Paper Title: Queering Social Profiling and Impact Assessment

Arn Sauer

Abstract

Social Impact Assessment's (SIA) focus on social groups consisting solely of women, aged, persons with disabilities, children, youth and ethnicity, needs to be challenged. In my conference contribution I will therefore present a critique of insider/outsider groups from a queer perspective and make suggestions for their transversal inclusion in current SIA activities, as already practised within various SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) strategies. It is evident that the many internationally applied forms of impact assessment need to engage in a more vivid dialogue on principles, standards and practices, e.g. about the evolution of a diversity-comprising policy analysis to increase acceptance and effectiveness of both policies and tools.

Queering Social Profiling and Impact Assessment

Profiling is the collection of social baseline data in the course of SIAs in order to allow the evaluation and audit of the impact assessment process and the planned intervention itself (Vanclay 2003, 8). It asks the question: who are the people that will be affected by the proposed intervention? Further activities comprised in a proper SIA according to the international standards of impact assessment are the identification of interested and affected groups and the facilitation and coordination of participating stakeholders (IAIA 2003, 4). This dismantling exercise enables us to bring various affected groups into focus and producing more accurate and effective assessment results. Thereby:

> *[…] awareness of the differential distribution of impacts among different groups in society, and particularly the impact burden experienced by vulnerable groups in the community, is of prime concern.* (Vanclay 2003, 3)

Vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, and the poor (WHO 2009) or women (Sabarwal et al. 2009) are most often represented as marginalized entities (Becker 2009) that are not further investigated or broken down according to additional intersectional categories or overlapping exposure to discrimination or states of affectedness (Crenshaw 1989).

This is where queer theory and the heterosexual matrix (Butler 1990) come into play. The heterosexual matrix describes heterosexuality as the underlying principle that constructs society at large, normalizing its institutions and social practices. As such, heteronormativity depicts the widely unreflected and unchallenged notion that social relations are shaped by heterosexual men and women only. There is little acknowledgement to overt discrimination of different sexualities such as lived by gays, lesbians, bisexuals or different gender identities such as transgender or transsexual. LGBTIQ Individuals are usually subsumed under the categories of "sexual orientation" and "gender identity", and are widely discriminated against in legal and social status, access to rights, representation, property, social and health services in the global South and North. Transgender/transsexual and intersex people are commonly included in the LGBTIQ movement although not always represented appropriately (Sauer 2009, 10). Intersex people are, especially in the global North, heavily confined to fitting into the existing heteronormative system of clearly identifiable and definable women and men, being exposed to early childhood hormone treatments and enforced genital surgeries (Sauer 2009, 10). I ask, how can SIA take a real *proactive stance for social development* and making the *identification and amelioration of negative outcomes* (Vanclay 2005, 1) if it persists in privileging heterosexual structures?

SIA theorists and practitioners alike could benefit from the deconstructivist queer-feminist infusion of the dimension of "sexuality," paying attention to the sex-gender-sexuality triangle. In this context a clear perception and separation of identity and sexuality is important. Queer theorists have claimed for the past twenty years that the category "homosexuality", that soon shaped a particular western identity concept, was too narrow to include the full spectrum of lived sexualities (Stryker et al. 2006), producing just as many exclusions as the category "heterosexuality" (Butler 1990). The particular value of queer theory was to dis-entangle the oppressiveness homonormative regimes in addition to the omni-present heteronormative structure of societies. In the postcolonial contexts debates on the "subaltern" (Spivak 1990), marking the disempowered other, criticize the dominance and view points of western culture within the international LGBTI movement, which originated in the global North. They blame western LGBTI activists and theorists for their unacknowledged situatedness of knowledge (Haraway 1988), creating new homo-normative systems unreflective of hegemonic positions of power

'IAIA10 Conference Proceedings'
The Role of Impact Assessment in *Transitioning to the Green Economy*
30th Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment
6-11 April 2010, International Conference Centre Geneva - Switzerland (www.iaia.org)

such as whiteness, masculinity, colonialism, capital etc. while raising questions of representation and participation. With regards to universal human rights and (gender) equality, queer and postcolonial theorists such as Butler (1990), Spivak (1990), Haritaworn (2007) or Koyama (2006) refute the western rhetoric of liberation, which has generally imitated the paternalistic rhetoric of women's liberation, as applied by the international LGBTI movement. In doing so, they disparage all normalizing women's as well as LGBTI movements, whose liberationist agendas were too often marked by unacknowledged advocacy of the individual (vs. communal), identity (vs. conduct), family (vs. new concepts of family or intimate networks) and/or nation (vs. global citizenship).

