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Paradoxes of Gender Budgeting

Regina Frey Genderbüro Berlin

Abstract

The paper makes the case that GB in practice is endangered to not fulfil the achievements promised in theory. This is called “the paradox of Gender Budgeting”: At the one hand GB can be an effective strategy and at the same time in the practical implementation GB can lead to contradicting side effects. The paper brings together practical experiences in consulting administration in Germany and elsewhere for effectively implementing GB as a strategy. At the other hand it encompasses a theoretical perspective on Gender – a concept that was controversially discussed and also accused to lead to problematic impacts on social relations when used in a flawed way. Taking the example of Berlin (see also the paper of Prof. Faerber) the paper elaborates achievements and dangers of GB in practice. With the help of different tools of GB many interesting and necessary facts and figures on gender disparities and state funds allocation have been collected to date. These facts can serve as a good starting point for taking consequences and adjusting policies for more gender-justice. However, GB was methodologically limited to an analysis of expenditure allocation and it started with a bias on so called “soft” policy fields, whereas fields like infrastructure remained mainly gender blind. Other above stated side effects could hardly be avoided because GB needs to be practical and manageable for administration bodies. In addition, because of Berlin being a highly indebted state the room of manoeuvre for reallocating the budget is limited. This shows that GB at least needs standards to minimise possible contradicting effects. A set of standards will be proposed (goals, range of tools, qualitative approach). Also preconditions for achieving standards will be discussed. In this context it will also be necessary to pose the question which synergies between gender mainstreaming and GB are possible.

Gender Budgeting (GB) has become a known strategy for achieving gender equality. Originally coming from an international critique on structural adjustment programmes in the poor countries of the South, it has been adopted by many European activists as well as governments to promote gender equality. The advantages of GB as a strategy seem to be obvious: when it comes to the allocation of resources, gender equality policy (a so called “soft” policy-field) has to be taken more serious by decision makers. Gender equality politics have reached the core of policy making, when administration staff and politicians normally dealing with budget policy start thinking about the effects of their decisions on gender equality.

In Germany GB has also become a known strategy on every policy level: The federal government has recently published a feasibility study on how to implement GB (see discussion paper by Prof. Faerber), on states-level, several governments have begun or are in the middle of GB processes. Also on communal level there are several examples of steps being taken. Berlin (which is a “Länder” government comprising several local governments) can be seen as the pilot government in Germany when it comes to concretely promoting and implementing GB and Gender Mainstreaming. The case of Berlin will be introduced and analysed in this paper (see also discussion paper by Prof. Faerber). It serves as an example to show the biases of GB in the second part of the paper.

This paper draws together practical experiences in advisory services to the administration in Berlin and elsewhere in implementing GB as a strategy. Being involved in GB practice and also doing lobby work for the implementation of GB on the federal level in Germany, I see the need to make GB applicable and not overburden it with theoretical demands. However, I hold that GB may have paradox effects if implemented in an incomplete and fragmented way and if the concept “Gender” is used in an oversimplified way. The practice of GB should recognise the history of feminist theory behind it and use *Gender* in a way that is informed by a theoretical perspective. Since the late 1980ies, there is an ongoing debate on the ambivalence of Gender, which is hardly taken up by practitioners – often because they find it too abstract. In this paper, I would like to invite everyone working on the implementation of GB to have a look at the subtext behind “Gender” and the implications a certain use of the term Gender may have. This kind of reflections on GB should be taken as an effort to further qualify GB as a useful strategy to change the unjust gender-order in our societies.

Therefore, the main thesis of this paper is: GB in practice is at risk not to fulfil the achievements promised in theory. I will call this the paradox of GB: At the one hand, GB can be an effective strategy and at the same time in the practical implementation, GB can lead to contradicting “side effects”. I will explain these

side effects by showing that the practical implementation of GB is biased in four dimensions. First, there is a “soft policy-bias”. The second bias can be called the “expenditure-bias”. The third bias I will call the “micro-bias” and a last and important bias will be called the “duality-bias”.

