

TOPIC: What is “gender analysis”?

Conceptual rating: BASIC to INTERMEDIATE level

Suggested module objectives:

- 1) establish an analytical foundation for a deeper gender analysis
- 2) relate theoretical discussion to daily lives of audience in order to demonstrate relevance and cultivate the audience’s interest and confidence for further learning

Key concepts:

- 1) The difference between “sex” and “gender” – the difference between biological and socially-constructed identity.
- 2) The difference between looking exclusively at females and a gender analysis.
- 3) A gender analysis can take many forms. The framework offered here takes four “cross sections” of life: the level of observation of trends and conditions in people’s every day lives; the level of policies and institutions that affect those observed trends and conditions; the level of theory that informs or explains those policies; the level of goals, values, social and cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices that influence the other levels....
- 4) Examples of economic questions and issues that would be explored at each of these four levels. (Providing an analytical framework that gets further developed in Module 3.)

Cross-references:

- **Link with Module 3:** Gender and Macroeconomic Policy. This applies the questions in Module 2 to probe neo-classical economic theory and policies.
- **Link with Module 13:** IFI rationale and consequences for not using feminist gendered macroeconomic policies. Option A in this module takes the framework from Module 2 and goes even deeper than Module 3 to explore the assumptions and limitations of the neoclassical framework and policy implications.

Time required: 45-60 minutes, depending on the length of the introduction

Suggested methodology: SKIT. LIVE ILLUSTRATION. Large group DISCUSSION.

Relevant readings:

- BRIDGE: Gender and Development Indicators. Cutting Edge Packs. Issue 19, July 2007 (from Day 7 CD) Available in English and French.
- BRIDGE: Putting Gender Back into the Picture: Rethinking Women's Economic Empowerment: An Overview and Bibliography. 2007, Emily Esplen with Alyson Brody.
- Francisco, Gigi, "Matrix of Assumptions & Issues: Women, Economy and Trade-Intensification".
- Iniciativa Cartagena Feminista. In search of an alternative development paradigm: feminist proposals from Latin America.
- Riley, Maria, 2003, "Gender Analysis", IGTN.
- Schneider, Geoff and Shackelford, Jean, "Ten Principles of Feminist Economics: A Modestly Proposed Antidote" (www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/gschnedr/FemPrpcpls.htm).
- Sparr, Pamela, 2007, "The Onion: A Basic Analytical Framework for a Gendered Political Economic Analysis"
- Sparr, Pamela, 2002, "Basic Building Blocks for a Gender and Trade Analysis", IGTN, March 2002.
- Wroughton, Leslie "World Bank Book Asks: What About Men and Gender?" Reuters, 2006.
- "Latin America, A Pending Debate: Contributions in Economics and Politics from a Gender Perspective" www.boell-latinoamerica.org

Preparation and supplies needed:

- Newsprint pad/flip chart paper and markers to record certain parts of the discussion
- Review suggested readings, particularly "The Onion" by Pamela Sparr.
- An onion
- If you are doing a sex and gender skit, prepare slips of paper with a few sample situations and brief dialogue. The slips should identify the character(s) involved – generally no more than 2 per skit to keep it simple. Situations should sharply but **implicitly** illustrate a trait that is biological or a trait/condition that is socially-constructed, using examples that resonate for your cultural context. If you decide to do one or more short skits to introduce these concepts, decide in advance whether you will ask for spontaneous volunteers from the audience to perform them, or whether you will arrange in advance who will do this.

Here is an example that touches on both terms:

Characters: 2 grandmothers.

Situation: they're talking on the street.

Sample dialogue: One says – “My grandson is really growing up – his voice has gotten lower since I last saw him! The other: “Is that so! My eldest granddaughter is growing up, too – she’s learning how to make (the name of some special food) so she’ll be a good wife!

Points for the facilitator to draw out in de-brief of this skit: voice change is a biological trait – an aspect of one’s sexual identity.

Learning how to be a good cook is a socially-prescribed trait – an aspect of gender roles, of one’s gender identity.

- *Optional*: prepare a handout with names and contact information for individuals, groups, government bodies that are engaged in gender analysis in your country or region. Include resources for further reading.

Suggested content to be covered:

- The difference between the meaning of “sex” (a biological category) and “gender” (a socially constructed category).
- A gender analysis examines trends and conditions in the lives of males and females and gaps or inequalities between males and females. It examines power relationships between males and females in several dimensions such as social, economic, political. It can be done at the individual, household, community, national, regional and global levels. There is often confusion over this – mistakenly conflating an analysis that looks exclusively at women with a gender analysis.
- Some people make a distinction between a gender analysis and a “feminist” gender analysis to highlight differences in political assumptions. For example, some neo-classical microeconomic policies and theories explain discrimination and differences in male/female behavior (e.g. persistent wage gaps and the sexual division of labor) as the product of rational choices and do not challenge existing economic, social, or political inequalities. It assumes them. (See the Schneider and Shackleford article for a discussion of this.) A feminist analysis, on the other hand, challenges the inequalities and the power dynamics that produce them. It does not treat inequality as “outside” the economic system, but takes it as a dimension of the economy that must be understood.
- There are many ways to do a gender analysis, and many levels from which to do it. Suggest using “The Onion” by Sparr (2007) to describe the levels from a political-economic perspective. The first two columns in Francisco’s matrix provide other examples for the economic theory level of the Onion and some “teasers” re: alternative assumptions which will be covered more in Module 3.

