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Gender-sensitive statistics: Making life's realities visible



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Gender-sensitive statistics: Making life's realities visible

Image: PID/David Bohmann



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PREFACE

Even if legal equality of men and women has been achieved in our society in theory, equality in real life is still a long way off. There are undeniable indicators that this is the case, such as the pay gap that still exists between men and women.

To be able to change the status quo and take targeted political action, it is necessary to first analyse the existing situation with respect to the problem: reliable facts, figures and data provide the starting point for driving change and taking supportive action.

That is why we need to take a look at the realities of the lives of women and men in their entirety, taking into account the factors that might potentially impact the differences they face as regards their situation within society (for instance with respect to child care opportunities). Only if we do so can we then derive the most objective recommendations for action possible from such data.

The City of Vienna has already taken important steps in the past that underpin its pioneering role in the implementation of gender equality today. A special unit (City of Vienna Equal Opportunities Advisers) is tasked with identifying violations of the equal treatment principle within the Vienna City Administration; the Department for the Promotion and Co-ordination of Women's Issues (MA 57) of the Vienna City Administration provides important basic research and support for women (grants, women's helpline, etc.), while the Office for Gender Mainstreaming assists the various departments when it comes to introducing and implementing gender mainstreaming in their day-to-day work. The principle of gender budgeting, which is firmly established within the Vienna City Administration, ensures that municipal funds are assessed for gender impacts and distributed in a fair and well-balanced manner.

This issue of the Vienna Statistics Journal explains what statistics hinging on gender are based on and how they are produced. Recent debates on the gender pay gap or on gender-sensitive language, which were highly emotional and far from objective, show what a sensitive field gender analysis still is today. All of this makes a publication that summarises the most recent state of knowledge on this subject and provides real-life examples all the more valuable.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Renate Brauner' and the signature on the right is 'Sandra Frauenberger'.

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INTRODUCTION

Women earn less than men. This simple observation will be confirmed time and again, whether you are talking among friends, looking at the different amounts of retirement pension your parents receive, discussing – on rare occasions – pay slips details at work or reviewing public tax information.

How big is this gap exactly, and how can it be explained? This is one of the questions statistics are supposed to provide an answer to.

This well-known example of applied gender statistics or gender-sensitive statistics (see box) illustrates very well what the purpose of statistics is – to map a certain section of real life. And doing so gives rise to a lot of heated debate within society.

Gender statistics and gender-sensitive statistics

This issue of the Vienna Statistics Journal uses the terms ‘gender statistics’ and ‘gender-sensitive statistics’ synonymously. These terms differ from mere ‘sex counting’ or ‘head counting’, where personal data are just recorded and evaluated separately by biological sex (women/men). Gender statistics or gender-sensitive statistics combine findings of women’s studies and gender research with statistics problems, for instance considering which data to collect and which additional data or indicators might be necessary to portray the real-life circumstances of women and men.

There are differing opinions on how to adequately calculate the gender-related income gap. Apart from what data source and what data collection method to use, the question is also whether and by how much the pay gap should be adjusted for gender-specific structural differences in employment. Some reasons for the observed differences in pay are obvious: women tend to work in lower-paying jobs and sectors than men. Given the time they invest in caring activities, women often work fewer hours per week and have longer gaps in their careers. Consequently, some people argue that only the amount remaining after these ‘easily-explained’ factors have been deducted should be referred to as actual gender pay gap. Others, however, argue that certain social parameters, such as the unequal distribution of unpaid work between the genders or the different value attached to ‘typical women’s work’ and ‘typical men’s work’, are the result of structural discrimination and a major cause underpinning the gender pay gap. Adjusting the figures by these factors, they say, would be nothing but a calculation move and would not provide a true portrayal of the differences actually found in real life. Thus what can or cannot be reasonably regarded as gender pay gap is also a question of political opinion. This goes to show that statistics cannot provide a comprehensive picture of reality translated into figures, but merely mirror a certain aspect of it.

However, what statistics can do is offer a stimulus for improving the lot of disadvantaged population groups. They serve as a key basis for political decision-making and as a measure of the extent to which political objectives have been reached, of whether grants, educational programmes or new laws have had the desired

effects. Gender statistics therefore both underpin and accompany policies for equal opportunities based on factual evidence. While statistics are up to this task, it is still necessary to also consider both limitations and leeway with respect to methodologies and definitions. As became clear in the gender pay gap example above, statistics can highlight certain inequalities or take them out of the equation. Any kind of statistics will thus be preceded by a choice, the choice of what is relevant and what is not. What is relevant will be measured, what is relevant will draw attention. To come up with reliable gender statistics, it is therefore crucial to disclose the underlying equality objectives and to justify the methodology used.

For this choice to be made, it is pivotal that the stakeholders from the spheres of politics, government and science collaborate and that expertise on equality as well as on statistical methods and analyses is mutually shared between all of them. This is the understanding based on which the City of Vienna has approached this issue. Consequently, the topic of gender statistics in this issue of the Vienna Statistics Journal will be addressed from different angles by experts from the fields of statistics, promotion of women, and gender mainstreaming.

The key aspects covered with respect to gender data are basic methodology and contents as well as adequate interpretation and analysis.

- The article authored by Eva Maltschnig, Ulrike Pailer, Gerald Sirlinger and Edith Waltner (Department for Economic Affairs, Labour and Statistics (MA 23) and Department for Health Care and Social Welfare Planning (MA 24) of the Vienna City Administration) deals with

the methodological aspects of gender-sensitive data presentation and analysis. Some of the questions addressed are how the living conditions of men and women can be measured and what factors have to be taken into account in data collection and presentation.

- In her contribution “Equals after all? Gender-sensitive statistics and equality monitoring as instruments in the City of Vienna’s equality policy”, Stephanie Kiessling (Department for the Promotion and Co-ordination of Women’s Issues (MA 57) of the Vienna City Administration) addresses the need for gender-sensitive data as a basis for equality policies and equality monitoring systems. Kiessling writes about the challenges involved in developing and interpreting suitable indicators and explains the key considerations and approaches underpinning the creation of the first Vienna Equality Monitor.

- The focus of the contribution by Jana Schultheiß (Chief Executive Office – Executive Group for Organisation and Security, Office for Gender Mainstreaming) is on the significance of gender-sensitive statistics for gender mainstreaming. She outlines the importance of gender-sensitive data for integrating a gender-specific view into political concepts and government administration action. In doing so, she examines the question of what gender actually means in the mainstream of statistics and what problems arise in collecting this kind of data.

Methodology aspects in the gender-sensitive presentation and analysis of data

Eva Maltschnig, Ulrike Pailer, Gerald Sirlinger and Edith Waltner

Women and men are faced with different realities in their lives. Access to resources in society is distributed unequally between the sexes, and women and men are affected differently by political measures. To be able to map social reality as it is, to identify inequalities and to develop strategies to promote equality, data is needed. Collecting and presenting data – which includes simple comparisons by sex as well as complex systems of indicators – is referred to as gender-sensitive statistics.

The purpose of gender-sensitive statistics is to ‘adequately’ reflect the living conditions of women and men. And it is this very term – adequacy, the bringing together of real life and statistics – that presents the greatest challenge for statisticians. What attributes are to be surveyed and how? What measures are to be calculated to make the lives of women and men amenable to measurement and to have reality reflected as truly as possible in figures?

The following paper addresses these questions. First of all, we present data collection methods and data sources and describe the quality requirements the data in question have to meet. The next part is dedicated to possibilities for data presentation and analysis, ranging from the simple breakdown of data by sex or gender to more complex (sets of) indicators and indices. Then the paper goes on to describe key milestones in the development of gender-sensitive statistics as well as perspectives for gender-sensitive statistics based on current trends.

DATA COLLECTION

COLLECTION METHODS

Statistical analyses are based on data coming from different data sources, with different methods being used to collect and present them. The data collection for a specific statistical purpose is referred to as primary statistical data collection (example: census). The attributes examined and their variations can be adapted precisely to the specific question at issue, and a high match rate with the objective of the survey can

be achieved. However, conducting one’s own primary surveys requires a lot of resources, in terms of both budget and time.

Secondary statistical data surveys rely on existing data that originates from other sources and are collected for other purposes or questions. An example would be that all traffic accidents involving personal injury are recorded by the federal police forces within the scope of the process of producing traffic accident reports. So if you wanted to carry out a statistical analysis of the number of persons injured in traffic accidents, it would not be necessary to collect such data specifically and separately, as you can rely on the data collected by the police. For this reason, secondary statistical data collection is more cost-effective; however, there is always a certain degree of discrepancy between the existing attributes and the most suitable statistical measures. Currently, the trend in data collection is towards using existing survey data or administration data.¹

In practice, the two types of data collection are frequently combined, with secondary statistical data being used as the basis for primary statistical data collection. Following on from the example above, a separate (i.e. primary statistical) survey might additionally examine the views and attitudes of the population on traffic safety in a particular city.

DATA SOURCES

Official statistics – a term describing statistics produced by official institutions (in particular statistics offices) – rely on statistical information from both primary and secondary statistical surveys. These statistics are the most important and most frequently used data sources. International organisations (such as EUROSTAT, the OECD or the UN), associations and professional organisations as well as research institutes make a host of data available for detailed analyses or questions of a qualitative nature. Census and register-based data, administration data and household surveys count among the most relevant data collections to gender-sensitive questions:

¹ cf. Hametner, Kristina (2005): 5.

Population censuses provide the public administration with information about the population, thus fulfilling one of the oldest tasks of official statistics. They supply crucial demographic attributes, information about education and employment, journey to place of work or education and on household and family types on a small-scale level. As all personal data are available, broken down by gender and various socio-demographic attributes (such as age and nationality), they offer a potential for comprehensive analyses of gender-based differences.

Administration data are collected by public authorities not primarily for statistical purposes, but as a basis for delivering their functions. An example: the income data collected by the Main Association of the Austrian Social Security Organisations are a by-product of the administrative procedures having to do with social security. These data conform to the social security system's specific information requirements and thus lend themselves to sociological analysis only with certain limitations. For the social security organisations to be able to calculate social security contributions, it does not matter whether a person is working full time or part time, but only whether or not he or she exceeds a certain income threshold. Consequently, it is not possible to derive the extent of employment or pay-per-hour from such data. A key advantage of such material is that the data are available at regular intervals and low cost and in most cases cover different regional levels. Within the scope of the Open Government Data project, the City of Vienna makes a lot of the data it collects within the course of discharging its administrative tasks publicly available.

Household surveys collect information that is not produced in administration data or recorded in registers at all or only to a limited extent. The method consists in drawing a sample of the population and then extrapolating the findings from the survey to the entire resident population using statistical methods. While the data are surveyed by different attributes, the possibilities for differentiation on the regional level are frequently limited given the (too small) size of the sample.

2011 register-based census

The first 'population census' in Austria carried out in the form of a register-based census took place on 31 October 2011. The legal provisions underpinning this survey are Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses and the Austrian Act on Register-Based Censuses (Registerzählungsgesetz), Federal Law Gazette BGBl. I No. 33/2006, as amended. Statistics Austria (Bundesanstalt Statistik Österreich) makes anonymised personal data from the 2011 register-based census available to the provincial statistical services of each federal province in Austria. Making the data for each province available is a federal government service provided under Article 15a of the Federal Constitution (Bundesverfassungsgesetz, B-VG).

Open Government Data (OGD)

Open Government Data (OGD) stands for open access and free use and reuse of administration data. Administration data constitute a valuable public sector resource. In addition to strengthening transparency in administration activities and accountability, the aim is to ensure better opportunities for citizens' participation as well as improved effectiveness and efficiency in public administration work. The OGD strategy has turned administration data into a resource for government, business and academia. The OGD project data are made available for secondary use in machine-readable format and free of cost. In Vienna, a dedicated portal (<https://open.wien.at>) offering a data catalogue and additional context information provides access to these data.

An example of such a household survey is the labour force survey conducted by Statistics Austria within the framework of the so-called microcensus. This survey serves as the basis for an international data comparison on employment and unemployment. It comprises basic demographic data that also supply information on family and household structures, job position, industry sector, occupation as well as regular and actual number of hours worked.

Another example of household surveys are surveys on people's use of time, where respondents are asked how much time they invest in different activities. So far, three time use surveys have taken place in Austria: in 1981, 1992 and 2008/09. In the last survey in 2008/09, 8,200 persons documented, for a whole day, all activities taking more than 15 minutes to perform. The results of time use surveys supply information on the extent and distribution of unpaid work, paid work and leisure time, thus providing an accurate picture of the different living conditions and situations of women and men. What is particularly relevant to gender-sensitive statistics is information on unpaid work, as this tends to be much less well documented than paid work. This enables the assessment and highlighting of gender-specific role stereotypes and the resulting social and economic consequences.

DATA QUALITY

The collected data must satisfy stringent quality requirements and meet a multitude of criteria to be able to adequately depict the many different situations in the real lives of women and men. The European Statistics Code of Practice² provides principles and standards for the production and dissemination of high-quality statistics. Some of these principles are:

- **Relevance:**
Relevant data meet the needs of current and even future users, i.e. they do not ignore demand, but examine problems and questions of an important social or scientific nature. In gender statistics, it is also very important to integrate the findings from women's and gender research in respect of gender-relevant topics into the data collection process.

- **Accuracy and reliability:**
Accurate data portray reality in a reliable manner, i.e. estimations should be as close as possible to the ac-

tual value. The statistical error rate (for instance due to an insufficiently large sample or due to lack of responses) should be low and be disclosed upon data publication, a principle that is frequently neglected.

- **Timeliness and punctuality:**
Data are timely when the time elapsing between their collection and their publication is as short as possible. Punctuality refers to compliance with announced publication dates or statutory requirements.

- **Accessibility and clarity:**
In official statistics, it is particularly important that users have simple, comprehensive and low-cost or free-of-charge access to data. Clarity implies that the data are presented in a clear and understandable form. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to provide additional information about concepts and methods of data generation (metadata). In the context of gender-sensitive statistics, it is especially important that the data can be broken down by different attributes (gender, age, origin, lifestyle, etc.). To the City of Vienna, it is also important that Austrian data are available at province or district level.

- **Comparability:**
Data should be valid not only immediately within the area they are collected, but also ensure comparability across time and space. Consequently, data production should be as uniform as possible, with attention being paid to continuity of outcomes. This makes it possible to identify changes over time and correlate them with those of other regional entities.

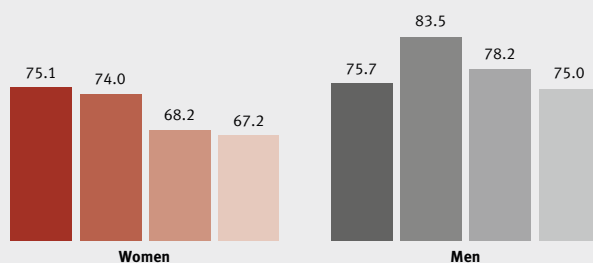
- **Coherence:**
Different data sources should produce identical outcomes for identical questions and it should be possible to combine them. This enables users to correlate these outcomes and gain deeper insights into real-life situations. However, different data are frequently based on different methods and concepts, so that certain questions might well yield differing answers (see example on labour market participation rates).