My first step will be to introduce the GB process in Berlin (A), which will serve as an example for the side effects mentioned above (B). This also includes a short excursion into the history of GB in the countries of the South. I will conclude with raising questions that can be useful to establish minimal standards for the practical implementation of GB (C).

A) Gender Budgeting in Berlin

In 2001, a coalition government of social democrats and socialists came into power and introduced Gender Budgeting in Berlin. The government passed a law for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting in 2002. This was a solid basis for the process to come, since it included concrete steps to be taken, fixed responsibilities and gave a timeframe. A Gender Mainstreaming focal point was set up, who coordinates the process as well as documents and communicates the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting. A website was launched which entails a wide range of information on Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting in general, as well as on the Berlin implementation process. A high-level commission with executives of ministries, communal and NGO representatives was set up as the responsible institution to make Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting work.

From the beginning onwards the commission was endowed with a working group on Gender Budgeting and another working group on gender disaggregated data. In a pilot phase starting in 2003, twelve administrations on the level of the “Land”¹ Berlin and on a communal level (“Bezirk”) started to implement Gender Budgeting, by assessing sex aggregated data and conducting users’ analyses in various fields of public expenditure. All ministries of the State of Berlin and all of the 12 “Bezirke” had to use sex-disaggregated data to prepare the 2006 budget. They carried out users’ analyses of selected products and titles. The council of mayors firstly determined six products for the communal representatives: borrowing of books in libraries, courses in adult education centres, promotion of fine arts, general promotion of children and youth, integrative educational counselling and counselling of families as well as the individual counselling of

¹ Germany has 16 states, Berlin being one of them, Berlin has 12 “Bezirke”.

disabled and ill people.² In 2006, the list of products for the users' analysis was enlarged to 56 products. The trend to analyse products in the so-called "soft" areas of policy being continued. From the beginning, the selection of products was driven by two criteria: On the one hand, the funds should be liable to be redistributed by local administrations, meaning that the areas of analysis should not be restricted by legal regulations limiting the room of manoeuvre for the local staff in charge. On the other hand, the question of feasibility was important. Therefore, the users' analysis was undertaken in areas, which allowed counting expenditure per head. A gender analysis of the impacts of the allocation of resources in fields like road construction or planning would have been more complex and thereby comparatively costly and time-consuming. This means the process was very much geared to the question of feasibility. Because of the hesitant acceptance of Gender Budgeting in many administrations, this is a reasonable approach: In the beginning of the process, the practicability of Gender Budgeting had to be demonstrated. However, this approach does imply a twofold reduction: On the one hand, the so-called users' analysis (which is a variation of a gender-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis) is represented as the sole method of Gender Budgeting and on the other hand – as already described – the selection of areas is restricted. However, Gender Budgeting offers a whole range of tools, highlighting topics like unpaid work, state income and shifting from analysis to setting goals and policy making. This will be dealt with and further elaborated below.

However, in the second report of the administration, more instruments of Gender Budgeting are named and the applied users' analysis is called "a first pragmatic step".³ A publication recently published by the GM focal point provides support on how to broaden the users' analysis to an institutional analysis: Organisations receiving state funds will be included in the GB analysis in Berlin in future.

To put it briefly: Berlin is the leading city in Germany, when it comes to the implementation of Gender Budgeting today. Many interesting facts have been achieved to date. However, challenges remain: Gender Budgeting was methodologically limited to a users' analysis and it started with a strong „social sectors' bias“, whereas the other budgets like construction and infrastructure remain gender blind to date. This shows that GB cannot be introduced within

² See: Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Frauen 2004, p. 129.

³ Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Frauen, 2004, p. 21.

only a couple of years. Berlin is the heading government in the implementation of GB in Germany today, but it is far from being fully developed.

