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Author: Arn Sauer, MA

Email: [arn.sauer@gmx.net](mailto:arn.sauer@gmx.net)

Short Bio: Arn Sauer is currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for transdisciplinary Gender Studies (ZtG) at Humboldt University Berlin. He works as an academic researcher for the GenderCompetencyCenter at the Faculty of Law, Humboldt University, and is also a member of the SIA working group of the International Association for Impact Assessment.

## **Paper Title: Intersectional Queer Challenges to E/SIA**

Most forms of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) conducted as part of Environmental Impact Assessment (ESIA)<sup>1</sup> focus on the needs of seemingly coherent social groups, so-called “communities.” In applications of a gender lens in assessment methods such as Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) or other forms of gender analysis of the social, it has become evident that men and women are exposed to and confront social, economic and environmental realities in different ways. These approaches, in turn, shape their local responses to societal and environmental changes. Their ways of participating in society and decision-making are interrelated not only with location, age, socio-economic class or culture, but also with sexuality and (gender) identity. Queer and postcolonial theoretical interventions pose intersectional challenges to the notions of vulnerability and development of sustainable societies in sustainable environments, notions which currently fail to integrate desire, sexuality and identity into gender and/or social analysis on a global scale.

The theoretical introduction of this paper examines why and how concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) can encourage an inexact and overly broad understanding of the social. This intersectional and queer critique of the social is also applicable to the notion of “community,” the holy grail of social impact practitioners. In a second step, I will consider how these categories of analysis can possibly be made fertile for E/SIA. In conclusion, I will supply some very recent examples of good practice and present, as well, potentially problematic categories of E/SIA analysis with regards to LGBTIQ.

### **The Bio-physical is the Social is the Gendered is the Sexed?**

I want to begin with a confession, an admittance of a strong belief or credo, if you will, and thereby position myself in the company of SIA theorists such as Roel Slootweg, Frank Vanclay and Marlies van Schooten: “[...] *all impacts are human impacts. [...] it makes no sense to separate the biophysical from the social environment*” (Slootweg et al. 2001: 27). Social analysis, therefore, which takes into account the size and social structure of the local population, their needs, wishes, skills and capacity, as well as an assessment of the population's health status, is required within the framework of Environmental Impact Assessment, which can be described

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this paper, I distinguish the social analysis part of ESIA from the environmental part by introducing a slash into the acronym (E/SIA), since the environmental impacts are not the core concern of this article.

as an integrated process “[...] of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made” (IAIA 1999: 2). Social impacts, in particular, are defined as the “social consequences of development” (Vanclay 2003: 6), without further explanation of what the social really is, thus prompting the question: What exactly constitutes the social?

This core question lies at the bottom of numerous philosophical debates around this undefined concept, according to which the content, value, or boundaries of application can vary according to context or conditions, instead of being fixed once and for all. “Social,” to the common understanding, refers to characteristics of living organisms (mainly humans, although biologists and cultural scientists apply the term to populations of other animals). Central to the concept of the social is the interaction of (human) organisms with other (human) organisms and their collective co-existence, irrespective of whether they are aware of it or not, and irrespective of whether the interaction is voluntary or involuntary. This very interaction causes the interrelatedness of humans that is codified in the word “social” and that is traceable in the origin of the word. The concept entered English through the middle French usage of the Latin word “sociālis,” meaning “belonging to a companion or companionship or association.” In short, inherent to the concept of “social” are people, more than one person, and the relations they maintain. Who those “people” are, however, remains undefined.

One attempt to break down the “social” and people in general into detailed units more suitable for analysis and more accurate in its results, is the introduction of the concept of gender, which looks at the diverging roles men and women inhabit in societies. The strategy of gender mainstreaming (GM) was invented during the post-Nairobi process and signed onto internationally (e.g. by all EU member states) at the 4th World Women’s Conference in Beijing, in a statement widely known as the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Women (UN 1995). GM was introduced in order to address and develop countermeasures for the different social realities men and women experience in our societies. In the post-Beijing GM implementation phase, many assessment tools have been created internationally to tackle gender inequality and strive for equitable and sustainable development, also with regards to the environment. The Johannesburg Declaration, for example, states:

*We are committed to ensuring that women's empowerment, emancipation and gender equality are integrated in all the activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the Millennium development goals and the Plan of Implementation of the Summit.* (Johannesburg Declaration of Sustainable Development 2002, 20)

But is a gendered conceptualisation of the social sufficient for a full understanding of the range of human interactions and their susceptibility to their environments and eco-systems? In this paper, I argue that an adequate analysis of the social inside and outside the realm of E/SIA requires a more intersectional and detailed account of the social, a more accurate and in-depth look into human relations and what constitutes human action, interaction and life – a more holistic view of the human in its environment. Starting from what the social is in current E/SIA analysis, we must extend our horizon and ask the other question, namely, of what is not present in this analysis. The absence is a gap that I will try to transform into a bridge, by bringing concepts of sexuality and identity into play.