² cf. EUROSTAT (2011).

Who is right – the participation rates example

In spite of all the requirements defined for data quality, it is not always possible to come up with one generally applicable and uniform statistical value for a given problem or question. In labour market research, for instance, a data search will rather quickly yield different results for one and the same indicator. The chart below illustrates this situation:

Participation rate Vienna 2011



Abbreviations:

- WAFF = Vienna Employment Promotion Fund
- BMASK = Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection
- MC LFS = Microcensus labour force survey
- RC = register-based census

Source: Statistics Austria, Main Association of the Austrian Social Security Organisations; BMASK Bali Web, computed by: Municipal Department 23.

Depending on the data source or calculation method used, the participation rate for women in Vienna in 2011 is somewhere between 67.2% and 75.1%. As for men in Vienna, between 75.0% and 83.5% fall into the category of 'labour force' (= total made up of gainfully employed and unemployed persons). Now which value is the 'right' one? This is a question to which, unfortunately, there is no simple answer. One thing that can be said is that at least none of the figures is basically wrong, as they are all based on a uniform calculation formula:

$$\text{Participation rate} = \frac{\text{labour force}}{\text{resident population}} * 100$$

The differences result from a host of detailed aspects. For instance, there is a fundamental difference in the way that the labour force is counted. You can count by heads, but you can also count by employment. Depending on which method is used, a person having two part-time jobs instead of one 40-hour full-time job will be counted once (head) or twice (employment) for the same purpose.

The regional allocation of the labour force may also have a significant impact on the outcome. If you want to determine the labour force in Vienna, you have to ask yourself who should be included: everybody who works in Vienna or just those people who live in Vienna and are gainfully employed (what about commuters)? This allocation alone will account for a difference of some 150,000 persons.

In addition, you will have to clarify which types of employment should be included. All the rates include employees. But some will also include self-employed persons and/or those in minor or marginal employment.

But even after resolving such issues, further differentiation within the groups then taken into account (for instance by age) has the potential for impacting the value of the indicator. As a rule, people within an age range of 15-64 years are considered to be of working age. Yet labour market participation is significantly dependent on age and gender. Including women between 60 and 64 in the calculation will considerably reduce the rate by comparison with that of men. Given the retirement age of 60 years for women, as currently applicable in Austria, it seems entirely adequate to leave out this group, but not all data sources will do so.

And finally, differences will also result from the method used to collect the underlying data. Interviewing individuals may yield quite different outcomes than running a computerised evaluation of administrative data, the method used in the register-based census in 2011. A questionnaire may also produce answers that are considered socially acceptable and may thus be based on inaccurate information being supplied by the respondents. Furthermore, a survey will in most cases cover only a representative sample of individuals and the outcomes will have to be extrapolated to refer to a larger universe (for instance, the population of Vienna). In the case of detailed analyses, this may contort the outcomes. The advantage of such surveys is of course that the outcomes will be available much faster, enabling them to map more up-to-date trends than would be possible with the help of full-scale surveys.

To put it briefly: there is no 'right' participation rate. However, depending on the question asked, there will always be a rate best suited for the specific purpose and capable of portraying reality as accurately as possible.

In practice, there will frequently be either no data available at all for given issues and questions or the available data will not feature the required quality level. Faced with a lack of resources or authority for conducting a survey of one's own, one may be required to compromise and use the 'second-best' data instead of not having any data at all.³ There will be cases where you opt for data that are not comparable over the given period of time or that come from several different sources with different universes or underlying concepts. What is important is to document any such compromises you may have made. When publishing the data, you should always indicate the applicable restrictions (metadata) so they can be taken into account in any interpretation of the outcomes.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Gender-sensitive data can be presented in simple tables showing the data broken down by sex or in the form of more complex (sets of) indicators and indices. What shape gender-sensitive statistics take on in practice is contingent on a multitude of factors. The research problem as well as the availability and quality of the data will govern which form of statistical data presentation is admissible and useful. In addition, it is necessary to adapt the various kinds of aggregations of information to different user needs. The general public needs to be able to easily understand data and indicators without too much background information. For scientific applications, however, it will be necessary to use presentations that process a broad data resource and might be more difficult to comprehend, but in the end provide a more differentiated picture of the facts. However, it needs to be noted that the informative value of an indicator will not increase automatically along with the volume of data being processed, if such data are not capable of providing a better description of the facts at hand.

STEP 1: DATA PRESENTATION BY SEX

The easiest and therefore most widely used type of gender-sensitive statistics is 'sex counting', i.e. showing data for women and men separately. This type of data presentation may be referred to as a first step in or a minimum requirement for gender-sensitive statistics. The key challenge in this context is to select

which data are needed for which areas of life in order to actually map the different realities women and men are faced with.⁴ So this is not merely about consistently separating existing data resources by sex, but also about taking account of issues and areas that may not have been accounted for in statistics at all so far.⁵ Sometimes, the gender-sensitive evaluation of data will have surprising effects and open up new perspectives on subjects that had never before been analysed from a gender differentiating angle. Currently, there are a lot of gender-relevant topics and issues for which there are no data or very few data available (e.g. unpaid work or domestic violence) or where such data are not yet being broken down by sex (e.g. saving behaviours or private household consumer spending).

However, differentiating data by sex will also entail problems. If you differentiate only between women and men, this fact suggests that these are both homogeneous groups. Differences within each group are not shown, and there is a risk that gender stereotypes will just be propagated. In presenting gender-differentiated data, attention should also be paid to showing values for women and men on a par with one another. If – as used to be common practice – the values for women are shown only as a subset of the total ('of which women'), this will convey the idea of men being the norm and women being something that deviates from the norm and will mean making men as such invisible and possibly losing sight of specifics.⁶

STEP 2: COMPARISON OF THE SITUATION OF WOMEN AND MEN

A further step in gender-sensitive data analysis is to interpret the values for women and men separately, to correlate them and to generate informative indicators.

Indicators

Indicators are important measures that make it possible to say something about a complex set of facts. They help reduce the complexity of a given phenomenon by expressing the multiple dimensions of such phenomenon in a single figure. Indicators permit a quick overview of the status quo of the phenomenon to be measured; they map developments and make trends visible.

³ cf. Pölsler, Gerlinde (2007): 48.

⁴ cf. Hametner, Kristina (2005): 4.

⁵ cf. Wroblewski, Angela/Leitner, Andrea/Steiner, Peter (2005): 8 et seq.

⁶ cf. Pölsler, Gerlinde (2007): 96, Gender Competence Center (no date).

The purpose of equality indicators is to provide information about the situation of women and men in life and to permit an assessment as to whether or not actions taken were successful or objectives have been attained. They are to highlight desirable and undesirable developments and make changes measurable. One of the most useful tools for analysing larger data volumes is to calculate statistical location, dispersion and distribution measures, such as means. The most important means include the arithmetic mean and the median.

Arithmetic mean and median

The **arithmetic mean** (which is frequently also referred to as average) is the most widely known and most frequently used mean. It is calculated by dividing the sum of all numerical values by the number of those values.

The **median** is the value separating the higher half of a range of numerical values ordered by size from the lower half. In contrast to the arithmetic mean, it is more robust in the presence of outlier values.

Relatively well-known and ubiquitous indicators are correlation measures that correlate two reference values through a simple calculation rule. Word combinations with terms such as rate, figure, density or ratio make them easy to spot. Examples include simple percentage values, such as the rate of migrants within a certain universe, the unemployment rate, the population density in a given area, divorce rates, birth rates and many more. So instead of just showing data by gender, it is possible, by calculating gender-specific ratios, to highlight differences between women and men more clearly, thus making gender-sensitive statistics more informative. Key ratios include gender gaps and gender ratios:

Absolute gender gap, relative gender gap, gender ratio

The **absolute gender gap** shows the difference (in absolute terms) between values for women and values for men:

Variant 1: Values for men – values for women

Variant 2: Values for women – values for men

The **relative gender gap** shows the difference between the sexes in relative, i.e. percentage, terms:

$$\text{Variant 1: } \left(\frac{\text{values for men}}{\text{values for women}} - 1 \right) * 100$$

$$\text{Variant 2: } \left(\frac{\text{values for women}}{\text{values for men}} - 1 \right) * 100$$

Gender ratios reflect the relationship between the sexes (or the shares of each sex):

$$\text{Variant 1: } \frac{\text{Values for men}}{\text{values for women}}$$

$$\text{Variant 2: } \frac{\text{Values for women}}{\text{values for men}}$$

When calculating ratios based on variant 1, the values for men are correlated with those for women; when calculating ratios based on variant 2, the values for women are correlated with those for men. The choice of calculation method will impact the outcome: If the values for men are higher than the values for women, the calculation result for variant 1 will be a higher number than the one for variant 2 and vice versa (see example next page). Both calculation methods are valid, but which of them should be used in a given case depends on the question being examined and the information to be provided or interpreted.

Gender-specific income differences for employees in Vienna

(Average gross earnings for people in full-year full-time employment)

Calculation variant	Gross earnings women	Gross earnings men	Absolute gender gap	Relative gender gap	Gender ratio
	EUR	EUR	EUR	%	
Variant 1: Values for women as reference	41,973.40	51,223.80	+ 9,250.40	+ 22.0%	1.2
Variant 2: Values for men as reference	41,973.40	51,223.80	- 9,250.40	- 18.1%	0.8

Data source: Statistics Austria, wage tax statistics 2013, calculations by MA 23.

The table above presents these different ratios based on an example of gender-specific income differences for persons in full-time full-year employment.

A set of facts – the differences in income between women and men – is presented correctly, but in different ways. The income of full-year full-time male employees in Vienna is EUR 9,250.40 higher than the income of full-year full-time female employees in Vienna (variant 1) or the income of women is EUR 9,250.40 lower than the income of men (variant 2). As concerns the absolute gender gap, the only difference between the two variants is the sign. Under variant 1, the relative gender gap is +22.0%; under variant 2, it is –18.1%. Or, to put it differently: Men earn 22.0% more than women, their income advantage thus amounts to 22%. However, when you use the income of men as reference, the relative income difference will be smaller. Under variant 2, the relative gender gap, i.e. the income disadvantage of women, is 18.1%. This is the variant commonly used to present the gender pay gap. In terms of gender ratios, the income of men is 1.2 times the income of women (variant 1) or the income of women amounts to about eight tenths of that of men (variant 2).

The difference is caused by the calculation methods used. This shows how important it is for producers of gender-specific ratios to explain, and for users of such types of statistics to question, which method of calculation was used.

STEP 3: SUMMARY VIEW OF DIFFERENT DOMAINS

To get an overall view of a complex situation, it is useful to select a ‘set’ of key indicators that are representative of certain developments. Any attempt to portray multidimensional constructs, such as equality between the sexes, will always require multiple indicators. As equality touches upon diverse social domains, it is not possible to define just one single ‘equality indicator’. Instead, you will need at least as many indica-

tors as there are independent dimensions (aspects) to the problem. In this context, attention should be paid to not using indicators that are dependent on one another, as this will lead to overrating the importance of a single aspect of the situation to be surveyed. At the same time, you should also make sure that all aspects requiring to be examined are actually included and that sufficient information is provided on the facts to be measured. In any event, a list of indicators should remain clear and manageable so as not to lose sight of the essentials. The less suited the selected indicators are to measure the described phenomena, the more different indicators will be needed to obtain a reasonable amount of measuring accuracy. What is important in this context is to find a good balance between excessive detail and inadequate simplification. Individual indicators can be aggregated to obtain a more condensed view of the information; this means that several indicators will be combined to form an index.

A gender-specific index thus is a measure made up of several gender-specific statistics and indicators. The purpose of aggregation is to provide an overall evaluation of partially opposed trends in gender relations in different domains.

Index

An **index** is a measure combining several (weighted) indicators in one single value. Indices aggregate information in a single figure, but more or less hide the way they are structured and weighted.

The so-called Gender Mainstreaming Syndex (GM Syndex) permits assessing and observing the labour market situation in Vienna from a gender mainstreaming angle. Calculated every two years, the GM Syndex measures the differences between men and women. It is made up of 20 base indicators, each of them weighted identically. These are combined into four group indi-

cators by domain covered: employment opportunities, employment, unemployment and earned income. The indicators take a value between 0 and 100; the higher the value, the greater the gender-related differences in the period under observation.⁷ The problem with this measurement is the following: It is not always positive when differences decrease. For instance, when women become unemployed more often or men are at risk of poverty more frequently, this may well help gender equality, but is still not a desirable development. What is more, it is not possible to discern the underlying developments (without additional explanations).

The chart below shows the development of the GM Syndex for Vienna since 2004.⁸ Since 2004, the gap between women and men on the labour market has narrowed slightly. During this period, the GM Syndex lost 2.1 index points, standing at 25.5 points in 2013. However, this rise in equality has not been registered in all the indicators under examination. The values for the 'employment' indicator have increased, which points towards growing gaps between the sexes. Income still accounts for the largest share in the inequal-

ity between women and men. One reason for this is that 7 out of the 20 base indicators belong in the category of this group indicator, which results in a very strong weighting at 35%. On the other hand, this also indicates that the income gap between the two genders has been closing only very slowly over these past few years.

The benefit of indices is that they allow complex issues to be expressed in a highly condensed form and also to be compared. This goes hand in hand with a loss of the underlying detailed information. In many cases, it is also no longer verifiable how the index is composed and weighted, which gives rise to a vast potential for error and misinterpretation. Concept- and content-related considerations also play a key role, as opinions and objectives have an influence on the way an index is composed and thus also on the measurement results. Consequently, the given results cannot be considered to be 'neutral' or 'reality translated into figures'. Quite on the contrary, they are contingent on the views held by the institutions and persons that created the index.⁹

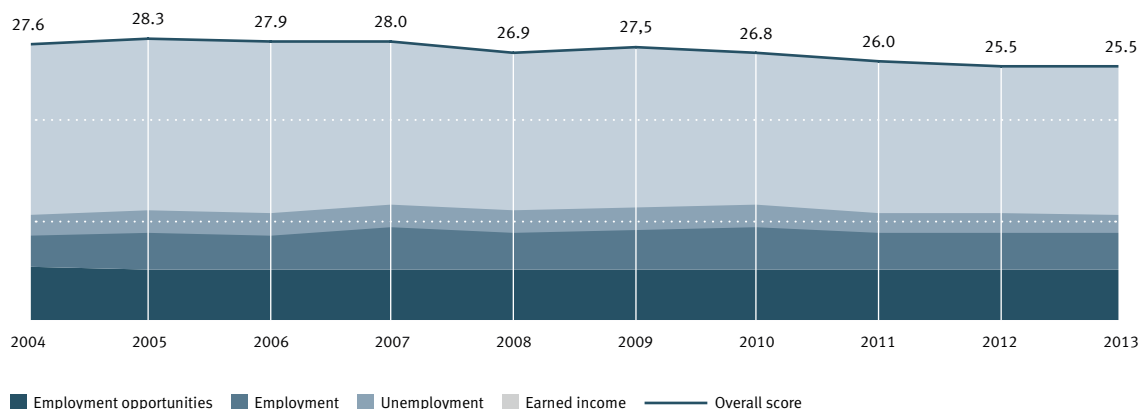
⁷ cf. Holl, Jürgen/Kembeiß, Günter/Prammer-Waldhör, Michaela (2014b).