B) Gender Budgeting: Four biases

In theory, GB is a strategy that looks at budget policy and the concrete budget; it encompasses all policy areas and the whole budgetary process. This understanding is mirrored in the definition of the Council of Europe stating Gender Budgeting „...implies a gender-based stock-taking of the budgets, which includes a gender-perspective on all levels of the budgetary process and redistributes the incomes and expenditures to promote equal opportunities for men and women.“ (Council of Europe 2003)

Looking at the history of GB, it also goes beyond mainstream models of budgeting, taking into account the interconnections between the care economy/unpaid work and the official economy. The range of topics and methods of GB is revealed in the different approaches of implementation. Budlender et. al. (1998) have proposed seven tools of GB analysis ranging from a “Gender-aware policy appraisal” to a “Gender-aware budget statement”. These tackle the income and the expenditure side of the budget, encompass budget policy as well as the concrete budget statement, and are about time use and the care economy as well as the question of assessing needs of women and men. If we hold that GB is about the whole Budget and Budget policy, then it is obvious that in Berlin, as I have shown above, only a very limited conception of GB was implemented. The “users’ analysis” being the core tool of GB in Berlin, is a variation of the expenditure incidence analysis – which is just one of the tools Budlender et. al. propose.

This shows how demanding the process of GB is. It needs time and can only be managed if several fields of expertise come together. It is obvious that there is some tension between theoretical demands of GB and the practical implementation in the every day procedures of budget policy and administrating the budget. The following “biases” show these tensions, but they should not lead to dismiss GB as such. Rather the awareness of these biases should lead to qualify GB practice.

1. The “soft policy”-bias

The implementation of GB is a challenge: To assess the impact of budget policy on questions related to gender, information on how state expenditure and

income meets societal structures and power relations is needed. To take practical decisions, administrative processes have to rely on complex social structures being reduced so they can be handled. In the context of GB this reduction is necessary as well. An example of this kind of reduction can be found when GB is explained by posing the question: "Who gets how much"?

This was also the case in the Berlin GB process in the very beginning, with the users' analysis being the core method to implement GB. Assessing the distribution of public funds per (female and male) capita is easily feasible. What is needed is the average expenditure for a certain public service and the number of persons benefiting from it (disaggregated by sex). It can thus be assessed that in the area of sports – for example – boys and men are being more publicly subsidised than girls and women. It is also easy to know how many women are involved in adult education in comparison to men and – in the Berlin case - that women usually create around 70 percent of the costs for this public service. And this is where problems begin: because it is easier to "sex-count" than it would be to assess costs for other services like infrastructure or transfer payments to organisations. The areas where it is possible to look at distribution to persons very often are located in social policy like health, education, youth and elderly persons. Unfortunately – but realistically – these policy fields are at the same time fields where many women are much more represented than men are - because of dominant gender norms in society. For example, women need more adult education because their professional careers are much more often interrupted by parental leave. Women and especially single mothers have to profit from educational services because the norm is that they are responsible for caring.

In conclusion, one has to state a soft policy bias in GB, if in practice GB is very much "sex-counting" and is very much on the side of state expenditure. To assess the "income" of the State which derives partly out of unpaid care work is much more difficult. However, the state expenditure in social fields should be compared and being set in relation to the care sector. Otherwise, there is the quick – but wrong – conclusion: "Women cost more". Politically this is a dangerous field opening doors for cutting funds in the social sectors. In practice GB is being easily misinterpreted as "equal distribution", meaning women/girls and men/boy should get 50:50 out of public funding. This is a flawed attitude towards GB, but it is not easy to determine what exactly a "gender-just" distribution would be. At this point GB becomes highly political: Should certain

groups of men be involved in adult education to a higher extend? Is a distribution of 70 percent for women (of a certain age?) and 30 percent for men adequate? Alternatively, should the proportion be 60 to 40? Who can decide on this? What are the goals to reach "gender-equality"? And what does gender-equality mean at all? These questions are coming up within the process of GB. Moreover, because rarely anybody can answer them in the short run, GB could be brought to an end by someone stating that women are getting more out of the state budget anyway. Politicians would then ask GB activists: "What more do you want?" The answer would be: GB is also about analysing further areas of state expenditure (like subsidies for organisations or infrastructure projects) and about taking a look at the care sector as well. However, analyses in these policy fields necessarily have to go deeper and are methodologically demanding. The easy answers and solution politicians often want (and need) are not always possible with GB.