It begins with the heterosexual matrix and queer theory. The heterosexual matrix describes heterosexuality as the underlying principle that constructs society at large, normalising its institutions and social practices (Butler 1990). As such, heteronormativity is at the core of the heterosexual matrix, denoting the widely unexamined and unchallenged notion that social relations are shaped by heterosexual men and women only. E/SIA theorists and practitioners alike would benefit from a deconstructivist queer-feminist infusion of the concept of “sexuality” in addition to gender. Special attention should be paid thereby to the sex-gender-desire triangle, which in most (patriarchal) societies is heteronormative and thus renders formerly invisible groups of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals -- but also transgender, transsexuals, gender-queer or questioning individuals and groups -- visible. A clear perception of and separation of identity as distinct from sexuality is supported by queer theoretical analyses, which have claimed for the past twenty years that the category “homosexuality” is too narrow to include the full spectrum of lived sexualities (Stryker et al. 2006) and produces just as many exclusions as the category “heterosexuality” (Butler 1990). The particular value of queer theory was to disentangle oppressive homonormative structures in addition to omni-present heteronormative social structures.

In postcolonial contexts, debates around the concept of the “subaltern” (Spivak 1990), or disempowered other, criticize the dominance of viewpoints originating in

Western cultures 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), which creates new homo-normative systems unreflective of hegemonic positions of power 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, 2006a, 2006b), Haritaworn (2005; 2007) or Koyama (2006) also 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 movements as well as LGBTI movements, whose liberationist agendas were too often marked by unacknowledged advocacy of the individual (vs. communal), family (vs. new concepts of family or intimate networks) and/or nation (vs. global citizenship).

The common denominator of feminist, queer and postcolonial critiques of normative societal systems is, however, the notion that collectives -- be they organised as nations, communities or simply groups of people -- often depend on the regulation of gender, sexuality, control of women and processes of "othering" to construct an in-group versus a negatively-imagined group of outsiders. The division of the public and private is one such example that demonstrates the exclusionary mechanisms of patriarchal societies and their heterosexual norms. The public sphere is constructed so as to exclude women and sexual and gender minorities. Participation in the public sphere, e.g. through engagement in community consultancy processes, is necessarily guided by these norms, which are not, in fact neutral (Joseph 2002: xxi), as this theoretical excursion has shown, but rather serve the particular interests of dominant collectives, that is, groups/communities/nations.

Internationally, there is little to no acknowledgement of overt discrimination against different sexualities, such as those lived by gays, lesbians, bisexuals, or against different gender identities such as transgender or transsexual, in societies at large and in current E/SIA debates in particular (U.S. Department of State 2009). Transgender/transsexuals and intersex people belong to disenfranchised and therefore vulnerable groups, in this sense comparable in status to children and youth. Like these groups, they usually have no voice and no representation in respective community organisations and are therefore (for the most part) absent from E/SIAs. How-

ever, while children's rights have made their way onto the agenda of social planning and UN indicators, where they are commonly subsumed under analytical categories such as "women and children" (a problematic approach in itself, as it assumes that mothers are solely responsible for and defined by their children) (Sabarwal et al. 2009), transgender/transsexuals and intersex people are only included in the global LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer) movement (Sauer 2009: 10).

But even LGB groups (also so-called "communities") are internationally widely discriminated against in terms of legal and social status, access to rights, representation, property, social and health services. Additional attention needs to be paid to the special situation of intersex people, who, in the global North, can be forced to fit into the existing heteronormative system of clearly identifiable and definable women and men and undergo early childhood hormone treatments and enforced genital surgeries (Sauer 2009: 10). To my knowledge, any E/SIA persistently privileges heterosexual structures while ignoring gender and sexually non-conforming segments of society, preventing E/SIA from taking a real *"proactive stance for social development"* and making the *"identification and amelioration of negative outcomes"* for such groups impossible (Vanclay 2005: 1).