Although postcolonial queer theory distrusts simplistic dual notions in general, in the realm of SIA it makes sense to maintain the divide in methodological approaches, as suggested by Vanclay (2002), between developed/colonizing and developing/colonized countries. Queering social profiling in this context means to culturally sensitively unravel local power relations and the self-labeling and construction of local and indigenous communities, and respecting LGBTIQ self-identification by empowering such local groups and involve them in the impact assessment processes. The involvement can take participatory forms through conducting stakeholder consultations but is by no means limited to it.

Consulting such so called "subaltern groups" in the global South (Spivak 1990), in matters where a social relevance through a gender and LSBTIQ sensitive perspective is attested, it must be assured that the consulting practitioner is aware of his/her privileges. On the one hand and his/her understanding of LGBTIQ groups must be a self-reflecting one, and shall not be shaped by western hegemonic homo-normative concepts of identity and sexuality on the other hand either. Here, queer and transgender theorists have been laying the ground work for an intersectional LGBTIQ analysis that, in combination with reflexivity and insider knowledge, will be able to identify when it is necessary to "queer" the process of social profiling:

> With each new intersection, new connections emerge and previously hidden exclusions come to light. The feminist scholar merely needs to 'ask (an) other question' and her research will take on a new and often surprising turn. She can begin to tease out the linkages between additional categories, explore the consequences for relations of power, and, of course, decide when another 'question' is needed or when it is time to stop and why. Intersectionality offers endless opportunities for interrogating one's own blind spots and transforming them into analytic resources for further critical analysis. In short, intersectionality, by virtue of its vagueness and inherent open-endedness, initiates a process of discovery which not only is potentially interminable, but promises to yield new and more comprehensive and reflexively critical insights. (Davis 2008, 77)

LGBTIQ groups have been discovered in a queer academic context as theorized political subjectivities. Thereby, they have been rendered "visible", whereas they were formerly "unseen", occupying social spaces outside their communities, based on their different gender representation, sexuality and identity. In the realm of development studies, development theorists and SIA practitioners alike continue to ignore such intersectional ways of validating and including the needs and experiences of LGBTI groups in their analysis and approaches.

Even the analysis tools applied in the gender mainstreaming context tend to make only the categories of gender and sex (Sauer 2009) and not sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) visible, perpetrating oppressive patterns and reiterating heteronormative settings. It is worth it, however, to ask "that other question". E.g. Women`s Health Victoria found higher obesity rates among lesbian women and therefore attests that it is necessary to:

> "Challenge discrimination experienced by samesex attracted women, Indigenous Australian women and women from CALD [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds] backgrounds. Programs and policies to increase women's participation in regular physical activity need to challenge prevalent community attitudes to certain groups of women in the Australian population. This may contribute to breaking down the barriers some women experience and ensuring all women have the opportunity to increase their health status and wellbeing." (Women's Health Victoria 2010, 10 & 16)

This way, formerly invisible groups emerge as soon as a non-heteronormative, queer-feminist perspective is applied and enabled through analysis tools that allow for reflexivity and inclusion. Supported by postcolonial and queer concepts and intersectional methods, such as employment of less statistically oriented qualitative methods in combination with transversal participatory consultations, LSBTIQ individuals and groups are allowed to enter the process of social profiling. A perpetuation of their invisibility in Social and Gender Impact Assessments is concerning from a human rights based perspective. It serves as an example for blind spots affecting methodologies and outcomes, documenting of how SIAs are conducted today: you only see what you are looking for.