⁸ cf. Holl, Jürgen/Kembeiß, Günter/Prammer-Waldhör, Michaela (2014a).

⁹ cf. Leitner, Andrea/Walenta, Christa (2007): 15.

Gender Mainstreaming Syndex - total score for Vienna

Development of the gap between women and men on the labour market overall



Note: The higher the indicator figure, the larger the gap between women and men in respect of their positioning on the labour market overall.

Source: Synthesis Forschung.

These institutions and persons determine which indicators and measures will be included in the index in question and what significance will be attached to different domains. Differences in concept entail that a given phenomenon will be measured in different ways. There are a number of indices that measure gender equality, with sometimes highly divergent results. The lack of comparability is aggravated even more by the fact that the indicators have to be continually adapted to changing circumstances. In the interest of flexibility and an improvement of index quality, it is sometimes expedient to exchange or remove individual constituent indicators of an index. However, retaining the previous manner of calculation and composition will meet the requirement of comparability over time. As is frequently the case, these requirements are diametrically opposed where the composition of indices is concerned.

There is no general rule for how to create indicators. For this reason, the development of suitable measures and measuring methods is “above all a creative act”¹⁰ or “first and foremost a question of imagination in terms of sociology”¹¹. In accordance with a UN definition¹², an indicator must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Trackable). This means a good indicator is:

- **Specific:** ... relates unequivocally to a given situation or phenomenon
- **Measurable:** ... is capable of measuring change
- **Attainable:** ... sets attainable objectives and indicates a clear direction
- **Relevant:** ... is relevant to the question at hand
- **Trackable:** ... is available and trackable for the stakeholders.

Indicator quality aspects can thus be viewed from lots of different angles, ranging from the data used to methodology questions to matters of content and substance. With respect to data, the first question to ask is what domains are relevant. Then it is important to find out whether data are available for this purpose and in how far these data meet the requirements in terms of contents and methodology. Methodology questions are about whether the measuring instruments are fit to measure certain phenomena and whether the measurement meets the criteria of accu-

racy, objectivity and reproducibility. Then it needs to be considered in which form the measuring results can best be presented. Questions of content or substance are about in how far information can be mapped without distortions and whether or not the differences in the situations and gender roles of women and men are portrayed realistically. Another important aspect is to verify whether comparisons across time and space are possible and whether the indicators conform to the needs of the users.

Meeting such a diverse range of requirements is only possible by relying on collaboration between subject-matter experts and on cooperation between data producers and data users.

DEVELOPMENT AND PERSPECTIVES OF GENDER-SENSITIVE STATISTICS

MILESTONES

International organisations and individual countries have been instrumental in spearheading the development of gender-sensitive statistics. The UN World Conferences on Women had this topic on the agenda right from the word go, starting with the first World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975 where the need for gender-specific data material was voiced.¹³ Statistics Sweden is not only the first national statistics office to have employed designated expert staff for gender statistics since 1983, but also published the widely quoted handbook “Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change”¹⁴ in 1996, making a key contribution at international level towards the further development of gender statistics in practice.¹⁵

In the 1990s, the issue of gender statistics attracted renewed attention through the fourth UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing. A separate strategic objective adopted by this conference was to “generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.” Organisations at regional, national and international level were called upon to generate gender-disaggregated data and to adapt existing statistical systems so as to be able to monitor the situation of women and men and provide an ongoing analysis of gender-based differences.¹⁶

¹⁰ English translation from Meyer, Wolfgang (2004): 24.

¹¹ English translation from Zapf, Wolfgang (1977) cited in Meyer, Wolfgang (2004): 24.

¹² cf. United Nations Development Programme (2002): 11 et seq.

¹³ cf. Pölsler, Gerlinde (2007): 9; Mecatti, Fulvia/Crippa, Franca/Farina, Patrizia (2012): 453.

¹⁴ Hedman, Brigitta/Perucci, Francesca/Sundström, Pehr (2006).

¹⁵ cf. Pölsler, Gerlinde (2007): 10.

¹⁶ cf. United Nations (no date).

The objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action provided an important impetus for international organisations to speak out for the necessity of gender-sensitive statistics as an element of equality programmes. The measurement of equality has likewise been advanced above all at international level. Fulvia Mecatti, Franca Crippa and Patrizia Farina (University of Milano-Bicocca, ABCD – Inter-departmental Research Centre for Gender Issues) analyse the most important existing gender indices prepared by supranational or international organisations sorted by order of historical development; they have observed a marked development both in terms of contents and methodology.¹⁷

The Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 likewise contributed to developing measures to attain gender equality, but also to further developing gender-sensitive statistics. One of the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted on this occasion is to promote gender equality and empower women in society. Goal achievement is verified based on clearly defined statistical indicators, with gender indicators also present for other development goals (in particular those relating to education and health).¹⁸

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

For gender-sensitive statistics to move forward, it is necessary to continually incorporate new trends and insights. The United Nations play a pro-active role in driving this process. In 2011, the United Nations Statistical Commission decided to expand the leading role of its Statistics Division in developing gender statistics. The following goals were laid down: review existing gender statistics and, based on the findings, derive a minimum set of gender indicators, prepare handbooks and methodological guidance and coordinate global activities in this domain.¹⁹

Reviewing the gender statistics of different countries by means of questionnaires gave rise to a fundamental insight: Even though 68% of the 126 responding countries have gender statistics produced by their statistical systems, only 15% of the countries have specific legislation requiring such surveys to be conducted. Like Austria, the remaining countries refer to provisions under equality law or laws that govern sta-

tistics in general. In traditional areas, such as mortality, education and labour market, gender statistics are published regularly in most cases, while this is much less frequently the case in other domains, such as media and violence. With a view to pushing existing efforts in gender statistics, the United Nations Statistics Division and UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) launched the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative. This initiative, which covers the period from 2012 to 2015, aims to compile a meta database of indicators on education, employment and health, to develop international definitions and methods for measuring gender participation in entrepreneurship and asset ownership and then test them in selected countries.²⁰

A new Gender Statistics Manual was presented in the spring of 2012.²¹ This online manual shows how a gender perspective can be integrated into various fields of statistics and how gender statistics can be analysed and presented. The manual primarily targets statisticians in less developed countries. 2013 saw the publication of Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women.²²

At EU level, the Actions to Implement the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men²³ included the creation of a new index for measuring gender equality – the Gender Equality Index²⁴. Developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), it was presented in June 2013. The purpose of the index is to make gender equality more amenable to measurement at EU level and show the progress of Member States in implementing their equality programmes.

¹⁷ For an overview of the development of important international gender indices, see Mecatti, Fulvia/Crippa, Franca/Farina, Patrizia (2012): 455 et seq.

¹⁸ cf. Mecatti, Fulvia/Crippa, Franca/Farina, Patrizia (2012): 453 et seq., United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and World Bank Institute (2010): 7 et seq.

¹⁹ cf. United Nations Economic and Social Council (2013): 2.

²⁰ cf. United Nations Economic and Social Council (2013): 2 et seq.

²¹ United Nations Statistics Division (no date).

²² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2013).

²³ COM(2010) 0491: Strategy for Equality between Women and Men and/or SEC (2010) 1080: Actions to Implement the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015.

²⁴ cf. European Institute for Gender Equality - EIGE (2013).

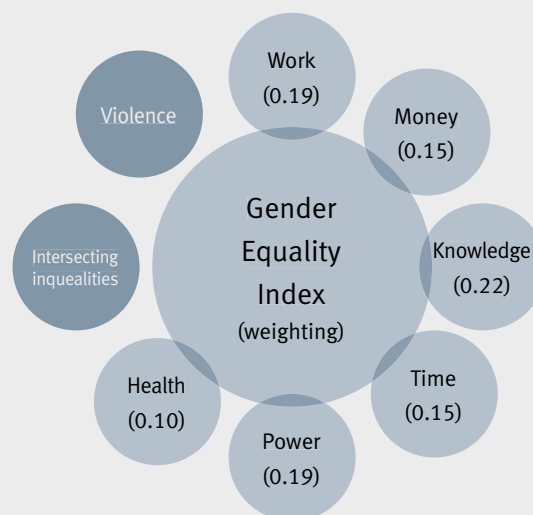
A new index – The Gender Equality Index

The Gender Equality Index measures the equality of women and men in the EU. The objective here is statistical equality – the gender gaps identified in the data are therefore taken into consideration in whatever direction they point, i.e. regardless of to whose benefit or detriment they are found to be. In terms of methodology, a correction based on the respective absolute value was introduced to ensure that a favourable index value would measure both a small gender gap and a high level of achievement. For instance, a favourable index value for life expectancy would mean that life expectancy is high overall and the gap between women and men is small.

The range of domains covered by the index is remarkable (see figure). In comparison with existing gender indices such as the Gender Development Index (3 dimensions and 3 indicators) or the Global Gender Gap

Index (4 dimensions and 14 indicators), the Gender Equality Index, which features 6 domains, 27 indicators and two additional satellite domains, is far more comprehensive. With respect to domain segregation, attention is being paid to having only outcome variables that measure a given status and to placing the focus on individuals rather than institutions or states.

Some indicators give rise to methodological problems, above all those which – due to a lack of alternative options – rely on household-related income data and are thus poorly equipped to map the individual situations of women and men. The two satellite domains of Violence and Intersecting inequalities (multiple discrimination) were included in the conceptual framework, but not used as indicators composing the index, as they relate only to certain groups and not to the total population.



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality – EIGE (2013).

CONCLUSION

So far, important progress has been made in some areas when it comes to developing gender-sensitive statistics. Statistics offices at national and regional level are more and more taking account of gender as a category in their statistics, and both the EU and other international organisations take actions to advance gender-sensitive statistics. It has meanwhile become established common knowledge that gender-sensitive statistics are not just about showing data for women and men separately, but also about selecting suitable domains and indicators that correspond to the respective objectives.

However, a look at data availability reveals that progress has been attained only on a relatively moderate scale. There are still a number of data gaps and quality problems. In some areas, there are no surveys available at all, while in others, it is not possible to interrelate or break down the data by gender, region or other relevant attributes. Gender issues are still not being sufficiently seen as an overarching topic, and 'gender-blind' domains still remain which transcend the traditional aspects of the participation of women and men in society and whose relevance to gender equality is not immediately obvious. One such domain is environmental policy, where climate and gender are in most cases presented as entirely unrelated topics and where the distribution and use of resources is neither recorded nor shown by gender. Frequently, the lack of data results in the focus being put on paid work or on the 'active labour force participation' phase in life, with differences in living conditions and circumstances not being taken into account.²⁵

So one of the remaining challenges in the further development of gender-sensitive statistics is to present a more clear-cut picture of the different living conditions of women and men, to find informative indicators and to correctly reflect the facts behind the numbers. As Kristina Hametner already pointed out in the last focus publication by the City of Vienna on gender-sensitive statistics in 2005, it is important to "ask the right questions [...], to analyse the available data from many more different angles and to look for additional data sources, to create an informative, consistent data set that also permits small-scale analyses to be conducted on smaller popula-

tion groups – and that over time."²⁶ This statement still stands, provided one regards the production of gender-sensitive statistics as a continuous process.

And yet – even perfection in conceptualisation and methodology paired with an ideal data offer will have no effect without the necessary political backing. The figures must be relevant to be able to produce effects. While changes in debt levels or GDP growth will set whole government systems into motion, the gender pay gap or the underrepresentation of women in politics and business is very rarely perceived as a serious problem. The whole point of politics, academia and society becoming aware of and addressing the issue of gender statistics is to make the figures being presented count in real life. If this effort succeeds, gender statistics may open up many new possibilities and opportunities. In a blog article on the OECD's Better Life Index, Angela Hariche and Karen Barnes Robinson, referring to the percentage of women in senior positions, come straight to the point: "[I]f a country's success was based on it, you can bet leaders would work a little harder to appoint women in top positions. If this indicator was important and recognised, imagine what might change."²⁷

²⁵ cf. Pölsler, Gerlinde (2007): 10 et seq., Leitner, Andrea/Walenta, Christa (2007): 21 et seq., Me, Angela (2005): 3 et seq.

²⁶ English translation from Hametner, Kristina (2005): 6.

²⁷ Hariche, Angela/Barnes Robinson, Karen (2013).

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Equals after all? Gender-sensitive statistics and equality monitoring as instruments in the City of Vienna's equality policy

Stephanie Kiessling

In 2010, the coalition government programme for Vienna concluded between the Socialist Party and the Green Party contained a resolution to establish a Vienna Equality Monitor to serve as a basis for the continuous further development of women's promotion measures in Vienna. In 2014, the first Vienna Equality Monitor was presented to the public.

In a first step, this article outlines the fundamental relationship between equality policies and (gender-sensitive) statistics as well as its extension – a step that was both necessary and expedient – towards (equality) monitoring. Using existing national and international monitoring systems as a starting point, the article examines how indicators are developed and how they relate to explicit equality objectives, a relationship that is sometimes fraught with problems. In conclusion, it discusses the key conceptual ideas and approaches used in establishing the first Vienna Equality Monitor.

ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EQUALITY POLICIES AND STATISTICS

"Equality is more than equal treatment and more than equal rights. Equality is the participation, based on equal rights and equal resources, of both genders in all areas and at all levels of society. Equality also implies a claim to equal standing and esteem. Women's promotion, gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are pivotal strategies in achieving this goal".¹

As both a modern-day employer and a customer-oriented service provider, the City of Vienna embraces comprehensive equality policies everywhere within its purview. What is emphasised in this context is that equality is not a so-called 'women's issue', but a human rights issue. First initiatives in this field date back to the beginning of the 1990s when, for instance, the City of Vienna Women's Department was founded (1991, see box on City of Vienna equality reports and programmes).

Since 2005, equality within the City Administration has been an agenda pursued in parallel in a sort of concerted action approach by several units, all with a different focus. In 2005, for instance, gender budgeting was enshrined in the Vienna City Administration's organisational chart (allocated to MA 5, the City of Vienna Department for Finance, Budget and Statistics²) and, since 2006, a relevant gender analysis has been included in both the budget and the financial accounts. In the same year, the Gender Mainstreaming project unit (called the Office for Gender Mainstreaming since 2011) was set up within the Chief Executive Office. In 2010, the Vienna Equal Treatment Act (Gesetz über die Gleichbehandlung von Frauen und Männern und die Förderung von Frauen als Bedienstete der Gemeinde Wien), which had been in force since 1 May 1996, was amended, and in 2011, the Equal Opportunities Advisers unit was established, which, among other things, is in charge of the Vienna Equality Programme (Wiener Gleichstellungsprogramm) and, since 2012, responsible for drawing up the income transparency report (Bericht zur Einkommenstransparenz).