Description of how to conduct the session:

1. Welcome by host group(s) and introduction of facilitator(s); provide any needed logistical information; outline goals for session.
2. Depending on size of group, invite participants to introduce themselves, share an expectation or question they bring. (Record expectations or questions on newsprint, if you are doing this step, and refer to them throughout the session.)
3. **SKITs OR LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION** (method depends on background of audience). If the audience is knowledgeable, ask them to supply quick definitions of “sex” and “gender”. Set up the live illustration by briefly mentioning what a gender analysis is and include a definition of a “feminist” gender analysis, if appropriate. If the group’s energy is low, or participants have not been exposed to thinking about socially constructed categories, consider short skits to introduce the definitions of sex and gender and launch the workshop. If one or more short skits will be performed, ask for volunteers (if you have not made arrangements in advance.)
4. **LIVE ILLUSTRATION and LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION.** Show the group an onion. Ask them to describe its essence. (It exists in layers that you peel away.) Talk about the fact that our lives, the world, reality can be seen as existing in layers. A gender analysis helps us to understand those layers. Invite the group to identify the layers of a political-economic analysis:
 - a) outer most – what are the major aspects of individuals’ lives in a particular country that could be readily seen by an outside observer? Record on newsprint the group’s answers. Work with the group to transform their ideas into examples of questions or issues that someone looking at inequalities and power dynamics between males and females might ask, might explore. (particularly if they were interested in economic issues). *When you are through with this, peel away that layer of the onion.*
 - b) Second layer – what policies (by governments, institutions, businesses) contribute to these conditions, these outcomes (in terms of trends and conditions for males and females). Refer back to the questions or issues mentioned in “a” and identify examples of policies and the policy-making actor(s). Before going to the next layer, make sure the group is clear about what a gender analysis of some of these policies would look like. *When you are through with this, peel away that layer of the onion.*
 - c) Third layer – what are the economic theories that informed the making of these policies? (If the audience has little or no exposure to neoclassical economics, this section will require the facilitator to provide more material, as appropriate.) *When you are through with this, peel away that layer of the onion.*

- d) Fourth layer – what are the values or goals behind the theories? Even if an audience has no formal training in neo-classical theory, people generally have enough life experience with businesses and the impact of those policies to make astute and accurate observations. Also, if the facilitator lays out the theoretical material well in the third layer, the audience should be able to draw their own conclusions for this section without much help. *When you are through with this, peel away that layer of the onion.*
5. Synthesize the discussion and summarize the main points generated.
 6. Close the session by identifying individuals or groups in your country and/or region who are engaged in gender analysis at all four layers of the onion. If appropriate, distribute a handout with contacts and suggestions for further reading.
 7. If this is part of a larger economic literacy effort, link this session to the next one. Provide logistical details related to the next session, as appropriate. Thank the audience for their participation.

Ideas for alternative methodologies/modification of the level of discussion:

- **VISUAL MAP.** For the sex vs. gender definitional discussion, create a 4 cell grid on newsprint with the two columns being “sex” and “gender” and the two rows being “male” and “female”. Invite the participants to brainstorm examples of qualities that you would write in each appropriate cell. (e.g. facial hair – for males under the “sex” column; physical bravery – for males in the “gender” column)
- For an **intermediate-to-advanced audience**, focus the session on one or both of the following elements:
 - a) Unpack the gendered assumptions behind neo-classical economic theory to illustrate a feminist gendered analysis of the theory. Use this as a launch pad for module 3 on gender and macroeconomics or blend this module with Module 3. Draw more heavily on the Francisco matrix, the Schneider and Shakleford article, and articles mentioned in Module 3.
 - b) Pick an area of special interest to the audience, like debt, trade, budgets, agriculture, etc. and use that as a case study for illustrating how one would go about doing a more specialized gender analysis.
- If the participants are **development practitioners, advocates, or activists**, consider spending a significant amount of time talking about the work being done at one or more levels of “the onion” in your country and/or internationally.

Some useful organizations or websites related to this topic:

- www.bridge.uds.ac.uk The Institute of Development Studies in England is a leading source of excellent gender and development research.
- www.dawnnet.org This is the website for a global network of Southern feminist female researchers, academics and activists. This is another leading source for obtaining progressive, comprehensive gender analyses on a range of development topics.
- www.oecd.org This website contains a comprehensive data base of statistics helpful for doing gender analyses.
- www.siyanda.org Comprehensive on-line database of gender and development materials produced from all around the world for activists, policy-makers, development professionals. Recommend to search “gender analysis” and “men and masculinity”. This is a sister site to BRIDGE (www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/bridge/).
- www.unifem.org The primary body within the UN system advancing gender analysis and development practice. Excellent source of analyses, practical tools, and data.
- www.unrisd.org-- UN Research Institute for Social Development. A great resource of academic research, applying gender analysis to various topics.