Although the practicability of intersectional ways of conducting multivariable analyses is still contested, the benefits in the social arena become immediately evident. In 2005, the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA 2005), publishing the first SOGI framework, most recently followed by the SOGI strategies of the Global Fund for the Prevention of AIDS and Malaria (Global Fund 2009) and UNAIDS (UNAIDS 2009). All organisations thereby acknowledge the importance to include those formerly outsider groups, the stigmatized and criminalized ones, in order to not only deliver on the human-rights promise, but also to create a stronger basis for sustainable communities, more stabile democratisation processes and last but not least growth and prosperity. Esp. with regards to the disastrous consequences of the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic for health systems, intergenerational family structures, labour markets and in sum the stability and future of democracies and nations, those outsider groups must be turned into insider groups in order to benefit their societies at large:

> *To progress in this area it is crucial to rethink issues around social, economic and cultural equity, gender equality, masculinities, femininities and SRHR [AS: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights] as a totality, in order to avoid the risk that LGBT issues become an isolated pocket of acceptance and tolerance in an otherwise heteronormative discourse. Any rights, gender and sexuality policy that does not mainstream homosexuality and transgender issues has severe deficiencies in its construct and theoretical framework. There should be no reasonable argument to reduce gender to men and women only and sexuality to heterosexuality only.* (SIDA 2005, 51)

In recognizing the multiple factors that might provoke discrimination and render groups "vulnerable", SIDA is at the practical forefront of anti-discriminatory policy analysis that is reflexive of its very on hegemonic and heterosexual perspectives and pays attention to intersectional categories (not only in the stakeholder consultation process). The latest successful example was the UN analysis of international counter terrorism measures (Scheinin/United Nations 2009), which even followed a multiple transversal approach and applied gender mainstreaming by including LGTIQ groups, sex workers and migrants as target groups in a cross-cutting manor. The Global Fund recently recognized that it is not yet doing enough to reach or benefit the health and rights of men who have sex with men, transgender persons and sex workers (Seale/Global Fund 2009, 7).

Vulnerable people, such as LGTIQ individuals, who are still marginalized or criminalized in large parts of the world, have a limited ability to influence national funding priorities, funding allocations, and program designs. The disavowal of not only gender identity through social relationships (Johnson 2007), but also sexual orientation has not yet trickled from international SOGI strategies in the HIV/AIDS context (Global Fund, 2009; UNAIDS 2009) into the mainstream of social and in particular gender impact assessment. Queering social profiling is therefore just the starting point in advancing SIA. The inherent heterosexual and gender norms of all steps and procedures should be reflected upon and counteracted in a truly systemic and integral way (Sauer 2008, 12), if practitioners take their own ethical and human rights-based sets of principles and values seriously (Vanclay 2003, 9):

> *The role of SIA goes far beyond the ex-ante (in advance) prediction of adverse impacts and determination of who wins and who looses: SIA also encompasses empowerment of local people; enhancement of the position of women, minority groups and other disadvantaged members of society, development of capacity building; alleviation of all forms of dependency; increase in equity; and a focus on poverty reduction. (Vanclay 2003, 3)*

Applying a queer and gender lens in not only the profiling but rather in the whole SIA process while using reflexive non-hegemonizing methods means doing science from below (Harding 2008) and would assist the advancement of SIA as a true "philosophy of […] democracy" (Vanclay 2002, 388). Please allow me to give you some examples of where mainstreaming LGBTIQ issues would be relevant:

Certain widely applied social assessment categories are particularly susceptible to heteronormativity and LGBTIQ exclusion. Units such as "households" make the individual invisible, pose certain assumptions on their composition and the leadership/provider roles, which are generically patriarchal and heterosexual. Thereby, frequently occurring same sex compositions of households are neglected and made invisible. The division of gender roles, labour and responsibilities in households is usually organised around questions of reproduction, access to the labour market, income, care work etc. but in principle, does not include the organisation of sexuality.

