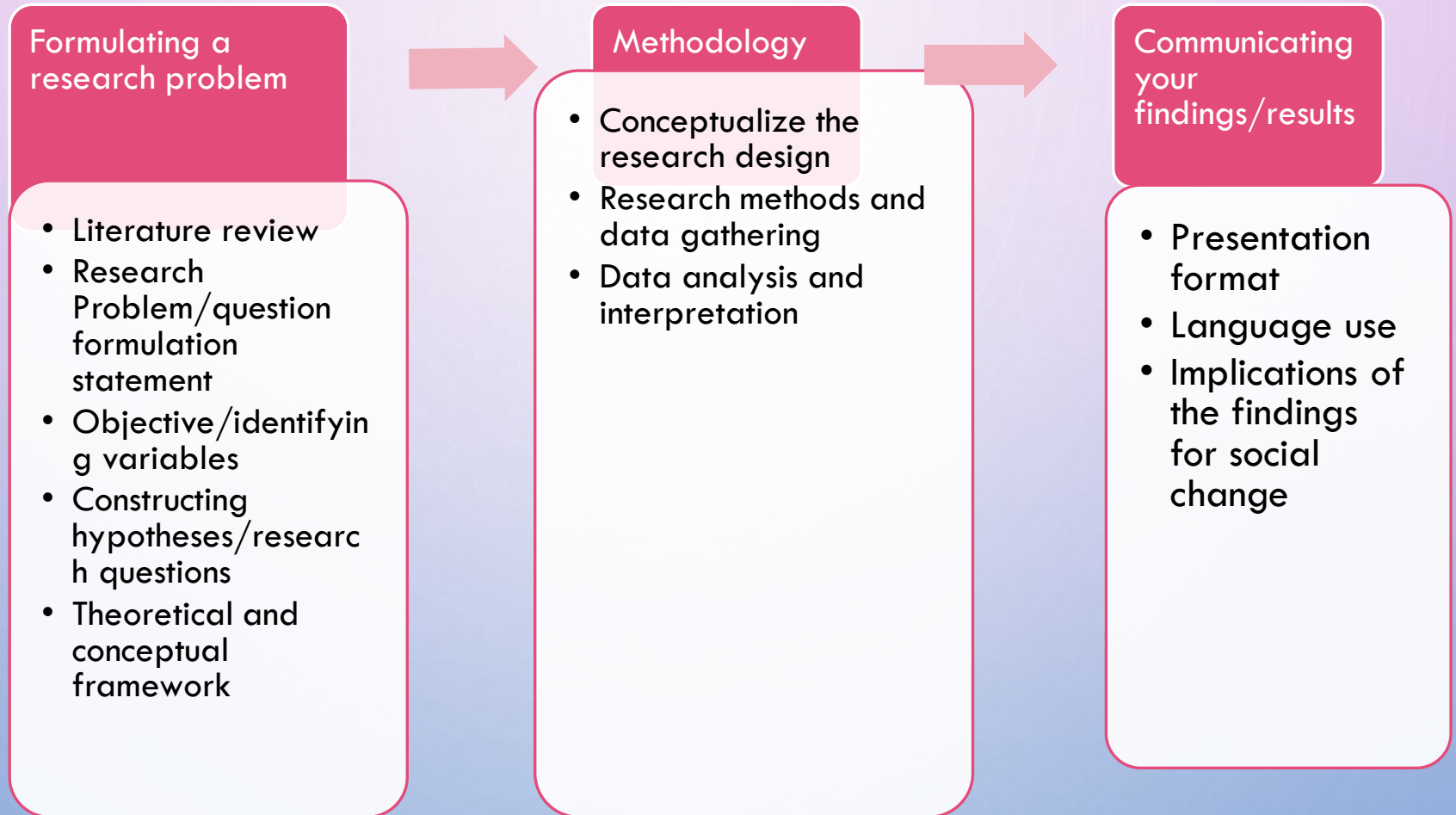
CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER FOCUSED RESEARCH

o **Gender analysis…..:** **Gender roles and relations**

o **Gender vs. Women:** getting the definitions straight.

o **Inclusion and diversity…** paying special attention to the voices of marginalized groups.

o Doing research that empowers women (and men) - bottom-up research techniques

o **Critique of standard science and social science** research theories and methods

o **Inter-disciplinarity**

o **Analysis of power hierarchies**

o **"non-traditional" qualitative research methods**

o **Research as political action…research as** a form of political advocacy to create social change/gender transformation

INCLUSION OF SEX AND GENDER VARIABLES …

- The exclusion of sex and gender as variables in any type of research is a serious omission that leads to problems of validity and generalizability

- Has implications for development policy and programming …may not address the needs of men, women and children –boys/girls

ENGENDERING SOCIAL RESEARCH

Formulating a research problem

- Literature review
- Research Problem/question formulation statement
- Objective/identifying variables
- Constructing hypotheses/research questions
- Theoretical and conceptual framework

Methodology

- Conceptualize the research design
- Research methods and data gathering
- Data analysis and interpretation

Communicating your findings/results

- Presentation format
- Language use
- Implications of the findings for social change

- Choosing the research topic and objectives
  - What is the gender question/issue? Who are the stakeholders/for whom will the research be useful?

ENGENDERING SOCIAL RESEARCH

KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER AT EACH STAGE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

LITERATURE REVIEW…THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Does the phenomenon under consideration affect both sexes?.