What all these programmes and entities have in common is that they need sound and reliable data for their work, either to justify the readjustment of measures taken and services offered by the City of Vienna with a view to attaining gender equality or to highlight the need for such action.

"Equality of opportunity must be more than just a catchphrase, it must be corroborated by indicators, figures and targets. For equality policies to be sustainable and effective, they need to be able to rely on such information."³

In this context, it seems important to specify more precisely that 'equality of opportunity' is to be understood as 'equal opportunities in real life', i.e. including the conditions that must be fulfilled to enable individuals to have not merely formal choices, but actual ones. The fact that this level of equality has not been achieved in all walks of life even in societies that guarantee the equality of women and men in law continues to give rise to many emotional and frequently strongly

¹ English translation from Feigl, Susanne (2014): 10.

² Since 10/2009: MA 5 – Financial Affairs.

³ English translation from German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (2010): 4.

biased debates that question gender-based discrimination or gender gaps on principle.⁴

It is therefore not surprising that, in the foreword to the City of Vienna Integration and Diversity Monitor 2009-2011, Sandra Frauenberger, City Councillor for Integration and Women's Issues, argues that in domains where public debate is particularly fraught with emotion, such as migration or integration, there is a strong need for de-emotionalisation or greater objectivity. In

this context, this implies presenting and analysing the pertinent data, in conformity with scientific quality criteria, in such a manner that the real-life circumstances in our society can be portrayed as they are.⁵ This line of argumentation also lends itself to the so-called gender debate. However, any choice made in respect of data and indicators will direct attention and awareness to specific areas, reflecting in this sense the specific conception of what are politically relevant fields of action, be it in the domains of integration or equality.

⁴ For information on current anti-feminist debates, see: <http://www.boell.de/content/die-antifeministische-maennerrechtsbewegung> [23/05/2014].

⁵ cf. Integration and Diversity Monitor (2011): 6.

City of Vienna equality reports and programmes

The City of Vienna can look back on a long tradition of reports and programmes relating to women and equality. In June 1991, Vienna's first City Councillor for Women's Issues, Christine Schirmer, presented the First Vienna Women's Report 1990 (1. Wiener Frauenbericht 1990) to the Vienna City Council in an effort to justify the need for establishing a separate unit in charge of women's issues. In December 1991, the Vienna City Council then proceeded to adopt a resolution to this effect. From 1993, the Situation of Women in Vienna Report (Situationsbericht Frauen in Wien) (based on secondary data analysis) was published regularly as well as the Vienna Women's Barometer (Wiener Frauenbarometer) (based on surveys) from 1999 to 2010. These publications were then superseded by the appearance of the Vienna Equality Monitor in 2013/14. The City of Vienna Women's Culture Report (Frauenkulturbericht der Stadt Wien), which is dedicated to evaluating the City of Vienna's art and culture grant and funding practices on a gender-specific basis, has been appearing annually since 2001.

At the regional government level, gender budgeting was enshrined in the organisational chart of the Vienna City Administration and allocated to the Department for Financial Affairs (MA 5) in July 2005. The budget for 2006, which was completed in the fall of 2005, was the first one to fully integrate gender budgeting in the regular budgeting process. Ever since, all budgets prepared by the City of Vienna have been analysed for their relevance to equality, both at the preparatory stage and in the corresponding financial accounts. A separate chapter is dedicated to discussing this issue.

The Vienna Equal Treatment Act of 1 May 1996 provided for the issue of equality within the City Administration to be addressed in so-called Equality Reports (Gleichstellungsberichte) and Women's Promotion Plans (Frauenförderpläne). Since 2011, the Equal Treatment Report (Gleichbehandlungsbericht) and the Report on the Equality Programme (Bericht zum Gleichstellungsprogramm) (formerly Women's Promotion Plans) have been drawn up by the Vienna Equal Opportunities Advisers team. The Equality Programme, which has come to replace the Women's Promotion Plans, is an instrument created by law that provides for clear objectives and targets for the elimination of discrimination of women and ensures that any unequal treatment existing at structural and organisational level is counteracted. Pursuant to section 38 of the Vienna Equal Treatment Act, the Mayor sets the objectives and targets for the Equality Programme for a period of three years. Since 2012, annual reports on income transparency have been providing anonymised information on the wages and salaries of City of Vienna employees, broken down by occupation and gender.

In addition to the comprehensive reporting on gender equality or women's equality provided within the Vienna City Administration, further action plans and programmes are in place to advance the issue of equality on a more action-focused level, such as the Equality Action Plan (Gleichstellungsaktionsplan) or the Vienna Women's Health Programme (Wiener Programm für Frauengesundheit) (since 1998).

“When working with statistics, one always needs to keep in mind that statistics cannot be understood as ‘reality translated into figures’, but on the contrary play themselves a part in construing reality. As a tool for reducing complexity, they are characterised by choices and accentuations, which create realities of their own. Like maps, they mark salient points in social relations and circumstances. Which aspects are highlighted and which are left out, which indicators and measures are used will impact the portrayal of reality. Statistics are less of a hard-facts instrument than they are generally made out to be. They also mirror the underlying ideas and objectives of the persons or systems that developed them.”⁶

In spite of this ambivalence, it is still necessary, and especially so for the domain of equality, to be able to rely on data and facts in order to make the debate(s) more objective, to achieve gender equality on the basis of indicators, figures and objectives, and to provide equal opportunities in real life.

Official statistics – a central data source for the information needed for this purpose – is generally defined as the art of government by a state that wants to rule the population with the help of statistics and probabilities, at least this is how the Vienna City Council put it in 1862 when it established what was then called the City of Vienna Statistics Bureau. Assuming that modern statistics were born from the desire to have a suitable instrument for governing the population, for the purpose of ‘governmentality’ as Michel Foucault put it in 1978, another arrow needs to be added to the quiver from a women’s policy perspective, and that is the demand for a more (gender) equitable form of governing. Surveying, collecting and evaluating data should be neither an end in itself nor a haphazard kind of undertaking – particularly not in the context of equality. The crucial question in our context is above all to know the specific objectives for which data are collected and evaluated.

GENDER-SENSITIVE STATISTICS AS A BASIS FOR EQUALITY MONITORING

In 2005, the former MA 5 Statistics and Analysis group dedicated a special issue of its “Statistischen Mitteilungen” bulletins to gender-sensitive statistics. Already then, the authors of the lead article, Angela Wroblewski, Andrea Leitner and Peter Steiner from the Vienna Institute for Advanced Studies (Institut für

Höhere Studien) tried to do away with the myth that gender-sensitive statistics meant simply differentiating statistical information or data by sex (sex counting or sex-disaggregated data). Quite on the contrary, they pointed out, it was also about identifying and differentiating by other attributes that are relevant to the relationship between the sexes. The focal point of their line of argumentation is the process nature involved in developing useful statistical data sets; this requires different stakeholders to be involved as well as a sound knowledge of gender issues to ensure that, in a second step, data gaps can be identified and closed.

“The task is not merely and simply to show the existing data sets disaggregated by women and men, but far beyond that, the task is to change the entire process of data collection and presentation. The key factor in this change process is that both, the users and the producers of the relevant statistics, need to be involved. Data users and data producers should collaborate right from the start, as the users (researchers or political stakeholders) define what data they need based on specific research interests or given problems. In many cases, it will be expedient or even necessary for analysis purposes to process or merge data from different sources.”⁷

Gender-sensitive statistics does not only mean the mere sex-disaggregated collection and evaluation of data, but also includes criticism and analysis of the specific context and the informational value of the data as such. In themselves, statistical data do not yet have any specific informational value; they will make sense and lend themselves to interpretation only within the respective social context.

However, gender-sensitive statistics not only contribute data for more ‘equitable governance’, they are also capable by themselves of directing the focus of attention. By explicitly highlighting certain aspects in data preparation or differentiating by certain attributes not previously noticed or not noticed to any significant extent in data collection, statistics are able to place the focus of attention on marginalised population groups that previously were subsumed under an undifferentiated whole. Also, by diversifying seemingly natural attributes, such as the dichotomous category of sex or gender, statistics are capable of taking gender identities out of their biological context and making them visible as a social phenomenon (see also the article by Jana Schultheiß in this publication). While meanwhile

⁶ English translation from Leitner, Andrea/Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 1 et seq.

⁷ English translation from Wroblewski, Angela/Leitner, Andrea/Steiner, Peter (2005): 11.

at least the (dichotomous) category of 'sex' has become an established principle in both data collection and data presentation and there is hardly any doubt being voiced any more about the usefulness of sex-disaggregated statistics as such, the debate is currently focussing more and more on questions of how such data can be put to a meaningful use. As in all systems where information is collected and presented, it is pivotal how the relevant and important aspects are selected from the enormous volume of data and information supplied and how they can be presented in a manner that users can understand.

Data monitoring is a special tool that helps us direct our focus even more explicitly onto certain problem areas and keep them in focus through continuous and systematic observation. The basis or starting point for monitoring are statistical data that are collected disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories and are then transformed into indicators.

"Indicators are measures that provide information on facts or processes that cannot be measured at all or only with great difficulty. Their purpose is to classify observations made, allocate them to phenomena that cannot be observed and in this way obtain an objective basis for assessing such phenomena. Indicators are tools that help identify problems and changes over time, monitor progress or optimise solutions. They focus the attention on the strengths and weaknesses of the items under observation."⁸

This definition shows that there is a clear distinction between data and indicators. Data correspond to information which, in itself, does not yet allow any conclusions to be drawn. "To be able to use such information, it has to be interrelated within a meaningful frame of reference. The composition of indicators, on the other hand, is always dependent on the objectives being pursued and the perspectives for comparison being applied."⁹ Sex-disaggregated data alone thus do not yet relate to any concrete (equality) objectives, whereas indicators are based on pre-defined problems and/or objectives. However, many empirical reports on equality continue to refer to sex-disaggregated data as equality indicators. And when indicators are presented, the goals and objectives underpinning them are only rarely disclosed explicitly. If at all, hints as to what those goals and objectives are can only be found in the interpretation of such indicators.

EQUALITY MONITORING: STATUS QUO AND ANALYSES

In Austria, you can find several different equality reports and monitors, most of them, however, limited to special domains (focus on employment and education), such as:

- Re-entry to the labour market monitor established by the Austrian Chamber of Labour (AK Wiedereinstiegsmonitor) (annually since 2013)
- Figures, facts, analyses. Equal opportunities at Graz University (Zahlen, Fakten, Analysen. Chancengleichheit an der Uni Graz) (2010)
- Gender monitoring. ZIT - The Technology Agency of the City of Vienna (Gender Monitoring des zit. Die Technologieagentur der Stadt Wien GmbH) (2008, 2010, ZIT FemPower Studie 2012)
- Gender Mainstreaming Syndex – monitor for labour market policy gender mainstreaming indicators (annually since 2004).

On a broader basis with respect to subject matter, but with merely regional application:

- Women's Monitor established by the Upper Austrian Chamber of Labour (Frauenmonitor der Arbeiterkammer Oberösterreich) (2007, 2009, 2010, 2011)
- Indicators for the equality of women and men, Office of the Vorarlberg Provincial Government (Indikatoren für die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern, Amt der Vorarlberger Landesregierung) (2012)

The Gender Index has been published by the Federal Minister for Women and Public Service at the Austrian Federal Chancellery since 2011 (renamed Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs in 2014). Following on from the 2010 Women's Report (Frauenbericht), this index provides key information on the situation of women and men in Austria and has been updated annually since its inception. In general, the Gender Index comprises gender-differentiated statistics on selected domains and is openly accessible to the public. However, it does not contain any clearly defined indicators with respect to equality objectives in the narrower sense of the term.

⁸ English translation from Leitner, Andrea/Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 9.

⁹ English translation from Leitner, Andrea/Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 9.

The multitude and variety of the available reports highlight the lack of uniform indicators at provincial and regional level. While in Germany a uniform system of indicators was introduced in 2007 for all federal states in order to allow mapping the status and progress in equality policies¹⁰ and the First Gender Equality Atlas was published in 2009, comprising 30 indicators for the domains participation, education, employment and personal situation, similar efforts in Austria, such as the GenderAtlas¹¹, have only just taken off. The one advantage that those different monitoring systems have is that they are better suited to present regional particularities in a more specific and focussed manner.

But in Germany, too, the indicators defined for the whole country are being adapted to suit regional particularities. Partly because competences are not allocated equally among local authorities, it is not possible to break all 30 indicators down to the local community level. The equality report produced by the city of Freiburg tried to “map equivalent community-level spheres of activity based on the given data” and, in contrast to the Germany-wide equality atlas, with a focus on both genders.

In a study entitled “Measuring equality. State of the debate on gender-segregated data, equality indicators and equality monitoring” (Messung von Gleichstellung. Stand der Diskussion zu geschlechtersegregierten Daten, Gleichstellungsindikatoren und Gleichstellungsmonitoring) (2011), the authors – Andrea Leitner und Angela Wroblewski – examine how equality reports or, less frequently, equality monitors are designed in both international and national contexts. They identify five models, which can be roughly classified into two categories:

- Reports based on sex-disaggregated data and statistics without containing explicit (equality) indicators.

- Reports or monitors that develop or rely on equality indicators with different focal points:
 - » for international comparison
 - » for opening up new fields
 - » for continuous monitoring
 - » for specific objectives.

Taking the equality indicators for international comparison as an example, the authors show how much data availability and indicator selection can impact the results in respect of equality. They compare three indicators explicitly intended for international comparison: the EU Gender Equality Index, the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index.

The concept and structure of the EU Gender Equality Index (EIGE) is explained in more detail in the article on methodology aspects. It covers six domains (work, money, knowledge, time, power and health) as well as two satellite domains. These domains are in turn divided into sub-domains, which all enter into the index, weighted and measured by a total of 30 indicators. What makes this index special is that it is explicitly based on a theoretical concept of equality, more precisely the goal of equity as developed by Nancy Fraser and the universal caregiver model.¹²

The Gender Empowerment Measure is composed of the three GDI (Gender-related Development Index) indicators: life expectancy, literacy and real purchasing power per capita, supplemented by another three indicators intended to measure the relative political power of women and men (gender ratios in administrative and managerial positions, in professional and technical occupations and in parliaments).

¹⁰ cf. City of Freiburg im Breisgau (2011): 1.