"Family" is yet another entity that hides individual experiences and so far is thought of in heteronormative terms only. This fires back to LGBTI individuals in two ways. One, LGBTIQ persons are at high and immediate risk of exclusion from their families being rejected on moral and/or religious grounds for their sexuality or gender representation. Their expulsion from (heteronormative) family structures falsifies assessment results and does not serve their needs:

I'd rather just tell people I'm an orphan or, you know, my parents are dead because they are as good as […]. They never come and see me, they never, they're not there for me, they don't do the parent thing anymore […]. (cited after Johnson 2007, 57).

Two, the heterosexual notion of familiy neglects to acknowledge the reproductive rights and health of lesbian mothers, gay fathers (Berkowitz/Marsiglio 2007) and transgender/transsexual parents. LGBTIQ individuals also form so called "rainbow families," but are usually subsumed under single mothers and fathers on legal grounds (non existence of same sex marriage/partnerships solutions), and therefore made invisible. In this context the category "women and children" should also be mentioned as a problematic approach in itself, because it assumes the solely responsibility and representation of children with their mothers and leaves out families consisting of (gay) fathers only.

All encompassing categories such as "citizens" come with their pitfalls. The notion of citizenship explicitly excludes transgender and intersex people who do not identify as neither male nor female and rather claim a third sex identity. Additionally, for many transgender and transsexual people worldwide, access to official identification in their appropriate gender is barred due to transphobia and lack of governmental regulation. They are deprived of their citizenship rights and, similar to many women in some countries, pushed into spheres of non-existence. The severe consequence of non-citizenship is underlined by the following example:

The Egyptian Center for Women's Rights assisted about 60,000 poor Egyptian women and girls to obtain their identity cards. With this documentation, these women have been able to claim all the rights that citizenship entails, such as rights to: services (e.g., health, education, poverty assistance); legal recourse; and resources, such as credit. It has also enabled them to have voice in the decisions that affect their lives, such as voting in elections (World Bank 2006, 2).

SIA practitioners, who prefer to work with the concept of "community" rather than citizenship or nation state, also pick a potentially problematic category with regards to LGBTIQ groups. More than 80 countries (ILGA 2009; U.S. Department of State 2009) do not acknowledge the existence of their LGBTIQ members and/or citizens and discriminate against them in their laws and regulations. Their local communities often don't pay attention to particular LGBTIQ needs. They exclude such members from participation and decision making. Their deviating sexuality or gender identity render them unprotected and they are criminalised and penalized by the very communities that should represent their social support and network (Sauer 2009, 9).

But there are also fruitful correlations. Some intersex phenomenon are anthologised and subsumed under forms of "disability". Although intersex in a movement and non-pathologizing context cannot be subsumed under disabled in general, there are varied and overlapping moments through sharing analysis and strategies by interrogating social and medical norms that either enforce undesired or hinder access to desired medical and surgical interventions. Their rights to informed consent and self-determination in treatment are often violated for disabled and intersex persons. Apart from the pathologizing transgender and intersex people, the health sector is severely undeserving LGBTIQ individuals in general.

However a change in perspective and methods is underway. In its Gender and Development Briefing Notes developed by its Gender and Development Group in 2006, the World Bank included the following question with regards to the relationship of gender equality governance structures:

How do legal and judicial systems improve the socio-economic and legal status not only of (heterosexual) women and men, but also of LGBTIQ members of society? How effectively do the legal and justice sectors address their status and protection under the law? (World Bank 2006, 1)

Posing such questions is undoubtedly a first, important step. Finding the answers at best through measurable progress and benchmarks is yet another one. The question of indicators is neither easy nor objective. Most indicators including gender indicators contain heterosexual bias. The GenderStats established by the World Bank e.g. assess according to adolescence fertility rate, age of first marriage, contraceptives prevalence or female headed households, all of which are based upon a hetero-normative, procreative grid, rendering lesbian women and infertile persons, such as e.g. some intersex and/or transsexuals invisible.

Las but not least, efficiency and quality management steps should also be concerned with LGBTIQ groups and issues. Now that SIA is being harmonized and on its way to developing international standards for a *quality assurance process similar to an Environmental Management System (ISO 14000)* (Vanclay 2005, 1), queering social profiling and SIA methodologies constitutes a necessary extension and mandatory advancement in the process of formulating inclusive standards for SIA.