### **Careful not Carefree – Queered intersectional Methods**

How can an intersectional SOGI approach be incorporated into ESIA? Which understanding of women's, men's and transgender/intersex sexualities and identities, accounting for their various vulnerabilities and capacities for dealing with interrelated environmental and social change processes, does it require? For this purpose, we will now look into how E/SIA methods such as screening, profiling and consultation are conducted. It will help form a better understanding of how incorporating a gender and sexuality perspective will enable the most vulnerable groups to be identified and thereby paint a fuller picture of the relations people have built within their communities and ecosystems.

Almost all social science methods have been and can be scrutinised and reformulated by feminism and queer theory, even quantitative methods. Part of the methodological critique of the past was based on sexism and positivism, but also on the epistemological basis for knowledge: who can know, who inscribes, in whose interests is the knowledge being produced? US feminists such as Sandra Harding

(Harding & Hintikka 1983; Harding 1991; 2008) and the Canadian feminist Dorothy Smith (Smith 1987) critiqued the myth of objectivity, advocating instead a feminist standpoint. The standpoint theory demands a high level of auto-reflexivity from the researcher and calls for transparency both in the goals as well as in the design of his/her research. In order to demonstrate the relevance of the choice of methods and the importance of the practitioner's self-reflexivity in accounting for usually overlooked parts of communities, such as LGBTIQ, I examine more closely the first step - the profiling exercise -- in a SIA as part of an EIA:

Profiling is the collection of social baseline data in the course of SIAs in order to allow for the evaluation and audit of the impact assessment process and the planned intervention itself (Vanclay 2003: 8). It asks a screening question: Who are the people that will be affected by the intervention (a new bill, policy, plan, program, development, etc., or by the environmental changes as in the case of E/SIA)? 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 practitioners to bring various affected groups into focus and produce 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, the poor and women, however (WHO 2009), are most often represented as “marginalized entities” (Becker 2009), a category that is not further investigated or specified according to additional intersectional categories or overlapping exposure to discrimination or states of affectedness (Crenshaw 1989). In the realm of development studies, development theorists and SIA practitioners alike continue to ignore such intersectional or transversal ways of validating and including the needs and experiences of LGBTI groups, who, as I have mentioned before, have been discovered in a queer academic context as theorized political subjectivities (Preciado 2009). They occupy formerly “unseen” social spaces outside communities, based on different gender representation, sexuality and identity.

Although postcolonial queer theory distrusts simplistic dual notions in general, in the realm of SIA it makes sense to initially maintain the divide in methodological approaches, as suggested by Frank Vanclay (2002), between developed/colonizing and developing/colonized countries. Queering social profiling in this context means to unravel, in a culturally sensitive manner, local power relations and the self-labeling and construction of local and indigenous communities. It also means to respect LGBTIQ self-identification by empowering such local groups and involving them in impact assessment processes, thereby rendering the formerly invisible visible. The involvement can take participatory forms such as stakeholder consultations, among many other possibilities. Alone the act of including parts of communities that are usually rendered voiceless and whose existence was previously unacknowledged constitutes a strategy and a political assessment, and is an act that has an effect by itself - an empowering effect or, perhaps, an even more endangering one (Lane & Dale 1994). The possible consequences of such an act (disruption of communities, cultural shifts, threats against individual LGBTI members of communities) mandate a careful and deeply considered choice of methodological settings and interaction on the local level.

Consulting and taking such subaltern groups in the global South and East into consideration (Spivak 1999), in matters where a social relevance through a gender and LSBTIQ sensitive perspective is attested, the consulting practitioner must, on one hand, be aware of his/her privileges and have developed a self-reflective understanding of LGBTIQ groups, and should not, on the other hand, be shaped by Western hegemonic homo-normative concepts of identity and sexuality. Here, queer and transgender theorists have been laying the groundwork for a transversal LGBTIQ inclusivity combined with reflexivity than human rights advocates or even the LGBTIQ movement itself (Sauer 2009):

*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)*

If we look at the analytical tools as applied in the gender mainstreaming context, they 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 structures. Supported by postcolonial concepts of transversality (Preciado 2009) and the use of less statistically-oriented qualitative methods, in combination with transversal participatory consultations, formerly invisible groups, such e.g. transgender or intersexuals, emerge, if a non-heteronormative, queer-feminist perspective is applied and enabled through analysis tools that allow for reflexivity and inclusion. It is of utmost importance, however, to carefully situate LGBTIQ people and issues in the local communities, discourses and social processes in which they are constituted/denied constitution and which they help to constitute. The continued invisibility of LGBTIQ issues and people in Social and Gender Impact Assessments can only be called careless and serves as an example for blind spots affecting methodologies and outcomes, a testament to how ESIA are conducted today: You only see what you are looking for. But is there another vision possible?

