

Handout 2: Methodology Brief

Overview

The Voice or Chatter project is interested in exploring ICT mediated citizen engagement initiatives. The following research questions foreground the focus of the study.

1. Under what conditions can ICT- mediated citizen engagement support and promote democratic governance?
2. How do processes of signification, legitimation and domination in ICT-mediated citizen engagement give rise to new governance regimes?

The study will investigate how values are renegotiated, new rules evolve to legitimize new forms of participation and power is re-distributed between government and citizens, thus tracing how interactions among actors continuously shape and reproduce governance institutions.

Using Anthony Giddens' structuration framework (1984) as a lens to unpack the process and provide a useful axiology to place research questions around the interplay of structure and agency, we would like to examine ICT mediation.

Specifically, we use the following categories (Parvez, 2006) to understand structuration:

1. Institutional-mediation structures: Vision, priorities, norms, external and internal pressures underpinning the design and development of ICT-mediated citizen engagement initiatives and continuities/ discontinuities in rules of democratic governance.
2. ICT-mediation structures: New informational and communicative structures opened up by digital technologies, institutional norms for ICT access and use in governance, ICT related capabilities of governance institutions and individual citizens.

The meta nature of Giddens' theory will allow us to bring to the table different analytical lenses. So we propose a two-tier theoretical framework to undertake this project; structuration at the macro level and complementary scholarship (critical marxist, post-colonial, media studies, critical ICT4D etc) at the micro level that seems appropriate for inter-disciplinary analysis and grounded interpretation.

Methodological Framework

Macro-Level Theory: Structuration Framework (Giddens, 1984; Parvez, 2006)
Used here as a theoretical entry point and axiological overlay.



Micro-level Theory: Based on CRP needs, objectives and inclination of researchers
What to keep in mind?
1. Does it complement the existing structuration framework?
2. Why and how is it a good fit for the Voice or Chatter study?



Field-Work Methods: Mixed methods approach that is based on country level project
needs + larger Voice or Chatter Project requirements