¹¹ The GenderAtlas project is a cooperative venture involving the Vienna University of Technology, the University of Vienna and ÖIR Projekthaus. The Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology sponsors the project within the scope of its FEMtech programme. “The aim of the project is to develop a gender atlas for Austria that systematically collects data, indicators, information and analyses on the real-life conditions experienced by women and men, presents and visualizes these findings in their spatial dimensions and makes them easily accessible to a broad user base.” The project, which was conceived for a two-year period, was launched in August 2013. The atlas prototype is expected to go live in the spring of 2015.

¹² Among other things, this refers to the “structurally assisted opening of social spaces” (such as unpaid care activities in the family), because only this kind of opening will “provide women and men with genuinely equal opportunities to be appreciated and esteemed and to have a full range of possibilities to express their manner of being human”. English translation from Wagner, Gabriele (2005): 149.

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index examines four domains (economic participation, educational attainment, health and political empowerment) and integrates a total of 14 indicators in a composite index. These indicators each measure the relative gender gap, i.e. the share of women as compared to the share of men.

The figure below illustrates that a comparison of these three equality indicators or indices results in decidedly different rankings for 15 selected EU member states.

On the EIGE index, Austria occupies rank 14, a rather inglorious position, while it scores much better with rank 7 and rank 9 in the GEM and the Global Gender Gap Index, respectively. While Sweden comes first in all three indices, England and Belgium also present a wide range of variation. The differences in conceptualisation (focus on differences, focus on participation, etc.) as well as the factors being considered relevant (and their regional manifestations) have a major impact on the differences in ranking. While the aspect of unpaid work is a pivotal factor when it comes to equality between women and men in modern societies, it is reflected only in the EIGE index (time domain). The assessment of violence as a factor (relevant to the future EIGE index) and its inconsistent assessment in the FRA survey will be discussed in more detail below.

The rankings produced by the various equality indices show that different ideas on how and from what angle equality should be measured or what domains are relevant for this purpose will lead to different outcomes.

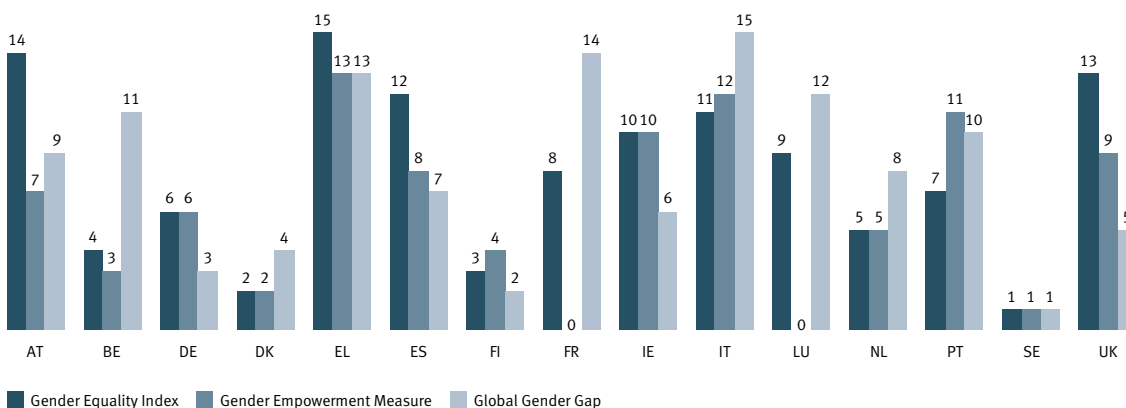
As a general statement, the authors find that, in the examples analysed, monitoring indicators that pursue specific equality objectives and present equality in a more comprehensive manner over time are still lacking for the most part. In conclusion, the authors comment as follows on the plans for the development of equality monitoring in Vienna:

"An equality monitor, i.e. a comprehensive collection of sex-disaggregated data, and an equality index, i.e. an index based on a compact, goal-oriented indicator system, are the two opposite ends on the spectrum of potential solutions – and we find that neither of these extremes would be a good choice. What would be important in our view in plans for developing an equality monitor is to create equality indicators that are based on concrete objectives. (...) This, however, will make it necessary to first define the objectives the attainment of which the monitor is then supposed to analyse"¹³.

¹³ English translation from Leitner, Andrea/Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 43.

Comparison of international equality findings

Equality ranking



Source: IHS (2011), data: EC, UNDP, World Economic Forum, in: Leitner, Andrea/Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 31.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND EQUALITY INDICATORS – A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP?

A review of international equality monitors or reports shows that there are only very few examples where – mostly within the scope of a gender mainstreaming process – an attempt was made to formulate binding and comprehensive equality objectives. A positive example in this respect is Sweden's equality programme. In 2006, the Swedish parliament adopted defined equality objectives:

“Overall objective: *Women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives.*

Interim objectives: *Equal division of power and influence between women and men. Women and men shall have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making. (...) Men's violence against women must stop. Women and men, girls and boys, shall have equal rights and opportunities in terms of physical integrity.”¹⁴*

The commission publishing the First Equality Report for the Federal Republic of Germany (Erster Gleichstellungsbericht) (2011) drew up guiding principles for the long-term reorientation of institutions and as objectives to be gradually attained through political action:

“We strive for a society where people have choices. The employability of men and women is ensured by offering adequate education and training. People are enabled to earn their own living and to establish their own social security arrangements. (...)”¹⁵

This example gives us a first idea why explicitly defined equality objectives are few and far between. Once formulated, the implied norms and values, the underpinning political understanding (of, for instance, equality) will become apparent and thus also open to criticism. It is with this in mind that Leitner/Walenta, in their paper on “Equality indicators in gender mainstreaming” (Gleichstellungsindikatoren im Gender Mainstreaming) (2007), underline the key influence the respective ideas and objectives of equality policy have on the development and/or selection of gender-sensitive statistics:

“Our basic assumption is that the choice of equality objectives will make a difference not only when it comes to interpreting statistics, but already when it comes to selecting the domains to be analysed, the indicators and the data to be used.”¹⁶

However, disclosing these implicit ideas (and values) will also expose the myth that statistics are seemingly neutral and unbiased and show that they are indeed directed by particular interests and based on particular positions. From a methodology angle as well, it is quite problematic to translate general objectives in terms of women's or social policies into concepts that are statistically or sociologically measurable and into indicators that have an informative value. If you take the example of the very general objective proposed by Sweden that men's violence against women must stop, the question arises in how far, for instance, the decrease or rather the increase in the number of incidents of domestic and/or sexual violence reported to the police can or should be an adequate indicator for the attainment of this equality objective. In this context, it seems expedient to differentiate between long-term, medium-term and short-term objectives. The Swedish example aims at a long-term decline of violence against women and girls. But, in the short or medium term, an increase in the number of reports to the police in this context is a possible indicator for heightened awareness and more openness in the public debate of this issue. However, the existence of such a link cannot be asserted conclusively, but will probably be ascertainable only in retrospect and in interaction with other developments.

Sometimes it also helps to clearly define the phenomenon in question, i.e. to say ‘domestic violence’ or ‘violence committed by partners and ex-partners’ instead of ‘violence against women’. For this purpose, it is not sufficient to break down statistics by gender, but it is also necessary to examine further categories beyond that. However, such categories will often become discernible only ex post facto and following a gender-sensitive analysis of the gender ratios predominantly

¹⁴ Alpkvist, Catharina (2011): 5 et seq.

¹⁵ English translation from German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (2011): 5, 48 and 233.

¹⁶ English translation from Leitner, Andrea/Walenta, Christa (2007): 13.

found in that domain. Presenting data on victims of violence by gender is thus an important first step that will allow conclusions to be drawn about the extent or the percentages of women and girls exposed to violence over a given period of time. But if the specific research interest is 'domestic violence' or, even more narrowly defined, 'violence against women committed by partners and ex-partners', as defined for the Vienna Equality Monitor (making violence against women committed by (ex-)partners visible and reducing it over the long term), further information will be needed, about the perpetrator as well as about the relationship between perpetrator and victim (acquaintance, relative, etc.). Police crime statistics, for instance, record the following with respect to perpetrator-victim relationships: for family relationships, as either 'living in the same household' or 'not living in the same household', or otherwise differentiated by 'acquaintance' or 'chance acquaintance'. Against the backdrop of the debate conducted in the 1970s and 1980s where violence against women was defined primarily as 'domestic violence', the collection of such information constitutes a major achievement with a view to making empirically valid statements about the numbers of women and girls exposed to domestic violence. However, these data fail to supply information on whether the perpetrator is the father, husband, brother, brother-in-law or stepbrother of the victim. This is problematic if the interest in the findings is focused on women who are victims of violence by (ex-)partners and not on the phenomenon of domestic violence as such. A trans- and interdisciplinary working group set up by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna in 2011 is preparing specific proposals for the categorisation of perpetrator-victim relationships in administrative data surveys in an effort to resolve the collection and evaluation problems surrounding the focus of interest in respect of the findings. "Given that no evaluations are carried out on how the gender and age of suspected perpetrators tie in with the 'perpetrator-victim relationships' assigned to them in the police crime statistics, it can neither be established whether suspects or victims (mostly) belong to the same generation nor how gender distribution correlates with the incidence of specific categories of relationships." This is just one example of how shifts in discourse and focus within a given domain have or may have an immediate impact on statistical data collection and vice versa.

A highly topical and relevant publication in this context is the survey on violence against women published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014.¹⁷ For this most extensive EU-wide survey conducted so far, 42,000 women aged 18 to 74 randomly selected in the 28 member states were asked about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence ('domestic violence'), as well as stalking, sexual harassment, and the role played by new technologies in women's experiences of abuse.

What is particularly remarkable apart from the dramatic results on the many different ways women are exposed to violence are the sometimes major differences between countries in terms of the prevalence of violence. Remarkable above all because the negative assessments also concern countries that are generally assumed to be particularly advanced in gender equality issues and where violence against women is supposedly at the top of the political agenda, such as Sweden and other Scandinavian countries. Sweden, for example, which at 74.3 has the highest ('favourable') ELGE score when compared with the EU average of 54.4 (or Austria at 50.4), ranks far above (!) the average in the equality ranking when it comes to the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women by (ex) partners or other persons: "Member States scoring higher on the Gender Equality Index also tend to have a higher prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women since [sic] the age of 15."¹⁸ The report explicitly addresses the differences between countries. "Just as official criminal justice data on recorded crime vary significantly between countries, there are often large differences between countries in levels of reported victimisation when people are interviewed for a victimisation survey. This applies to crime in general, and in particular to incidents of violence against women, which are particularly sensitive topics to talk about in a survey."¹⁹ Five reasons are offered as possible explanations. First, in different countries, it may be more or less culturally acceptable for women to openly talk about experiences of violence. Second, the degree of gender equality: Incidents of violence against women are more likely to be openly addressed and challenged in societies with greater equality. Third, women's exposure to risk situations, for instance whether they work outside the

¹⁷ The FRA EU-wide survey responds to a request for data on violence against women from the European Parliament, which the Council of the EU reiterated in its Conclusions on the eradication of violence against women in the EU.

¹⁸ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2014): 31.

¹⁹ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2014): 22.

home and go out and date or stay at home most of the time. Fourth, different overall levels of crime between countries, and, fifth, prevalent drinking patterns in a country.²⁰ This additional information is not meant to relativize the results, but to highlight different impacting factors. In any case, this example clearly illustrates the problems inherent in ‘measuring’ socially complex phenomena. The results of the FRA survey will enter into the computation of the EIGE index in the future in an effort to supply internationally comparable data for the domain of violence, on which data had not been compiled so far.

THE VIENNA EQUALITY MONITOR

As already mentioned above, the decision to create a Vienna Equality Monitor was laid down in the coalition government programme in 2010. In the spring of 2011, the Vienna Women’s Department was tasked with developing and designing such a monitor, and in the fall of 2014, the Equality Monitor was presented to the public. Against the backdrop of the questions and recommendations outlined above, the steering group in charge of conceptual matters²¹ decided on a few key principles, with respect to domain scope and definition of equality objectives as well as to guiding principles, especially in terms of how differences and interconnections are to be presented. These key principles are briefly explained below.

OBJECTIVES, DOMAINS AND SPECIFIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE VIENNA EQUALITY MONITOR

In keeping with the etymological meaning²² of the term, the purpose of the Vienna Equality Monitor is, through systematic and continuous data monitoring, to draw attention to relevant trends in the process of attaining equality and to call for corrective action where necessary. The central focus is on monitoring the progress and quality of the (equality) process to enable the process to be specifically guided into the right direction and undesirable developments to be detected as early as possible. A deliberate choice has been made in having the Vienna Equality Monitor address a broad range of domains so that new and relevant areas can be tack-

led even if they exceed the immediate scope of action of the City of Vienna. In an effort to meet relevance requirements, these domains include central and critical equality policy issues, such as education or paid and unpaid work on the one hand, while on the other hand, true to the aspiration of embracing innovation, they also shed light on issues that so far have rarely been analysed from an equality angle, such as sports, the environment or the media.

To arrive at (ultimately eleven) domains²³, it was necessary beforehand to identify or select areas that are relevant to equality and formulate specific equality objectives. The key question for developing objectives and spheres of activity was a highly ambitious one: “What knowledge or experience (with respect to the equality of women and men) do we want a monitoring system to provide?”. Ambitious because it was not geared towards actual availability of data, as a question like “What can we know?” would have been. With this in mind, the drawing up of more than 70 equality objectives was based on a broad understanding of what equality should be, covering different aspects and areas of life. The aim was to think outside the box and go beyond the topics and indicators usually taken into account and to focus on areas that have not been adequately covered by statistics so far. For, while the relatively high quality and density of data available in some fields permits relying on a whole set of indicators or a broad range of potential approaches (particularly for widely discussed issues such as paid work, income, education, etc.), there are either no data at all or only very few data and hardly ever any Vienna-specific data available for others (such as unpaid work, media, sports, leisure time, violence). Often, this is another argument why such issues are not included in classic equality reports or monitors, apart from the argument that topics such as health or violence are so comprehensive and complex in themselves that they (would) require monitoring of their own.

On the one hand, the equality objectives defined for these domains specifically aim to change the criteria used in decision-making, such as embedding gender competence in each of these domains, thereby achieving a sustainable change in the gender hierarchies currently in place there. “This is about changing positions of powers, about defying entrenched role stereotypes and reshaping the societal context

²⁰ cf. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2014): 25 et seq.

²¹ Since March 2012, the steering group has been made up of three permanent representatives from the Women’s Department (Karin Tertinegg, Martina K. Sommer, Stephanie Kiessling) and one representative each from the Gender Mainstreaming Office (Jana Schultheiß) and from Municipal Department 23 (Edith Waltner).

²² The term ‘monitor’ derives from the Latin verb ‘monere’, which translates as ‘draw attention to something’, cf. Leitner, Andrea/ Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 7.