2. The "expenditure-bias"

The next effect that is dealt with here is linked to the "soft policy"-bias described above. As I have stated, the care sector is rarely in focus when GB becomes practical. However, GB as a strategy in its origin was very much linked to the question of how the public budget and the private households are connected. The interdependency between the public and the private sphere has been discussed in-depth in feminist economics and political science. This was particularly the case during the 1980ies and 1990ies when structural adjustment programmes were imposed to the countries of the Global South by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Gender Budgeting can be seen as a reaction to this policy, which brought about dramatic social hardship. Interpreted as a short-term side effect by the World Bank and the IMF; cut downs in social expenditure were, however, strongly contested by lobby groups questioning the effectiveness of Structural Adjustment policies. With Gender Budgeting women activists and academics created an instrument to detect – and to scandalise - the effects of these policies on gender relations. Gender Budgeting focussed on the interdependencies of public and private budgets: from a government's point of view a successful "belt-tightening" of the State by cutbacks in social expenditure is in fact quite often merely a shifting of state responsibilities to private households – and thus a shifting to the area of unpaid (women's-)work. By

stressing concepts like the care economy (unpaid care work)⁴ and questioning the private household as a black box, mainstream models of economic thinking were contested and alternative economic models came into play. Gender Budgeting lobby groups also demanded a participatory way of budgeting thus making the process more democratic and transparent. These new ideas on how a public budget could work are a potential Gender Budgeting offers.

Many examples show, that today GB is rarely focussing on the care sector: possible effects of the budget on unpaid work and time use are not discussed. A tool, described by Budlender et. al. is the "Gender-disaggregated analysis of the impact of the budget on time use" (see Budlender et. al. 1998, p.48f.). To get the whole picture, the work being done in the care sector should be conceptualised as a kind of "invisible tax": people doing care work are contributing to the reproduction of human resources providing a key service for the functioning of the economy and the society as such. This kind of invisible tax is not considered in the BIP or other economic models – something feminist economists have been claiming for decades. In GB the revenue side is rarely considered as such. If so, the focus would be on official taxes, and particularly income, rather than consumer taxes. The "invisible tax" of unpaid work does not appear at all.

The focus on expenditures makes the (mostly) female reproductive work invisible, reproducing the official economic thinking – something that early approaches to GB wanted to avoid. The blindness concerning the care economy also reinforces the problem described above: If the care sector is not conceptualised as an indirect source of revenue to the state, expenditures for the social sector will be seen as pure costs, thereby obscuring the fact that people doing no care work are being subsidised by the community.

3. The "micro-bias"

Taking a look at how GB is being operationalised, another effect or bias is obvious: In Berlin administration staff are busy counting how many books girls and boys, women and men are taking from the library, assessing the number of hours men and women are doing sports, analysing how many hours young men and women are visiting the youth centre. The results are sometimes surprising – sometimes not. A lot of work is being done to get an impression of who uses which public service to which extend.

At the same time Berlin is one of the most indebted Länder in Germany, leaving the government no room of manoeuvre at all to hire staff, to set priorities and so

⁴ For a short introduction in the concept of the Care Economy see: http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/gender_budgets_cd/3.1-care.htm and Elson 1999.

on. On the contrary, at a high level Berlin is privatising hospitals, the energy sector and housing. The state treasury has to be filled just for the enormous amount of annual interest to pay. Coming back to the roots of GB, the issue of privatisation of the health service was one of the prominent examples highlighted by Diane Elson (see Elson 1989, 1995). Many studies have shown that especially privatisation has a major impact on gender relations because it goes hand in hand with the retrenchment of costs and especially overhead costs. What is often called "effectiveness", really is a saving costs regime at its limits. It goes hand in hand with the delegation of services to the private sphere: Just recently a hospital, which was privatised just years ago in one of Berlin's inner city districts announced that it will be have to close down. The worsening of standards in the health sector will inevitably have an impact on who will care for sick people in the family. So while the administration is busily counting at the micro level, decisions are taken at the macro level which may even contradict gender equality. In Berlin, there is a clear focus on concrete budgets and not on budget policies within GB. This may lead GB to being an alibi strategy – leaving aside the agenda setting decisions that have a severe impact on gender relations. The analysis at the micro level can be useful, but the results should also inform the agenda. With a situation dominated by the regime of cost saving, one can question if there are opportunities for a pro-active gender-equality policy.

