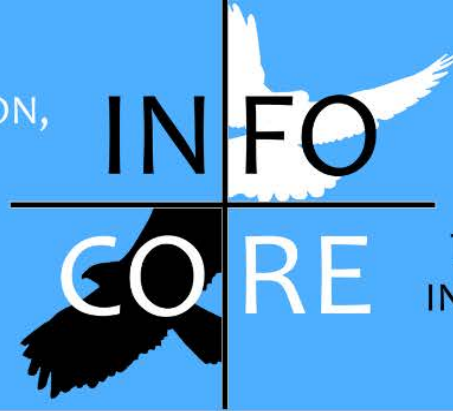


(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,  
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:



THE ROLE OF MEDIA  
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

# INFOCORE Definitions

## “Gender-Sensitive Perspective”

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### Definition: “Gender-Sensitive Perspective”

Gender sensitive research is research that takes into account ‘gender’ (male and female!) as a significant variable in — our case — *social science* research. The aims of a gender sensitive perspective in research are to **provide additional and/or even new prospects, to raise new questions, and potentially also to use new/more advanced empirical or analytical methodologies and tools** (see some examples in appendix, p. 2).

Gender sensitive research acknowledges that **men and women have different roles in public and private lives, which impact differently on the cases we investigate (war, (violent) conflict, public communication, policy/politics, agenda setting etc.)**. This includes (different and varying) power relations between men and women as well as power relations between men and society/policy/organisations/institutions etc. on the one hand and women and society/policy/organisations/institutions etc. on the other hand. **These again can heavily influence the perspective of men and women on issues, topics, problems etc. of – in our case – conflict, conflict resolution, media coverage on conflict, PR and propaganda about conflict/war etc.** Gender sensitive research also acknowledges that gendered perspectives, roles, assumptions, stereotypes etc. **vary across cultures as well as national, political and or historical contexts**. This might result in contradictory gender perspectives, roles, assumptions, stereotypes etc. in different countries as well as within one country.

Gender sensitive research **explicitly pays attention not only to the differences but also to the similarities between men and women’s experiences and viewpoints, and gives equal value to each**. The expectation is to create **a more complete picture of the research topic/question and its results/answers by combining men’s and women’s different experiences and views; this includes male and female researchers as well as men and women as research subjects**. INFOCORE has a good gender balance among its WP leaders which should assure the constant consideration of different gendered experiences/views etc.

Against this backdrop, it is most evident that gender sensitive perspective is much more than merely to consider “sex” as social demographic variable (in surveys, content analysis etc.). A commitment to gender sensitive research instead includes the acceptance of the fact that research is by any means gender neutral (cf. Ritchie, 2009). With respect to this, female and male researchers should always acknowledge their own (gendered (= usually male)<sup>1</sup> bias). **Hence, a commitment to gender sensitive research is also a commitment to pay particular attention as a researcher on the possible effects of exclusively male or exclusively female biases and patriarchal values<sup>2</sup> in research.**

Applying a gender sensitive perspective in research means to consequently integrate the gender perspective into every phase of research: (1) the identification of a certain issue/problem, (2) the definition of a specific research question, (2) the definition of a respective conceptual and analytical framework, (3) the selection/decision of/on a certain methodology, (4) the analysis of data and the interpretation of findings, and finally (5) the dissemination of results. **INFOCORE committed itself to apply a gender-sensitive perspective throughout the whole project and all its WPs.**

### References

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<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that due to the dominant culture in research and science, female researchers, too, usually follow/apply a *male* bias in their research (behavior).

<sup>2</sup> For example: high significance/estimation of a positivistic orientation (for example positivistic methodological practices), empiricism, the adequacy and validity of empirical rules and norms, competition, control etc. or the production of knowledge (science, technology) that is not useful for people in subordinate positions, that reinforces social hierarchies,

## Further Sources:

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- For **Workplace Cultures in Sciences** see → Hasse, C., & Trentemøller, S. (2008). Break the pattern! A critical enquiry into three scientific workplace cultures: Hercules, caretakers and worker bees. Tartu: Tartu University Press.
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- For **Lack of Support** see → Connolly, S., & Fuchs, S. (2009). Analysing the leaky pipeline in academia. In European Commission (ed.), Women in science and technology. Creating sustainable careers (pp. 59-68). Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

## Appendix

### Methodological considerations (examples):

- Due to lower alphabetization rates of women in developing countries one could decide to survey women with a face-to-face interview while men can be reached through a paper and pencil (or even online) do-it-yourself questionnaire. When conducting face-to-face interviews of focus groups the following (empirically proven facts) should be considered: (1) Women pay more attention to body language than men (bias); (2) women judge emotions from nonverbal communication better than men do; (3) in contrast to men, women anticipate negative consequences for expressing anger and aggression etc.
- Gender sensitive formulations of a questionnaire: Besides the usage of gender neutral (and/or both genders including language)<sup>3</sup> the avoidance of terms/terminologies which might mislead interviewees – for example correctly “sexual harassment” or “rape” instead of “sex attac” (these are rather simple examples; the whole issue might be more complex according to a concrete topic or field of research).
- Different (culturally determined) expectations (of male and female researchers) regarding the possible differences of social desirability behavior of male and female interviewees.
- Content analysis: Consideration of gender typical role attributions in conflict (for example “murderer”: female role attribution = murder committed in self-defense (“victim” as stereotype), male role attribution = murder committed as a result of pure aggression, greed, drive (“offender” as stereotype). Or: considering ALL gender typical role attributions when investigating on the framing of women and their experiences during war as a “reproductive force”. This includes not only the depiction of women as ‘nurses’. The ‘reproductive force’ frame also becomes apparent through the topic of sexual relationships with enemy soldiers or of prostitution (not to be mixed with “sexual relationships with enemy soldiers”!).
- Consideration of particular gender sensitive security concerns; for example the decision for and selection of gender sensitive environments for qualitative surveys/focus groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Gender-specific: fireman, stewardess, chairman; businessman → gender-neutral: firefighter, flight attendant, chairperson (or chair), businessperson; the usage of both gender-specific terms: actor and actress. Gender-neutral language may also involve the avoidance of gender-specific pronouns, such as he, when the gender of the person referred to is unknown; they may be replaced with gender-neutral pronouns (for example in English: “he or she”, “s/he” etc.).