Bibliography

Berkowitz, Dana & Marsiglio, William (2007): Gay Men: Negotiating Procreative, Father, and Family Identities. In: Journal of Marriage and Family 69, p. 366–381.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble*. New York [et al.]: Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics'. *University of Chicago Legal Forum , 14*, 538-554.

Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword. *Feminist Theory , 9*(1), 67-85.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies , 14*(3), 575-599.

Harding, S. (2008). *Sciences from below : feminisms, postcolonialities and modernities*. Durham: Duke Univ Press.

Haritaworn, J. (2007). *(No) Fucking Difference?*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

International Association for Impact Assessment (2003). *Social Impact Assessment - International Principles.* URL: http://www.iaia.org/publicdocuments/special-publications/SP2.pdf (last accessed 2010-01-22).

International Lesbian and Gay Association (2009). *Lesbian and Gay Rights in the World.* URL: http://www.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_map_2009_A2.pdf (last accessed 2010-01-22).

Koyama, E. (2006). Whose Feminism is it anyway? In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Ed.), *The Transgender Studies Reader,* 698-705.

Johnson, K. (2007). Changing Sex, Changing Self. *Men and Masculinities , 10*(1), 54-70.

Sabarwal, S., Sinha, N. & Buvinic, M. (2009). *The Global Financial Crisis: Assessing Vulnerability for Women and Children.* URL: http://www.worldbank.org/financialcrisis/pdf/Women-Children-Vulnerability-March09.pdf (last accessed 2010-01-22).

Samelius, L., Wågberg, E. & Swedish International Development Agency, (2005). *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues in Development*. Stockholm: SIDA.

Sauer, A. (2008). *Gender-based Analysis (GBA): Gleichstellung in der Verwaltungspraxis in Kanada zwischen Instrumenten, Mechanismen und Controlling - neueste Entwicklungen*. Berlin: GenderKompetenzZentrum.

Sauer, A. (2009). *Regenbogen Philanthropie!*. Berlin: Dreilinden gGmbH/Forum for Active Philanthropy gGmbH.

Scheinin, M. & United Nations, (2009). *Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism. New York: United Nations.*

Seale, A. (2009). *Global Fund Strategy in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities*. Geneva: Global Fund.

Spivak, G. C. & Harasym, S. (1990). *The post-colonial critic*. New York, NY [et al.]: Routledge.

Stryker, S. & Whittle, S. (2006). *The transgender studies reader*. New York [et al.]: Routledge.

U.S. Department of State (2009). *Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity References: Human Rights Reports for 2008. Washington.*

UNAIDS (2009). *UNAIDS Action Framework: Universal Access for Men who have Sex with Men and Transgender People*. Geneva:

Vanclay, F. (2002). Social Impact Assessment. In Mostafa K. Tolba (Ed.), *Responding to Global Environmental Change,* Vol.4, 387-393. Chicester: Wiley.

Vanclay, F. (2003). International Principles for Social Impact Assessment. *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal , 21*(1), 5-11.

Vanclay, F. (2005). *Engaging Communities with Social Impact Assessment: SIA as a Social Assurance Process. URL: http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/abstracts/Vanclay-Frank-final.pdf* (last accessed 2010-01-22)*.*

Whittle, S., Turner, L., Combs, R. & Rhodes, S. (2008). *Transgender EuroStudy: Legal Survey and Focus on the Transgender Experience of Health Care.*

Women's Health Victoria (2010). *Gender Impact Assessment No. 12. Women and Physical Activity.* URL: http://whv.org.au/static/files/assets/a3b15e42/GIA_12_Physical_Activity.pdf (last accessed 2010-03-30).

World Bank; Gender and Development Group (2006). *Governance & Gender Equality.* URL: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/BriefingNoteGenderGovernance.pdf (last accessed 2010-01-22).

World Health Organization (2009). *Trade, foreign policy, diplomacy and health: Glossary. URL: http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story093/en/index.html (last accessed 2010-01-22).*