### **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) – Good Practice in Human-Rights Based Assessment Approaches**

Let me present, therefore, two new visions and visionary institutions and strategies for how LGBTIQ individuals and issues can be taken into consideration in the effort to create sustainable societies in sustainable environments. In 2005, the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA 2005) published 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). This new SOGI approach, as implemented by UNAIDS and the Global Fund, offers an integrated human rights-based approach to inclusionary assessment. Although the practicality of increased intersectionality in conducting multi-variable or multi-criteria analyses is still contested, the benefits in the social arena are immediately evident: The employment of less statistically-oriented, qualitative profiling methods in combination with deliberative, participatory elements supports the emergence of formerly invisible and dis-

enfranchised groups, including women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and youth, and now also encompasses gays, lesbians, bisexuals, gender variant or transgender people and intersexuals.

In emphasising and addressing sexual and gender minorities, the two organisations thereby acknowledge the importance of including these groups of former outsiders, the stigmatised and criminalised, in order to deliver not only on the human rights promise, but also to create a stronger basis for sustainable communities, more stable democratisation processes and, last but not least, growth and prosperity. In the particularly urgent case of the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic and the disastrous consequences it is having on health systems, intergenerational family structures, labour markets and, finally, the stability and future of nations, those outsider groups must be turned into insider groups in order to benefit their societies at large. Based on long-term experience in development, SIDA is therefore convinced:

*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 recognising the multiple factors that might provoke discrimination and render groups “vulnerable,” SIDA is at the practical forefront of transversal ways of conducting an anti-discriminatory policy analysis that is reflexive of its own hegemonic and heterosexual perspectives and pays attention to intersectional categories not only in the stakeholder consultation process. The latest successful example of LGBTIQ mainstreaming in ex-post impact assessment and reporting, was the UN analysis of international counterterrorism measures, which followed a multiple transversal approach and applied gender mainstreaming by including LGTIQ groups, prostitution and migration as cross-cutting issues (Scheinin & United Nations 2009). The Global Fund recently recognised 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 marginalised or criminalised in large parts of the world, have a limited ability to influence national funding priorities, funding allocations, and program designs. In the realm of social impact assessment (Global Fund, 2009; UNAIDS 2009) -- which, it should be noted, always needs to resemble a gender impact assessment in order to deliver accurate results -- queering social profiling is therefore just the starting point to advancing E/SIA even further. 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 of E/SIA 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 loses: 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 equity lens not only in the profiling segment but also in the whole E/SIA process, while using reflexive non-hegemonizing methods and “*doing science from below*” (Harding 2008), would assist the advancement of SIA within E/SIA as a true “*philosophy of [...] democracy*” (Vanclay 2002: 388).

### **No Category is Neutral – Potentially Problematic Categories of E/SIA through a SOGI Perspective**

Certain widely applied social assessment categories are particularly susceptible to heteronormativity and LGBTIQ exclusion. Units such as “households” make the individual invisible by creating certain assumptions about the composition of those households and the leadership/provider roles, which are generically patriarchal and heterosexual. The frequent occurrence (especially in Western societies) of households comprised of same-sex couples is 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 thus is often thought of in heteronormative terms in the assessment community. LGBTIQ persons in particular are at high and immediate risk of being excluded from their families on moral grounds, due to 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 interview in Johnson 2007: 57).

The heterosexual notion of family additionally neglects to acknowledge the reproductive rights and health of lesbian mothers, gay fathers and transgender/transsexual parents (Berkowitz & Marsiglio 2007). LGBTIQ individuals can form “rainbow families,” but are usually subsumed statistically under single mothers and fathers on legal grounds (non-existence of same sex marriage/partnerships solutions), and are therefore again made invisible.