²³ The final domains covered by the Monitor are: Political participation, leisure and sports, art and media, income, housing and public space, environment and mobility, health, social security and poverty, education, education and training, continued education, violence as well as paid and unpaid work.

in such a way that access to each of these domains is possible for everyone regardless of social attributes and living conditions”, as is stated in the introduction to the Vienna Equality Monitor. On the other hand, the focus in developing equality objectives was also on outcomes, with a view to making equality-relevant developments in the selected domains visible and not with a view to evaluating projects or activities undertaken by the City of Vienna or individual departments. Given the broad range of topics and domains covered, the Vienna Equality Monitor also goes far beyond the immediate purview of the City of Vienna, its departments and business enterprises.

To be able to present the breadth and diversity of equality in its full complexity, the option of index-based monitoring was deliberately dismissed, which meant foregoing comparability with other (national and international) monitoring systems. It was regarded as a key disadvantage of index-based equality monitoring that it would not be possible to record or take adequate account of attributes specific to Vienna, which are particularly relevant especially in connection with pro-active equality policies. An example: In order to make the defined equality objective “Increasing participation of women and integration of gender criteria in urban planning” measurable for the purpose of monitoring, it is of crucial importance to take account of how City of Vienna competitions (e.g. for publicly funded housing development (Wohnfonds Wien), design of public parks, public spaces, etc.) are actually organised, i.e. to look at how the respective decision-making bodies are structured (due consideration of gender expertise or proportion of women in the awarding juries).

But even the most ambitious monitoring project constitutes a limited system if the principle to follow is that “monitoring [is] the art of collecting the necessary information with as little effort as possible in order to make landmark decisions in a timely manner”²⁴. This is why certain restrictions had to be defined also within the relevant domains so as to keep the monitor ‘readable’ (within the bounds of reasonableness), which of course resulted in placing the focus on particularly interesting aspects. On the basis of this extensive set of defined equality objectives, the Vienna Institute for Advanced Studies was commissioned to conduct a debate with experts both inside and outside the Vienna City Administration over a period of several

months in order to operationalize these objectives for the purpose of monitoring and to pool them and flesh them out once more with a focus on the central aspects of each domain. The key challenge therefore was to strike a balance between the variety of topics covered and a manageable number of indicators.

With its decision not to use index-based monitoring, the Equality Monitor steering group was in agreement with the conceptual deliberations of the Vienna Integration and Diversity Monitor.²⁵ During the development process, the Integration and Diversity Monitor provided a key benchmark, especially in terms of the problems surrounding valid data and being able to differentiate between them, as the problems addressed were of a similar nature, even if against a backdrop of different theoretical approaches. While in the context of integration, a pivotal issue is to define or identify the target group – who exactly is a migrant? – and represent it in data sets (nationality vs. country of birth/origin vs. national or foreign by education or a combination of these features) and to differentiate the group as accurately as possible by migration backgrounds (first and second generation), defining the target group seems to be comparatively simple when it comes to gender – differentiated by women and men, given a world (still/only) construed on the basis of two sexes – even if such definition has not yet become sufficiently established in all relevant fields.²⁶ But already at the next level of analytical detail, when it comes to evaluating data by (equality-)relevant subgroups such as single parents, migrants, etc., any ambitious monitoring system will soon reach the limits of the informational value provided by its data. Frequently, these data will not lend themselves at all or only to a limited extent to an analysis conducted in line with the principles outlined below.

²⁴ English translation from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC/DEZA) 2003: 68.

²⁵ Unlike the Integration and Diversity Monitor, which is published biannually, the Equality Monitor has been designed to be published every three years, one of the reasons for this being that the phenomena under observation are assumed to be relatively stagnant and that significant change will become apparent only over longer periods of time.

²⁶ Including a potential third or alternative gender into the (register) data and other Vienna-specific surveys is (unfortunately) not yet a matter under discussion at the moment.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE VIENNA EQUALITY MONITOR

While the discussion surrounding Vienna's equality objectives was primarily a (equality) political process conducted on an expert level, sociological criteria such as quality, objectivity, adequacy and, last but not least, availability, played a much greater role in the process of developing indicators.²⁷ These criteria apply to all sociological-empirical work, but the Vienna Equality Monitor relies on additional specific principles that had a major impact on the selection and development of indicators. This is discussed in detail in the introduction to the Equality Monitor.

The discrimination of women in various areas of life was the central starting point for developing equality objectives and indicators. What was decisive for selecting particular aspects was that the problems were relevant to women, and not if there was any backlog experienced by men. However, the equality aspects included in the monitor are generally represented in the form of gender ratios so as to make the overall (dis)proportionality visible. In this respect, all indicators are relevant to equality. General objectives that have no relevance for equality (in regard to discrimination of women) were not taken into account.

The focus on discriminatory structures between the sexes does not mean that women (or men, for that matter) are defined as a homogenous group. The Vienna Equality Monitor tries to capture and show women and men in all their multifacetedness and diversity. The difference between the sexes is not always the most informative or most highly relevant difference; many differences of relevance to equality will only become apparent after a differentiated analysis of certain subgroups. When you look at the domain of housing, for instance, the subgroup of single parents or people (women as much as men) from a migrant background turns out to be particularly disadvantaged. However, empirical analysis often fails to meet the aspiration of intersectionality, i.e. the consistent analysis for further dimensions of differentiation with a view to showing how different structural categories interact, because either the samples are too small or the relevant categories (age, health problems, migrant background, etc.) are not captured at all.

Ultimately, the Monitor also aims to make gaps in the data visible. As pointed out above, the Vienna Equality Monitor relies exclusively on existing data sets. In this context, indicator development will frequently reach its limits, as the data sometimes do not feature any information about gender or other social attributes, do not adequately map the realities of life women are faced with or are not edited in such a way that they would allow for gender-specific evaluations to be performed. These gaps in the data are explicitly addressed in the Monitor, so that both data and indicators can be further developed on the basis of such information.

The Vienna Equality Monitor tries to bridge the gap between topics that are relevant to equality policies and topics that, while interesting from an equality policy angle, have not been adequately researched until now. Moreover, it tries to show how issues are interwoven and interact with one another. In this respect, monitoring is regarded as a continuous process that will not stop once the proposed indicators have been defined, a process that in itself will drive the necessary adaptations of indicators and, where applicable, equality objectives.

*"Equality indicators are thus also an element of a doing-gender process; they construe social reality and determine gender ratios by reproducing or reinforcing gender stereotypes or counteracting them."*²⁸

²⁷ What also played an important role in indicator development was the possibility to use available, i.e. already existing, data sources, the continuous availability of such data as well as the fact that the data related specifically to Vienna or lent themselves to evaluation under a Vienna perspective.

²⁸ English translation from Leitner, Andrea/Wroblewski, Angela (2011): 1.

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The significance of gender-sensitive statistics for gender mainstreaming

Jana Schultheiß

The key focus of gender mainstreaming is on integrating a gender-related view into all political concepts and at all levels of public administration. However, gender aspects are not always obvious, at least not at first sight. Statistics that are based on gender-sensitive surveys provide an important basis in this context, as they are able to show existing differences between the sexes in society and serve as an essential prerequisite for identifying inequalities. This paper examines the significance of gender-sensitive statistics for implementing gender mainstreaming, taking the City of Vienna as an example, while also exploring the question of what 'gender' really means in the mainstream of statistics.

The key question, addressed from a theoretical angle, will be what the term gender statistics really means. In practice, it refers in most cases to personal data that are collected and evaluated disaggregated by biological sex, i.e. by women and men. However, unlike the biological 'sex', 'gender' is understood as the socially and culturally influenced gender or 'social gender'. And this kind of category is very difficult or even impossible to capture by statistics. Still, experts today understand the term gender statistics to mean more than just the disaggregation of personal data statistics based on the male/female attribute as mentioned above. Findings from women's and gender research are integrated into the problems or questions examined by the statistics in question, which has impacts on what these statistics will look like. This is the understanding based on which the City of Vienna has approached this issue. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to take a look at the underlying theoretical debate to arrive at a better understanding of the term 'gender' and what challenges gender-sensitive statistics are faced with.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE VIENNA CITY ADMINISTRATION

The objectives of gender mainstreaming are to reduce differences that cause structural disadvantages for one gender, for instance where the socio-economic realities of life are concerned, to ensure equal opportunities and to demolish role stereotypes in behaviour and traditional expectations. One aim that is always

part and parcel of gender mainstreaming is to make existing power relations in society and different opportunities for participation by women and men visible. It is presumed that the gender roles that are considered the norm in society can be changed and actually do change.¹ Accordingly, structures and institutions must also be amenable to change, as there are obvious interdependencies. In contrast to what is frequently being implied, it is definitely not an objective of gender mainstreaming to do away with any and all differences between women and men.

Gender mainstreaming has been embraced by the Vienna City Administration since 2000. In 2005, institutional responsibility for this issue was assigned to the Chief Executive Office, to which the former Gender Mainstreaming project unit, now the Office for Gender Mainstreaming, reports. The Office for Gender Mainstreaming starts from the assumption that life's realities and societal opportunities are still not the same for women and men. For this reason, all City Administration decisions, projects and undertakings should take the diverging interests and needs of women and men into account. With this in mind, applying gender mainstreaming will ensure that the products and services offered by the City of Vienna will contribute to furthering the equality of women and men in Vienna.² To be able to identify the (diverging) needs of female and male citizens, it is necessary to have data that were collected and evaluated from a gender-sensitive perspective as well as analyses with a corresponding focus on gender-sensitivity. This may take the form of satisfaction surveys, but also use statistics that are evaluated with the necessary gender competence³. For example, if girls use a sports facility or park less than boys, the reason may be a lack of adequate sports offerings or simply the fact that there are no changing rooms for girls. The collected data can highlight differences and provide a basis for informed decision-making that helps to better target activities and products to their poten-

¹ cf. Eckstein, Kirstin (2007): 180 et seq.

² cf. City of Vienna (2011): 4.

³ "Regardless of age, income, education, origin and family situation, women and men are still faced with different expectations and different opportunities and limitations. Persons who have gender competence are sensitive when it comes to identifying such differences and always prepared to acquire more knowledge and apply it in their field of work", English translation from City of Vienna (2011): 41.

tial addressees. Ideally, stronger target group orientation will result in offers becoming better and more efficient overall, as it is possible to plan services specifically to meet different needs.⁴ Given its pivotal role, the principle of gender-specific data collection and analysis is one of five gender mainstreaming principles defined by the Vienna City Administration for its work. The other principles are gender-sensitive language, equal access to services for women and men, equal participation of women and men in decision-making, and integration of equal treatment in steering processes.⁵ Gender budgeting⁶, which is mandated by law, also needs sex-disaggregated data as a key basis. The City of Vienna implements gender budgeting in the following manner: the budget states the intended female and male users of relevant measures (who is the target audience of the measure?) and the financial accounts then compare this figure against the actual number of users, likewise disaggregated by sex. Indicators are provided to make the success of implemented measures visible in terms of gender equality.

In summary, one can say that gender-sensitive statistics are necessary in order to identify the still existing differences in the lives of women and men (for instance, by means of indicators or more comprehensive monitors, see also Kiessling in this publication) and then design measures specifically for the relevant target groups. In this context, Hedman et al. point out the special significance of gender statistics, since the perception of gender roles is very often wrong. People living in countries where laws and other rules guarantee equality and human rights frequently tend to believe that equality has de facto been achieved and therefore underestimate existing discrimination. “And wrong perceptions prevent people from changing the situation”.⁷ In many areas, there is still a need to overcome gender blindness. Gender blindness implies that gender is ignored as a variable and that domains or areas are shown as genderless or gender-neutral, while in fact, in most cases, they are not. Gender-sensitive statistics can help question such ‘blindness’ or failure to recognise gender as a structural attribute.

ENGENDERING STATISTICS – GENDER-SENSITIVE DATA IN THE STATISTICAL MAINSTREAM

Internationally, and above all at the United Nations (UN), the issue of gender-sensitive statistics has been pursued for some decades (see also Maltschnig et al. in this publication). A large number of handbooks and online tools have meanwhile been created.⁸ They frequently describe gender-sensitive statistics as a comprehensive process that covers a lot more than just differentiating data by sex. Quite on the contrary, it affects all stages of the statistics production process, as is stated, for instance, in a UN online tool: “Integrating a gender perspective into data collection goes beyond recording the sex of the respondent (or household member, reference person, or head of the household, for that matter). It entails a review of the data collection process in all its stages – from the selection of topics to be covered by the survey or census, to questionnaire or form design, sample design, selection and training of interviewers and supervisors, data collection in the field, data coding and data editing – and paying attention to all factors that could potentially lead to a gender bias in the data”⁹. So the gist of it is to integrate the gender perspective into all aspects, from topic selection to form of survey, questionnaire and interview design to data collection and presentation.

The handbook “Engendering Statistics. A Tool for Change”¹⁰, which was published by Statistics Sweden as early as in 1996 and is still considered the fundamental work on gender-sensitive statistics, describes an ideal process for producing gender statistics. The authors of this publication developed a multi-stage process in which great attention is paid to identifying problems and needs. In this context, the need for an exchange between the producers and users of statistics is underlined as a major point in the development of gender-sensitive statistics: users must formulate their specific data demand and producers must be able to understand that demand. The issue of data gaps is addressed as well, as is the need to collect new data

⁴ cf. Jary, Karin (2013): 10.

⁵ cf. City of Vienna (2011): 9

⁶ Article 13 (3) of the Austrian Federal Constitution reads: “Federation, provinces and municipalities must aim at the equal status of women and men in budget management.”

⁷ Hedman, Birgitta/ Perucci, Francesca/ Sundström, Pehr (1996): 41.

⁸ Here are a few examples: United Nations Statistics Division: Gender Statistics Manual. Integrating a gender perspective into statistics, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/Default.aspx> [16/01/2014] or United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE): Gender Statistics, <http://www.unece.org/stats/gender/> [16/01/2014].

⁹ United Nations Statistics Division.