4. The "duality –bias"

The fourth bias I deal with here, is informed by gender-theories. Very often, the term "Gender" is used as if its meaning was self evident. However, there is a tremendous lot of work being done on Gender, which is a theoretical concept and not self understanding. *Gender* Budgeting can be inspired by thinkers like Linda Nicholson, Donna Haraway or Judith Butler, whose ideas on Gender are not against the term as such but are rather very useful in clarifying this core concept by relating it to its history. As Donna Haraway states:

"The value of an analytical category is not necessarily annulled by critical consciousness of its historical specificity and cultural limits. But feminist concepts of gender raise sharply the problems of cultural comparison, linguistic translation, and political solidarity." (Haraway 1991: 130)

A contribution to this debate which refers to Gender-politics in practice is the "Gender-Manifesto". It was published by a group of experts in 2006 in Berlin⁵ and raises questions about the way in which gender is being used in the field of gender training and advisory services. The Manifesto can be applied to GB as well because its basic aim is "to return to the core and the critical intrinsic meaning of the term Gender". The authors see the problem, that in gender training and gender advisory services conceptions of gender are being used that reproduce rather than challenge the gender order. In this sense, the purpose of working with Gender as a concept should be to overcome Gender as a *social institution*. An understanding of Gender as a social institution as for example Judith Lorber (1995) puts it, would drive us to use the term in a more cautious and reflexive way. According to the manifesto, and many other authors before, the dual structure of thinking "Gender" is a core problem and the strategies to overcome Gender as a social institution should work to overcome duality. Only if it does not matter any more whether a person is of this or that gender – or only if gender is annulled as a principle structuring society – then could one talk about a veritable "gender equality" (see for example Nicholson 1995 or Butler 1990, 2004). Consequently "*gender-policy*" would be about "using Gender to undo Gender" (Lorber 2000). I would like to highlight the issue of why the duality of thinking gender in GB may be problematic by going into two threads of the discussion, which are interconnected: Firstly, I will introduce gender as an "open" concept and secondly, I will elaborate on gender as a "multiple" concept. I will deal with implications for the practice of implementing GB by giving examples from the Berlin process of GB.

a) Gender as an open concept

Often gender-analysis or gender-statistics are about showing disparities between women and men. In GB this is crucial to prove that the Budget is not gender neutral. However, this kind of analysis always will be a reduction of complex social reality. It is very clear that women and men are not homogenous groups respectively – in fact, they are very diverse social groups in themselves.

Disparities between young and old women or poor and rich men may shape the lives of individuals more than a pure "gender"-disparity- depending on what kind of issue the analysis will be. One of the pitfalls of doing gender-analysis in a way

⁵ See Frey et. al. 2006 (www.gender-mainstreaming.org). The Gender-Manifesto has been signed up by 116 persons and institutions up to date.

that divides groups into two categories ("the" women and "the" men) is that other - and maybe very important - categories could be blinded out. This is discussed today under the term "Intersectionality" which was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1997) and further elaborated by Patricia Hill Collins (1999). The core idea of Intersectionality is that multiple forms of oppression can not be divided from each other but that they are always interlinked.

Mary Hawkesworth made a strong point on this already in 1997:

"If gender is always mediated by race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, then an analytic framework that isolates gender or construes gender in terms of an 'additive model' is seriously flawed and may serve only to mask the numerous privileges of white, heterosexual, middle-class feminists who have the luxury of experiencing only one mode of oppression (..)." (Hawkesworth 1997: 651)

This makes clear that an isolated gender analysis is not only methodologically imperfect but it is about the power to define which kind of inequality is important and which is not worth being looked at. In fact, multiple analysis are not an easy task and sometimes go beyond what is possible and manageable in practice.