Even seemingly all-encompassing categories such as “citizens” have their pitfalls. When, for example, the Worldbank assesses to what extent policies and practices support women and men to realise their duties, rights, and access to services as citizens (Worldbank 2006: 1), it is not interested in finding out about illegal migrants and/or transgender and intersex persons. The notion of citizenship explicitly excludes transgender and intersex people who do not identify as either male or female and rather claim a third sex identity. For many transgender and transsexual people worldwide, access to official identification in their appropriate gender is impossible due to transphobia and lack of governmental regulation. They are deprived of their citizenship rights and, similar to many women in some countries, forced into non-existence. The consequences of non-existence are 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. (Worldbank 2006: 2)*

As mentioned before, 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. Communities and states alike in more than 80 countries (ILGA 2009) worldwide do not acknowledge the existence of their LGBTIQ members and/or citizens. Local communities often pay no attention to specific LGBTIQ needs. If the communities acknowledge these members’ existence at all, they exclude such members from participation and decision making. LGB forms of non-heteronormative sexuality and TIQ forms of identity render them invisible, unprotected and if they emerge as subjects or groups, they are criminalised and penalised by the very communities that should represent their social support and network (Sauer 2009: 9). Especially in the realm of SIA, one must therefore end the “romance with community” and “interrupt the reiteration of community” (Joseph 2002: ix), because “fetishising community only makes us blind to the ways we might intervene in the enactment of domination and exploitation” (ibid.).

Disabled people are sometimes accounted for in some SIA target group analysis. Some intersex phenomena are anthologised and subsumed under forms of disability. Although intersex 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. Primarily in the health systems of the global North, intersex rights to informed consent and self-determination in treatment are often violated. Apart from the pathologisation of transgender and intersex people, the health sector in general is severely under-serving LGBTIQ individuals and communities. In societies of the global South, intersexuality (when known) or transgender status often represents a viable form of living, offering a person various means of gender transgression and places in society/communities that allow for some fluidity (Balzer 2008). Depending on how and to what degree they deviate from the binary gender system, however, many such people remain severely disenfranchised and marginalised. The interrelationship of trans women, sex work and HIV transmission, for example, has only recently been given attention as a category of analysis due to increased vulnerability to poverty and HIV infections (Howe et al. 2008; Collumbien & Qureshi [no date]).

Whether in the realms of health or legislation and enforcement, public expenditures or delivery of services -- the list is inexhaustible-- queer perspectives as applied to current impact assessment practices are very difficult to find. Nevertheless, there are a few best practices available, such as at the Worldbank. In its Gender and Development Briefing Notes published in 2006 and developed by its Gender and Development Group, the Worldbank asks, with regard 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? (Worldbank 2006: 1)*

Posing such questions is undoubtedly a first important step. Finding the answers, at best through measurable progress and the setting of benchmarks, is the second one. The question of indicators is neither an easy nor an objective one. Most indicators, including gender indicators, contain heterosexual bias. The GenderStats established by the Worldbank, for instance, make assessments according to adolescence fertility rate, age of first marriage, the prevalence of contraceptives or female-headed households, all of which render lesbian women and infertile, intersex and/or transsexual women invisible. Efficiency and quality management questions should therefore be posed right away, also with regard to LGBTIQ. Now that SIA is being harmonised 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 of SIA constitutes a necessary extension and mandatory advancement in the process of formulating inclusive standards for SIA that are also applicable to ESIA as well.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, we have seen that the realm of the social has so far been defined too narrowly in E/SIA, in exclusion of categories such as sexuality and gender identity. If LGBTIQ groups continue to be ignored by the E/SIA community, planners and policy makers will be able to achieve neither high ethical and equality standards nor the goals of effectiveness, equity, and empowerment codified in their policy reforms, program strategies or other forms of interventions in developed/colonising as well as developing/colonised countries. Denial will both, undermine any intervention

and its possible empowering effects, and constitute a failure for the vulnerable groups in question. The deconstruction of the romanticised notion of “community” aids E/SIA practitioners in developing a better understanding of in- and out-groups and of hidden (heteronormative) power relations, and helps them develop innovative ways to approach community development from a different, more inclusive angle. The new policy SOGI framework and its governance contribute to making LGBTIQ groups and individuals visible in order to enhance processes of democratisation, eradicate poverty, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and, in the long run, create healthy and sustainable societies.

Assessment of categories such as sexuality and identity, however, requires a transversal and culturally sensitive way of conducting social profiling. One methodological way to achieve inclusion rather than perpetuate exclusion is a participatory and/or peer-conducted in-depth qualitative assessment process that involves local LGBTIQ groups and individuals and that is based on reflexivity concerning inherent heteronormativity within SIA structures and the people conducting them. Applied methods in the analysis process ought to be confidential and conducted in accordance with strict ethical practices, due to significant stigma and the high degree risk these vulnerable groups are exposed to in many parts of the world.

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