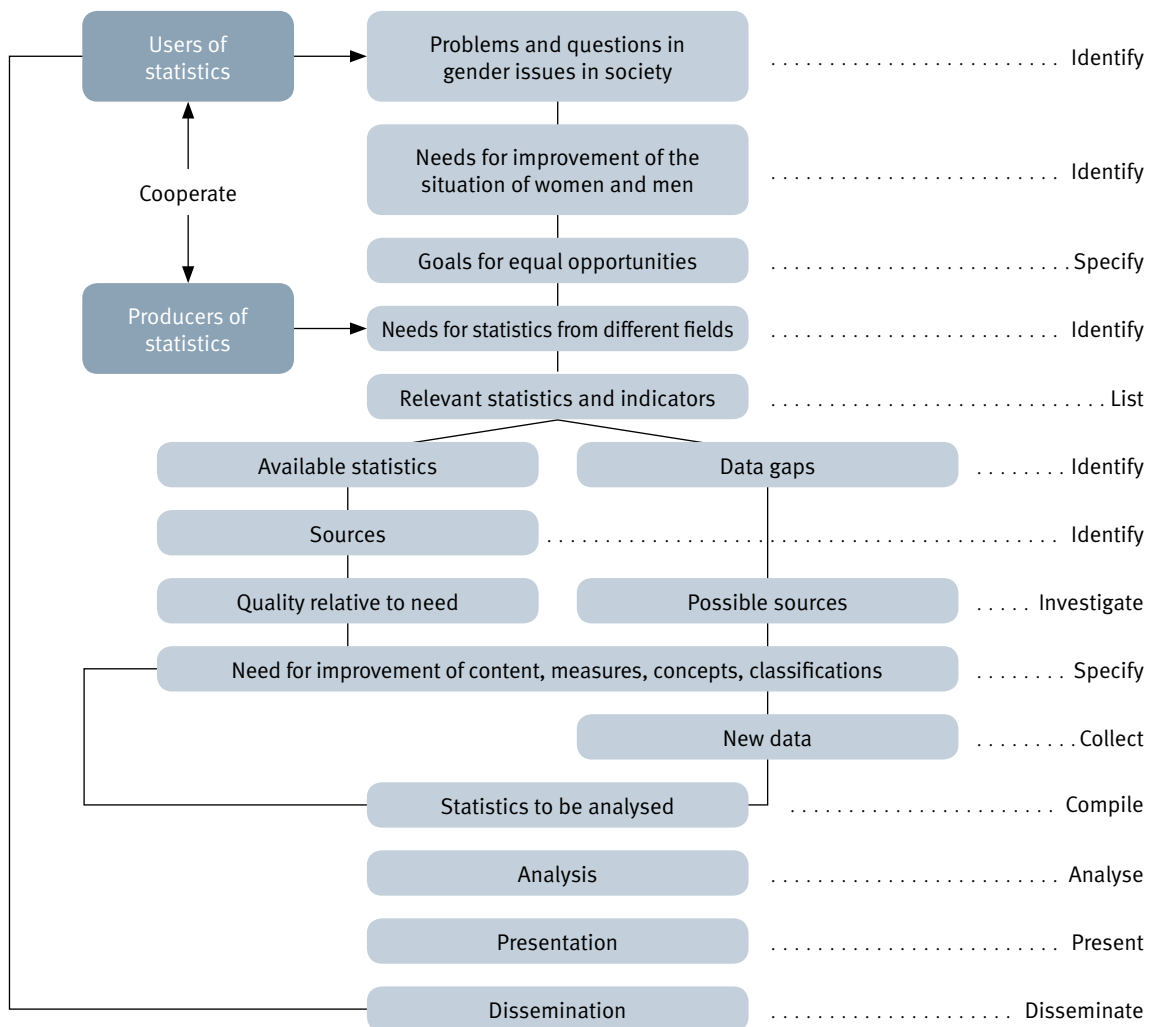
¹⁰ Hedman, Birgitta/ Perucci, Francesca/ Sundström, Pehr (1996): 8 et seq.

or combine different data sources with a view to improving statistics. Hedman et al. describe the production of gender statistics as a never-ending process – it is a continuous process of integrating developments and improvements of gender statistics into the entire official statistical system. One statistical output of the production process creates a new in-

sight of the situation of women and men and a new understanding of users' needs. This in turn leads to new needs for gender statistics in the same area of concern or in new areas.¹¹

¹¹ cf. Hedman, Birgitta/ Perucci, Francesca/ Sundström, Pehr (1996): 11.

Gender Statistics
The Production Process



“ALL STATISTICS ON INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE COLLECTED BY SEX. (...) ALL STATISTICS SHOULD REFLECT GENDER ISSUES”¹²

The fact that the production of gender statistics concerns the entire official statistical system is a key point made in the Swedish handbook. Concepts and methods used in data collection and presentation must adequately reflect gender issues and take into consideration all factors likely to produce gender-based bias.¹³ What is called for then is mainstreaming or engendering the whole field of statistics. This ties in more or less with the above-mentioned gender mainstreaming principle of gender-specific data collection and analysis as applied by the Vienna City Administration. All personal data are to be presented disaggregated by sex and to be reviewed for potential further gender aspects, and this applies not just to data that are directly relevant to specific women's and equality issues. Equality and gender aspects have to be taken into consideration and analysed in all domains. But beyond all that, gender is to become an integral element of the statistical mainstream. This is made very clear by the concept of engendering. The aim here is to integrate a gender perspective and/or gender sensitivity into existing domains or areas of political activity, such as statistics or, frequently, macroeconomics, in an effort to overcome gender blindness. A specific domain – statistics in this case – is to be redesigned from a gender perspective.¹⁴

A crucial issue in statistics is to identify and take account of factors that may produce gender bias. Gender bias is a gender-based distortion likely to (negatively) impact data and research outcomes. According to the GenderCompetenceCenter¹⁵, the three most frequently found forms of gender bias are androcentrism, gender insensitivity and double standards. Androcentrism in research means that problems and views are (implicitly) investigated from a male perspective, even though the questions involved concern women in equal measure. With respect to data, this may entail that, even though women are being left out of or being underrepresented in data collection, the results are used to draw conclusions applicable to women and men alike (this may turn out to be a problem, for

instance, when medical drugs are tested only on men, but are taken by women as well). When studies on single parents only collect data on women, this also qualifies as gender bias. Gender insensitivity refers to the same thing as gender blindness – gender being ignored as a variable in research. This may happen when the smallest unit under investigation is a household, which makes gender relations within such households invisible. The frequent failure to address the issue of unpaid work and how it is distributed is another typical example of gender insensitivity in labour market research. Double standards means that identical characteristics or behaviours are assessed or investigated differently with women and men, often based on the influence of stereotypes. An example would be to portray childcare obligations as normal and positive for women, but as non-normal for men.¹⁶ Hedman et al. list a host of other issues where gender aspects may be overlooked and gender stereotypes present in society may be reproduced in statistics. Potentials for bias range from the set-up of samples, the language used in concepts and questionnaires, the setting of reference periods or the existence or non-existence of gender sensitivity among interviewers up to the selection of respondents.¹⁷ Interviewers need to have a minimum of gender competence to avoid reproducing stereotypes in respect of certain topics. It should also be taken into consideration that respondents may give different answers depending on whether they are interviewed alone or in the presence of other household members. An example involving reference periods would be that women and men might be employed in seasonal work to a different extent, which might then again impact the research outcomes, etc.

Awareness of what has been said above about gender bias and the reproduction of stereotypes can, when combined with adequate counter measures, lead to an overall increase in the quality of statistics, as is pointed out for instance in a gender statistics manual published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Bank Institute. Gender statistics can contribute to providing a better description of life's realities for the population as a whole: “Gender statistics have an important role in improving the whole statistical system, pushing it to describe more accurately and fully the activities and characteristics of the whole population, which is made of women and men.”¹⁸

¹² Hedman, Birgitta/ Perucci, Francesca/ Sundström, Pehr (1996): p. 42.

¹³ cf. Hedman, Birgitta/ Perucci, Francesca/ Sundström, Pehr (1996): p. 42.

¹⁴ cf. Çağlar, Gülay (2009): 17.

¹⁵ The GenderCompetenceCenter was founded in 2003 by Prof. Susanne Baer, at Berlin's Humboldt University. Its main task was to provide consulting to the German federal government on gender mainstreaming and gender equality strategies. Since 2010, the project has been continued autonomously, since 2011 as a facility operated by the Gender/Queer e.V. association. Its website provides a host of information on many topics in the field of gender mainstreaming. <http://www.genderkompetenz.info/> [21/01/2014].

¹⁶ cf. on this paragraph: GenderCompetenceCenter (a).

¹⁷ cf. Hedman, Birgitta/ Perucci, Francesca/ Sundström, Pehr (1996): 60 et seq.

¹⁸ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and World Bank Institute (2010): 7.

SEX COUNTING – HEADCOUNTS OR GENDER STATISTICS?

As described above, the term ‘gender’, unlike the biological ‘sex’, is understood to mean the socially and culturally influenced gender or ‘social gender’. Gender also includes education and socialisation in line with defined gender roles and expectations that society has in respect of women and men. In practice, however, the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ tend to be frequently mixed up or used synonymously. This may result in confusion and misunderstandings, as these different terms are underpinned by different concepts. The widely used term ‘gender statistics’ needs to be questioned specifically in this respect. In nearly all cases, gender statistics refer to personal data that are collected and evaluated disaggregated by biological sex, i.e. by women and men. The category or variable of ‘gender’ with the meaning described above is, as such, very difficult to survey, if at all.¹⁹ Corner, too, considers gender not as a very useful category for defining statistics or statistical variables, as gender aspects can be assessed very differently by different observers. She says: “Gender statistics are disaggregated by sex and not by gender”.²⁰

The debate as to how far biological sex and social gender have to be deemed identical in data collection and evaluation for pragmatic reasons, such as feasibility, is difficult at times. Döring, for instance, has a rather critical stance towards the argument of using biological sex as a representative of social gender “because most people are socialised in a gender-specific way based on their biological sex, so that surveying the biological sex will already cover social gender by approximation”. In doing so, she perceives the risk that the construction of social gender will ultimately be eliminated after all in sociological research and that biological sex will be used as an explanatory factor even if “in reality, it explains nothing at all”.²¹ Corner, on the other hand, points out the close link between sex and gender in everyday life. For her, one of the main reasons for the interest in sex-disaggregated data is its capacity to reveal differences between women and men or girls and boys at a particular point in time, such as their average labour force participation or level of education, that are the result of gender differences in their lives. The lower labour force participation rates of women, she argues, are also the result of women’s dif-

ferent gender roles (women are more likely than men to stay out of the labour force to care for children).²² A look at Austrian participation and part-time work rates of women and men aged 25 to 49 with and without children seems to corroborate Corner’s premise. The traditional family model with the man as sole breadwinner, which still exists, or its more modern version with women working part-time makes its presence felt very clearly: While participation rates of women and men without children are more or less the same at around 90%, they rise to about 97% for men with children while dropping to some 80% for women with children. Men will thus actually raise their participation rates when they have children. The picture for part-time work rates is even more revealing: For women without children, they are about 30%; for women with children, they increase to more than 70%. With men, on the other hand, the part-time rate, which at about 8% is very low anyway, drops by a further three percentage points when they have children.

THE PROBLEM WITH CATEGORISATION AND HETERONORMATIVITY

When working with gender-sensitive data, it is always necessary to look at the forming of rigid categories, such as ‘women’ and ‘men’, with a critical eye. As “categories produce beliefs in the existence of homogeneous groups”, they are all the more likely to promote and confirm stereotypes and prejudices relating to groups.²³ Very quickly, a seemingly paradox situation will develop when, in the context of equality and diversity policies, the forming of categories will reinforce differences and stereotypes instead of eliminating or overcoming them. However, in contrast to individual discrimination, structural disadvantages become discernible only when groups are formed and compared to other groups. For this reason, it is inevitable over the medium term to form categories for analysis purposes in an effort to make inequalities visible, to eliminate the differences over the long term and, by doing so, also overcoming the need for categories. Hofmann, for instance, points out that, in spite of all the problems involved in categorisations, “they [fulfil] a major orientation function by reducing complexity and making action possible in everyday life.”²⁴ Hanappi-Egger explains that categories are important for analysis purposes. However, this is something that has to be understood and consciously applied – categories “need to be understood as analysis frameworks and

¹⁹ cf. Eckstein, Kirstin (2007): 181.

²⁰ Corner, Lorraine (no date): 4.

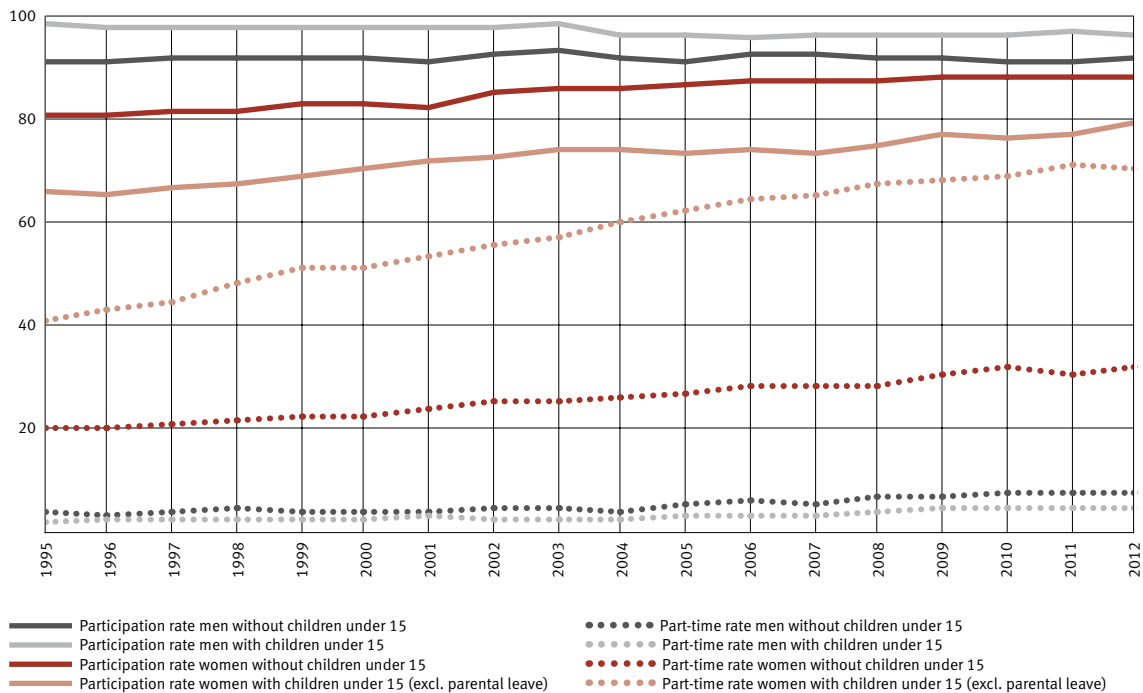
²¹ English translation from Döring, Nicola (2013): 104.

²² cf. Corner, Lorraine (no date): 4.

²³ cf. Hofmann, Roswitha (2012): 31.

²⁴ English translation from Hofmann, Roswitha (2012): 32.

Participation and part-time rates of women and men aged 25 to 49 with/without children under 15 in Austria since 1995



Source: Statistics Austria - labour force survey 2013.

not as instructions for action, which would indeed lead to reproduction”.²⁵ It is crucial to critically examine the categories and their construction and to make transparent what they are: constructions for analysis purposes. This applies also to the frequently inherent assumption of ‘heteronormativity’, which basically defines heterosexuality as the norm, thus postulating a binary system of genders. Following along with this premise, there are then exactly two biological sexes, which can be unambiguously distinguished from one another.