The idea of Intersectionality in GB in practice can be explained by another example from Berlin. One of the subjects of the users' analysis in Berlin is the library services. In all the Berlin "Bezirke" the library staff counts the number of books being borrowed by men and women, girls and boys. The result is: women and girls are borrowing more and other books than men do. However, the figures change if more categories like age groups and background of the readers are being considered. In some of the Berlin Bezirke there is a strong population with a migrant background. At the same time, young males with a migrant family background are clearly overrepresented in the group of pupils with school problems. The services of a public library should contribute to public education; especially by improving reading skills of children and young people. A GB process that is limited to counting the male and female users would not come to reasonable results in terms of who needs what kind of support and what attitudes towards masculinity and femininity are important with regard to reading as a necessary activity to achieve knowledge. How can the library staff attract male citizens of a certain age group if reading for them is "womanish"? GB that takes gender as part of an intersection of diverse categories of exclusion can serve as a good starting point for raising these questions. This is not a

theoretical exercise but it is about the quality of public services allowing for a targeted allocation of resources.

The preconditions in this case were: a) Gender has been taken as an open concept being interlinked with age and ethnic background and b) the figures were used as a starting point for a qualitative analysis, which also was informed by research results – for example on reading behaviour of certain social and age groups. Such a qualitative approach to GB consists not only of using resources in a more targeted way, but it is also about justice: ignoring the specific situations of citizens with a migrant family background could even deepen disparities within a community of a “Bezirk”. Especially so as it would be limiting the educational opportunities of young men and women of this social group.

Some other Bezirke did not go beyond “sex-counting” yet, which may not only lead to figures that are less useful, but may also have additional other problematic implications, which I will deal with now.

b) Gender as a multiple concept

The second thread to be introduced here is the question of gender being either a dual or a multiple concept. Gender was originally introduced to critically question (the biological term) “sex”, meaning there are no fixed roles for men and women respectively, which are determined by biology. Rather, society forms the patterns of approved behaviour of persons. Gender in its very meaning is therefore a concept which is informed by culture and society, it is changeable and has to do more with “femininity” and “masculinity” and less with “men/male” and “women/female” as such. Consequently, it is not possible to say that there are two genders: there are many possible and not just two ways to life as a man or a woman – even if most societies (not all) categorize their members in two gender groups. The way in which gender roles are being taken is however changing depending on history and culture: what is adequate for persons being categorised as male or female changed rapidly in so-called modern societies. In addition, what is acceptable for men and women may differ completely from one culture to another culture – dressing being just one example. This shows that gender is negotiated in different contexts. West and Zimmermann (1991) invented the term “Doing Gender” for this negotiation: Gender is continuously produced and reproduced in interaction and thus institutionalised. Gender for them is “an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct” (West

and Zimmermann 1991, quoted in Lorber 1998: 161). In this understanding, gender is being done in different contexts; it is not stable any more and can hardly serve as a universal category for analysis. It becomes multiple because doing gender takes place in multiple social situations. This kind of conceptualisation of gender has been criticised because gender may then lose its analytical power and become depoliticised.

Another example from Berlin can illustrate what it may mean to *use Gender* (as an analytical category) *to undo Gender* (as a social institution). The example is about the promotion of popular sports activities by the local government by subsidising sports clubs and provides infrastructure for sports, mainly sports halls and courts. The users' analysis has shown that that men in average profit more from public spending in sports than women do. One main cause for this is the dominance of football, which is almost exclusively played by males. At the same time, football is played much more in the open; whereas women prefer indoor sports.

In sports, there is a clear gender separation: There are still some rare sport activities which are exclusively done by men or women respectively, however this was reduced through women entering former male sports domains like football and boxing. In popular sports, however, this is still an exception and women who want to do "male" sports will have difficulties to receive support by sports clubs. Especially in popular or recreational sports, there are also many forms being exercised in mixed groups, like volleyball or badminton. A local government does not have the capacity to rapidly change the way people do sports. However, it is under obligation to distribute the scarce resources as fair as possible. Moreover, it is legally obliged to promote gender justice.⁶ How then can a local government contribute to gender justice in sports? GB is a first step to show imbalances in the use of public resources in sports as a starting point. With the result of men in average being privileged by the local funding of sports, one would be presented with several options. One strategy to equalise imbalances would be to promote more women's sports to create a compensation for the dominance of football as a predominantly male sport. This, however, would retain or even reinforce the dual gender order in sports. A distribution of public funds that is used to 50 per cent by men and 50 percent by women would