- In the studies being reviewed – has the role of women and men been given adequate attention – eg studies on family roles and reproduction

- Does the literature address issues of diversity among women and men? – Intersectionality lens?

- Does the literature provide information on two sexes? What sex and gender disaggregated data is available of the topic? Is the data qualitative or quantitative?

- Is the language used gender-neutral or does it reinforce gender roles and stereotypes?

- Define a conceptual framework reflecting men's and women's experiences

- Use inclusive definitions of concepts; avoid male bias, prejudices and generalizations…sexism

- What type of measurements will best capture this data?

- Are there previous research projects that examine the topic? What measurements were used for those projects? Why are your indicators similar/different?

Research Problem And Question Formulation

- Provide a background that takes into account
  - Whom does the issue currently affect? How does the issue affect men and women differently?
  - How have women and men already taken action to address this issue?
  - Who will be affected by this research? How will this research affect men and women differently?
  - What previous research has been conducted on the topic? Did that research take gender dimensions into consideration?
  - What sex and gender disaggregated data is available on the topic?

Formulating Research Questions/Hypothesis

- Does the research question exclude one sex…

- Does the research question exclude one sex in areas that are usually seen relevant to the other e.g SRH, SGBV issues

- Does the research question take the male as the norm for both sexes

- Does the research question take the family or household as the basic analytical unit

- Does the research question assume that men and women are homogeneous groups

RESEARCH DESIGN & APPROACH

- If the phenomenon under investigation affects both sexes, does the research design adequately represent both sexes?

- Of the major variables examined in the study, are they equally relevant to men and women?

- Does the study take into account the potentially different life situations of men and women?

- Is the same research focus, method or approach used for both females and males?

- Is the sex of all participants in the study, reported and controlled for?

- For issues that deal with family or household

    - Explore the differences in experiences of all the members

- What is the research approach – quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods?

Research Methods And Data Gathering

- Develop a gender sensitive methodology

  - Single or multiple methods? Are the methods empowering or disempowering?

- How is the representation and participation of men and women in the study?

- Has the research instrument been validated on diverse groups of both sexes?

- How gender sensitive are the instruments/tools - do the research instruments take one sex as the norm for both sexes

- Are opinions asked of one sex about the other treated as fact rather than opinion?

- Are the same coding procedures used for males and females

Gender Sensitivity In Data Collection

- Power relationships
    - Reciprocity…offer some favours/support
    - Collaboration/collaborative
- The sex of the interviewer…men interviewing women and vise versa
- The research environment…impact of gender on the research process
- Dynamics of researching sensitive issues ….Preparing for flashback experiences
- Understanding participants social location - women's/men's social location, age…gender enactments

Data Analysis And Interpretation

- If only one sex is being considered, are conclusions nevertheless drawn in general terms?

- Are data interpreted by taking one sex as the norm?

- Have the potentially different implications for the two sexes been made explicit?

- Are gender roles or identities presented in absolute or specific terms? Are stereotypes perpetuated?

- Is equal attention given to female and male responses?

- Anticipate impacts of new policies or practices on men and women---for social transformation

- Use and produce gender disaggregated data and conduct a gender analysis

TYPES OF INFORMATION/DATA

Sex disaggregated data

Reveals if there are differences between women and men, boys and girls on a specific issue e.g. boys enrolment in school is higher than girls

Information or data on specific issues where a specific gender disparity is known to exist e.g. hrs of sleep/leisure, unpaid work, violence against women etc

Gender statistics

Gender analytical information

Provides information about what the cause of the difference is, and how to address it e.g. girls are expected to stay at home and help with more house responsibilities thus having a lower enrolment rate

REPORTING/COMMUNICATING YOUR RESULTS

- Priority for GFR – social change
    - Clear articulation of findings is critical
    - Take different forms – depending on audience, intended use…
        - Research report
        - Workshop presentation
        - Policy briefs
        - Academic articles
- Key issues for consideration…..
    - Use of the findings, target audience, the message, accessibility of the findings/strategies to reach men and women etc
    - Highlight the gender dimension
    - Using gender sensitive language in the research report
    - Advocating for gender sensitive practices….
    - Reflexivity and lessons learnt … acknowledging own bias

Women's Representation In Research And Publishing

- Women representation in research and publication…globally and Uganda in particular

- Factors that explain the status

- What is needed to have more women in research

Checklist for Gender Sensitive Research

1. Identify the human and social components of the research object
2. Define a conceptual framework reflecting men's and women's experiences
3. Avoid male bias, prejudices and double standards
4. Develop a gender sensitive methodology
5. Build a gender balanced research team
6. Choose a gender balanced sample
7. Give value to both men's and women's experiences
8. Use and produce gender disaggregated data
9. Conduct a gender analysis
10. Anticipate impacts of new policies or practices on men and women
11. Use gender sensitive language in the research report
12. Acknowledge our own bias

GENDER AND SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

- SWEP as GFR share common concerns…commitment to social change and creation of an equal and just society

- Gender sensitivity is therefore critical to social work education and practice

- Requires integration of gender in the curriculum content

- Use of pedagogical styles that allow for;

  - Self reflection and critical thinking

  - Reduction of marginalization of women and minorities in class and privileging of male dominance

  - Recognition of differences and eliminate sexism

  - Students deconstruct the cultural representations of gender norms that are stereotypical and discriminatory

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Most methods of research can be used to attain gender sensitive results and outcomes

- Gender focused research assumes that knowledge is socially constructed.

- Developing the most accurate and complete "knowledge" requires use of methods that reveal and embrace diversity of social experience.