There is no denying the fact that sex-disaggregated data may corroborate the assumption that there is a binary system of sexes. Nevertheless, they are considered necessary and important. Currently, the methodological problems identified by, among others, Döring are regarded as too difficult to enable the binary assignment of sex in official statistics to be eliminated in practice. What is more, it is questionable whether the number of cases, which may sometimes be rather small, and the conclusions drawn from them will not

rather result in stigmatisation, with the negative consequences possibly outweighing the positive effects, such as making diversity visible. Likewise, however, there is no general acceptance for the alternative sometimes proposed from a queer theory perspective, namely to deliberately refrain from capturing data on gender.²⁶ The risk that this would produce gender blindness and ignorance of the structural discrimination of a large group within society – women – is deemed too high. Gender-competent persons are well aware of these problems. The elimination of discrimination and unequal treatment of transsexual or trans persons and the promotion of a self-determined lifestyle are important objectives – also outside the field of statistics.²⁷ The current debate in Europe on the potential legal recognition of a third gender and thus a further category and first steps to implement it, at least in part, need to be further monitored – also in other parts of the world.²⁸

²⁶ cf. Döring, Nicola (2013): 102.

²⁷ cf. the work of the Vienna LGBT anti-discrimination office (Wiener Antidiskriminierungsstelle für gleichgeschlechtliche und transgender Lebensweisen): <http://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/queer/> [11/02/2015].

²⁸ cf. City of Vienna, WAST (2013): 28.

²⁵ English translation from Hanappi-Egger, Edeltraud (2012): 196.

Recent scientific approaches to capturing the category of ‘gender’¹

In 2013, Nicola Döring published an article in which she addresses the problems involved in operationalising sex in sociological questionnaires. Apart from criticising the conventional presentation of the variable ‘sex’ with two possible replies (female/male) in a simple poll for sex in questionnaires (single items), she also presents approaches for defining ‘gender’ as a category.

The fact that sex is captured in questions using single items, in most cases as a dichotomous variable (male or female), fails to meet the criteria of unambiguity, exclusivity and exhaustiveness, which nominal-scaled variables² have to meet under methodology requirements. Using this approach, it does not become unambiguously clear what is to be understood by the category, as it can refer both to biological sex and to social gender. From a queer theory perspective, exclusivity (each person has to fall into one of the manifestations of the variable) is also not achieved, as individuals may define themselves as female and male or neither female nor male. Exhaustiveness (each manifestation of the attribute must be covered) is likewise not fulfilled, as intersex or intergender or transsexual or trans persons cannot find themselves reflected in these categories. Döring refers to insights of gender and queer research according to which both dimensions, i.e. sex and gender, need to take account of more than two manifestations. As an example, she uses sex testing in sports, where several tests performed on one and the same individual may come up with different results. A pragmatic approach would be a semi-open-ended item with three alternative replies to the question for sex or gender (male, female, other, please specify: ...). However, potential for criticism also needs to be taken into consideration, for instance the hierarchy inherent in the replies, male first, female next, ‘the’ others last, which uncritically reflects existing power relations in society and also symbolically implies marginalisation through the use of the term ‘other’. In addition, there is the problem that, while gender-sensitive respondents expect more than two possible reply options, the ‘other’ option might be perceived as irritating or provocative by non-sensitised persons. While this may be a deliberate and desirable effect, it may also entail undesirable consequences, such as the ques-

tionnaire being rejected or filled in with nonsensical information. Moreover, it must be ensured that the anonymity of those questioned is safeguarded and individuals are not unintentionally outed. Another issue to be questioned with such an approach is the informational benefit of capturing such data. Given a normal sample size, there will, as a rule, be so few people ticking ‘other’ that further evaluations are not possible and these cases will have to be excluded from the analysis.

‘Gender’, too, can be represented not only in a binary manner (i.e. either feminine or masculine gender role), as it is a multi-dimensional construct that also includes gender role behaviour, gender expression or gender-political identity. Accordingly, there are (relatively) time-stable states, but also situation-related states. For this reason, it is very difficult to operationalize the ‘social gender’. According to Döring, this, too, should most likely be resolved by means of a semi-open-ended item or a completely open-ended item (such as “With respect to my gender role, I define myself as...”). Apart from the increased effort needed for evaluation, this will give rise to similar problems as the ones described above. Methodological problems include one-dimensionality, the definition of exhaustive and distinctive items, and potentially also data protection. According to Döring, what is called for is “a differentiated and explicit survey of social gender in all cases where social gender effects play a role within the context of the research question (justified by theory) and where it is important to avoid reifying gender stereotypes.”³ In addition, Döring presents the option of capturing (social) gender as a continuous variable using scales. In this scenario, individuals are not asked to assign themselves to either the masculine or feminine categories, but rather where they see themselves situated on a continuum. Several questions have to be asked to determine this position. However, the disadvantage of scales is that they make questionnaires significantly longer (a gender scale will, as a rule, comprise 20 to 60 items). Often, this is regarded as unreasonable for respondents or harbouring the risk that less care will go into making the individual responses. Moreover, there is only a limited number of gender scales available at present and it takes a lot of time and effort to develop new ones. In Döring’s view, the relevant instruments have not been sufficiently developed yet.

¹ This excursus is based on a summary of the article by Döring, Nicola (2013): Zur Operationalisierung von Geschlecht im Fragebogen: Probleme und Lösungsansätze aus Sicht von Mess-, Umfrage-, Gender- und Queer-Theorie, in: Gender. Zeitschrift für Geschlecht, Kultur und Gesellschaft.

² Nominal-scaled variables are made measurable based on designations (e.g. religious affiliation). There is no ranking among the manifestations of the attribute.

³ English translation from Döring, Nicola (2013): 107.

GENDER STATISTICS IS MORE THAN MERE HEADCOUNTING...

Among experts, the term gender statistics has become established along with the awareness of the linguistic and conceptual differences actually existing between sex and gender. The general understanding is the comprehensive one discussed above – such as defined by the UN organisations – that a gender perspective is called for in all stages of statistics production. For many experts in this field, a distinction must be made against so-called sex counting or head counting, where existing personal data statistics are merely differentiated by the categories of women and men as defined by biological sex. A more comprehensive view of gender statistics combines findings of women's studies and gender research with statistics problems, for instance when considering which data to collect and which additional data might be necessary to map the real-life circumstances of women and men in statistics. A well-known, but still important and adequate example is labour force participation of women and men. Were we to apply mere sex counting, this would result in a disaggregated presentation by sex of the numbers of members of the labour force and employed persons and the corresponding ratios. To those with a basic knowledge of equality policies, it will quickly become clear that this is not sufficient to correctly assess the participation rate. What is urgently needed for this purpose are data on working times (full time, part time – in turn broken down by extent – or full-time equivalents). Depending on how the question is formulated, it is also of interest to have data on the quality of paid work (precarious employment, temporary employment, low-pay sector vs. normal employment), distribution of unpaid work or availability of public childcare facilities. The latter is in itself another good example of gender statistics in the widest sense of the term. It is not enough to show the rate of children being cared for, but the data should also be reviewed in terms of opening hours, number of days per year the facility is closed, lunch-hour closure times, etc., to ultimately be able to answer the question whether the available childcare offer enables both parents to work full time. Moreover, a comprehensive understanding of gender statistics also com-

prises the use of suitable indicators (well-known ones include the glass ceiling index, the dissimilarity index or the Vienna Gender Mainstreaming Syndex²⁹) and the development of new indicators that are relevant to specific demands (cf. Maltschnig et al. and Kiessling in this publication).

This is the understanding based on which the City of Vienna has approached the issue of gender statistics. "Gender statistics reflect the living situations of women and men"³⁰. A pragmatic approach is used, i.e. differentiating statistics by biological sex – while being well aware of the problems of categorisation and the difference between the sex and gender concepts – while adding further data that will allow informed gender analysis. This makes it possible to identify existing gender differences, to highlight structural and social discrimination and to tailor measures based on this information. Frequently, it is expedient to capture further data, such as age, socio-economic background, migrant background, if any, or level of education. This is the only way to comprehensively reflect the lives of women and men. This intersectionality is also crucial for identifying multi-dimensional discrimination.³¹ 'Women' and 'men' are no homogeneous groups in themselves. Sometimes the differences between women with children and women without children are greater than those between women and men, as shown by the above-mentioned example on labour force participation and part-time work. However, when trying to capture multiple discrimination in statistics, attention must also be paid to keeping the data volume adequately large to be able to draw qualitative and representative conclusions. If this is not possible, such data representations should be eliminated and qualitative research methods be chosen over them. However, this argument must not be used as a pretence for refraining from collecting additional data in these domains.

²⁹ On these indicators, cf. the website of Municipal Department 23 "Gender indicators – statistics": <http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/gender/indikatoren/index.html> [10/01/2014].

³⁰ English translation from City of Vienna (2011): 17.

³¹ GenderCompetenceCenter (b).

GENDER-SENSITIVE STATISTICS – NECESSITIES AND CHALLENGES

Producing gender-sensitive data, like producing statistics in general, needs to be understood as a dynamic process. Over time, there will be a need for change and innovation as new social phenomena appear, new socio-political topics gain in importance or different political questions present themselves. An example in point would be gender-related statistics on violence (cf. the relevant section in Stephanie Kiessling's article) or the growth over the past few years in the number of precarious jobs or the so-called working poor, people who, while gainfully employed, still cannot obtain an income above the poverty line.

In addition, gender-sensitive statistics are still facing well-known major challenges in terms of methodology, such as the fact that lots of data are captured only on a household level and not differentiated by individuals. Particularly in social statistics, which shed a light on topics such as poverty or distribution of wealth, it is thus only possible to present gender-disaggregated data and conclusions for single-person households, while households consisting of couples or more persons are regarded as a single unit. Distribution of resources or power relations among the household members remain undisclosed, the household acting as a black box. Given this situation, the scope for meaningful gender-sensitive analyses and conclusions is very limited in these socio-politically highly relevant domains. It is worthwhile in this context to take a look at current research on intra-household distribution of resources (see box below).

Research on intra-household distribution of resources

A special module of the EU SILC survey¹ 2010 for the first time supplied data informing on the distribution of income and on decision-making within households and/or partnerships. Mader et al. evaluated these data and found that, in Austria, (only) 57% of the couples interviewed generally make decisions on expenditure jointly. A closer look at the type of expenditure concerned shows that decision-making in households often follows stereotypical patterns. Women, for instance, are more frequently (solely) in charge of decisions on 'everyday shopping' and expenditure 'for children living in the household'. It is also interesting

to note that about a quarter of the couples interviewed disagreed on who is making decisions on expenditure; the responses provided by the partners were thus contradictory. This not only illustrates the new challenges in terms of survey instruments and questionnaire design, but also shows that power relations and distribution within households are a complex topic after all. Mader et al. also arrive at the conclusion that the assumption (frequently made in economics and statistics) that persons living in one household can dispose in equal measure of the available resources has to be refuted based on the results of their SILC data research. In any case, these first insights highlight the need for further surveys and (separate) interviews of individuals living in households and an analysis of the findings in terms of intra-household distribution of resources.

¹ The EU SILC survey is a key basis for social statistics in the EU. The survey is conducted annually and provides information on income distribution and living conditions of private households. The abbreviation SILC stands for Statistics on Income and Living Conditions.

GENDER-SENSITIVE STATISTICS IN THE VIENNA CITY ADMINISTRATION

It was mentioned in the introduction how important sex-disaggregated data are for gender mainstreaming in the Vienna City Administration. This applies in equal measure to women- and equality-related research instruments, such as the Equality Monitor, and to the City of Vienna's income reporting. What is important in all this is the mainstreaming approach: the aim is to collect and evaluate at least personal data disaggregated by sex in all domains and all fields of policy and not just in areas where gender differences are either already known or assumed to exist. Where these differences are is not always apparent right away. What is more, user statistics and target indicators are required on an annual basis for the mandatory gender budgeting reports. Experience has shown that it is not always possible to develop high-quality equality indicators and supply data immediately and readily. However, it is crucial to take these issues seriously and direct efforts this way.

What is important in this context is that experts have at least fundamental knowledge of each other's domains and engage in a regular exchange. Thus, statisticians and data experts in the various departments need to be aware of the social impact of gender as a structural attribute in order to understand the demand for gender-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive statistics. Fundamental knowledge of equality matters

is also helpful when it comes to creating and analysing statistics, such as the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work and the importance of childcare facilities. In turn, equality and gender experts within the administration should have at least a minimum of knowledge about statistical methods and analyses to be able to generate (the right) information for decision-making from the data. It is also expedient to be able to categorise different data sources and understand, for instance, the different results produced by indicators, such as the many conclusions on 'the' gender pay gap (see box next page).³² Ultimately, it is necessary to have a continuous exchange going on at all relevant levels – politicians, administration executives, academics, experts and statisticians – in order to highlight the need for and requirements of (gender-sensitive) statistics, discuss various possibilities and supply the corresponding data³³.

In conclusion, it should be underlined that gender-sensitive data and gender statistics are not an end in themselves. The overarching aim must be to jointly find suitable data and indicators that will show the political leadership and the administration where to make adjustments to enable change in society for the better, such as a reduction of inequalities and inequities.³⁴

³² cf. also: Hedman, Brigitta et al. (1996): 6.

³³ cf. also Fürst, Ernst (2013): 27 and Jary (2013): 46.

³⁴ cf. Jary, Karin (2013): *ibid.*

‘THE’ gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is probably one of the most well-known indicators from the field of gender-sensitive statistics. In most cases, it is computed as follows:

$$\left(\frac{\text{income (women)}}{\text{income (men)}} - 1 \right) * 100$$

The result is a percentage value. The conclusion to be drawn is: women earn X% less (or more) than men.

The extent of the pay gap depends on the different assessment bases and the data sources used. This is why there is no ONE pay gap in Austria. For one thing, it makes a difference whether you compare hourly, monthly or annual pay. Then there is the question of who is going to be included in the computations: All employees? Or only those who work full time? Frequently, the population will be persons in full-year full-time employ-

ment, in an effort to avoid distortions from part-time and seasonal employment. With this approach, however, it has to be taken into consideration that a large part of women will not be included or that attributes that structurally disadvantage women will be excluded. Other differences may result from the different views on median or average income or on whether place of residence or place of work is used as a factor or whether gross or net income is to be compared.

The key data sources for the City of Vienna are the structure of earnings survey conducted by Statistics Austria as well as administrative data (wage tax statistics, Main Association of the Austrian Social Security Organisations). The gender pay gap determined depends on the data source used, the underlying earned income concept and the computation models (see table).

Gender pay differences in Vienna – a comparison (2010)

Average gross annual earnings (wage tax statistics)

Employees	26.3%
Employees: full-year full-time	20.0%

Monthly income subject to social security contributions (Main Association of the Austrian Social Security Organisations)

Employees: Arithmetic mean	19.8%
Employees: Median	21.9%

Gross hourly pay excl. overtime, median (Statistics Austria)

Employees	16.3%
Employees: full-time	14.7%

Sources: Statistics Austria, Main Association of the Austrian Social Security Organisations; computed by Municipal Department 23.

Note: The pay gap was computed as the difference in per cent between the earnings of women and the earnings of men, based on the earnings of men.

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