⁶ In Germany Article 3 of the "constitution" (Grundgesetz) governments are obliged to actively promote gender justice. This exceeds the obligation to equal treatment of women and men.

not necessarily overcome gender stereotypes in sports. It would also limit the possibilities for men and women who want to do sports not in accordance with gender-stereotypes. Consequently, different kind of sports should be promoted and sport facilities that allow for many different kinds of sports and to also do it in mixed groups should be provided. This could also gradually diminish stereotypes in sports because a range of possible ways to do sports can open up new opportunities to younger and older men and women with diverse backgrounds in sports.

The mayor of the Bezirk in which these analyses were done (Lichtenberg) decided to redistribute funding not directly to certain sports but to shift public resources from the maintenance of (open) football grounds to sports halls – in which different sports could be exercised and which attract more women as well as mixed groups. From a “gender” point of view, this can be seen as an effective and clever decision. It is not about directly privileging one or another group but about creating better conditions for non stereotyped sports. This can be seen as a (maybe small) contribution to create room for sports where gender and other social categories will not play a role. It is clear that this is not the only way to deal with the shown imbalances. Another step would be to drive the sports clubs to follow a more active and conscious gender policy and overcome “gender-barriers”.

The examples show: GB helps to use Gender as an analytical category – what then follows can either “dramatise” or “undo” Gender as a social order. The political decisions taken will also depend on the underlying concepts. Gender is a category that not only serves as an analytical tool to show differences between two groups in society (“the” men and “the” women). It is an open concept which includes other social categories. It is also a structure to be *undone*:

“Undoing Gender (...) loosens the ties, relations and attachments of the bipolar hierarchical gender order, unfastening the laces of the aforementioned gender corset and abolishing in the long term the still-existing effects of the gender hierarchy. This all promotes a gender diversity that is individually, equally and fairly moulded and a new way of renegotiating gender relations based on companionship and solidarity.” (Gender-Manifesto)

C) Conclusion

As I have shown in this paper, GB is not an easy exercise: There are several biases that can limit or even contradict the impact of GB. There are many different ways in which GB can be implemented; this will depend on the actors involved, the methodological framework chosen, the openness of the persons involved etc.

As much as we cannot speak of the right way to do GB, we should consider some minimum standards which are proposed here. They are on the outcome of GB as a strategy to create gender equality.

The following questions summarise the four dimensions dealt with in this paper; they could be used for a reflection of GB in practice.

1. Do the policy-fields covered by the GB process mirror all kind of sectors or is it limited to the fields of social policy? Is there a danger that the conclusion could be drawn "women benefit from public funding to a great extend anyway"?
2. Does the process of GB consider the care sector as well and is unpaid work recognised as equally important as for example income tax?
3. Are decisions on a high level (like privatisation and market liberalisation) also in focus or does GB take place just on a micro-level? Is it possible that at the same time that analysis is done on a local level, high level decisions may restrict or even contradict the achievements of GB?
4. Is Gender as a demanding concept being used in an oversimplified way within the implementation of GB or is it informed by theoretical ideas such as Intersectionality? Is Gender used as an open concept, meaning is it linked to other categories like social or ethnic origin, age and others (depending on the context)? Is Gender being used as a multiple concept, trying to overcome a strict male-female duality?
Is there an ongoing reflection of Gender in a certain context and are there efforts to avoid a tendency to reproduce the Gender order?

GB in Berlin and elsewhere can be a strategy to overcome "Gender" as a social institution that creates and recreates social inequalities. However, we need an awareness of the biases of GB if we wish to prevent GB from becoming an alibi strategy and from contradicting the plurality of Gender.

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Contact:

Dr. Regina Frey
0049-30-8179 77 77
frey@gender.de
www.gender.de