

IGF 2020 | Session Title: Future Unclear: data and bodies in the post-pandemic times

1. Key Policy Questions and related issues:

How can we place the concept of 'privacy as boundary management' at the centre of conversations about data – boundary management allows us to control what we share with others, and is crucial to live a life of dignity.

What happens with the personal data that is collected by apps, especially when users' consent is not informed or meaningful, and what are the gendered implications around this?

What kind of feminist values can we use to build the future of technology, and how can we use imagination as a tool for political change?

2. Summary of Issues Discussed:

1. Summary of Gender Report Cards (IGF 2019)

2. Data, privacy and boundary management

Speaker Dr. Anja Kovacs highlights in her [essay](#) highlights the concept of 'privacy as boundary management' as being central to whether and how we share our data, what happens with our data, what information about ourselves do we want to share or not share, etc. However, the concept of boundary management doesn't reflect much in traditional conversations about privacy. In most dominant discourses, data is treated as a resource - separate from the medium that generates it. This has severe implications on a person's agency, privacy and rights. Boundary management is not only important because it allows us to control what we share with others but this control is crucial to living a life of dignity.

3. Gendered implications of data collection by apps

In her [essay](#), Sadaf Khan reflects on menstrual apps, how they track data, and the gendered implications around it. People's consent to data collection by apps is often not informed consent - they are not fully aware that the apps are 'authorised' to share their information, comment and stories. What do these apps do with the data? Who handles the data? Who has access to it? How is it used? For how long is it stored?

4. Feminist values for building transfeminist futures

As Joana Varon reflects in her [essay](#), what would the future look like if algorithms that command our daily interactions were developed based on feminist values? What if the technologies we cherish were developed to crash, instead of maintain, the [matrix of domination](#) of capitalism, hetero-patriarchy, white supremacy, and colonisation? How can we build

technologies based on feminist notions of consent? How can we use feminist frameworks and values to question, imagine and design tech?

3. Key Takeaways:

Placing consent at the centre of the conversations around data. Data policies must consider consent & privacy not individualistic matters but collective matters. Policies must take into account economic structures that impact how tech is designed & marketed to men & women, impacting power dynamics.

4. Policy Recommendations or Suggestions for the Way Forward:

What policy sector(s) does this fall under? (leave blank if not sure):

Social-cultural

Issue and Recommendation:

We need to think not just about datafication of bodies, but also about how data is used and what implications it has for us. No longer talking about data as a resource is an important way to start rethinking data and privacy. Feminist thinking around bodies and the constitution bodies becomes a useful tool to develop a language and vision to address some of these issues. We need to put meaningful consent at the centre of the conversations and we take into account power relations - can we negotiate before, during, and after entering into an agreement, and can we walk away from it. Media and Information Literacy is focused on technicalities of using the internet but not about meta data, what goes on outside the user interface and the screens we see, implications of biometrics, FRTs, etc. MIL should focus on including these questions.

What policy sector(s) does this fall under? (leave blank if not sure):

Social-cultural

Issue and Recommendation:

In data protection frameworks, it is important to recognise consent not as an individualistic matter but as a collective matter closely tied with autonomy, agency, and privacy. Data protection policies should be consistent with feminist principles of consent.

What policy sector(s) does this fall under? (leave blank if not sure):

Social-cultural

Issue and Recommendation:

We need to have more conversations on the economy of tech which impacts the design of tech and gendered experiences around data collection, algorithms, surveillance etc.

6. Final Speakers:

Speakers:

Dr. Anja Kovacs, Internet Democracy Project, India

Joana Varon, Coding Rights, Brazil

Sadaf Khan, Media Matters for Democracy, Pakistan

Moderator:

Bishakha Datta, Point of View, India

7. Reflection to Gender Issues:

The session directly engaged with gender, focusing on issues such as the gendered implications of data collection by technology, algorithmic biases impacting marginalised genders, the feminist principles of consent, etc.