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Sex-Disaggregated Budgets as Driver of Social Change?

- Exploring the Effects of Sex-Disaggregated Budgets

in a Guatemalan Context

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine the effects of sex-disaggregated budgets (SDBs) by looking at Guatemalan cooperatives. The method of the study was semi-structured interviews carried out with Guatemalan cooperative members and staff accessed through the Swedish Cooperative Center (Swedish development non-governmental organization). The main conclusion is that the SDBs have had substantial positive effects on gender equality and development objectives at a more general level in the organizations included in the study. One important effect noted by the interviewees was the SDB's positive influence on the women cooperative members' access to education. This resulted in a range of important spiraling effects, such as self-esteem, gender awareness, participation, cooperative development, income generation and household work distribution. Also, some interviewees stressed the importance of not only looking at the equal distribution of resources between men and women, but also at the SDBs' contents.

Keywords: Cooperative, empowerment, Guatemala, sex-disaggregated budgets (SDBs), Swedish Cooperative Center (SCC).

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1. Introduction

Since the era of foreign aid begun after the Second World War numerous development approaches have been applied in the fight against poverty. Sometimes approaches emphasizing the market's ability to lift people out of poverty have been used, whereas at other times the focus has been on the state's role. In recent times, there has been a rising convergence in development thinking that the market alone cannot ensure welfare for all (Stokke 2009). The state is now considered important through ensuring key services to its citizens. Especially health care, education and social security are now seen by a wide and increasing range of development scholars and practitioners to be a key state responsibility since the social sector plays a crucial role in the fight against poverty and inequality. Empirical studies show that investments in people are associated with higher and more sustainable economic growth. For instance, one can observe that in the OECD-countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) economic productivity is positively correlated with social spending (Ortiz 2007). The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development states that economic and social development indeed reinforces each other (UNRISD 2010). What is not as clear is how you ensure that sufficient social investments take place in contexts where significant shares of populations are economically, socially and politically marginalized, since poverty deprives you of the ability to efficiently participate in, for instance, social and political life (Sen 1999).

Numerous development actors have stressed the importance of pro-poor growth. One example of an organizational type belonging to the pro-poor growth-paradigm is the cooperative. The cooperative model can be argued to be inherently egalitarian by nature. Cooperatives return of surpluses is democratically governed, stemming from the core principle of cooperative members' equal voting rights. This means that the economic benefits deriving from the economic activities pursued get distributed evenly among its members (Simmons and Birchall 2008).

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), cooperatives can indeed play a significant role in poverty reduction (ILO 2003). The ILO sees cooperatives as effective in meeting the needs of the poor as the key idea of a cooperative is to pool resources in order to fulfill cooperative members' common aims. Altogether, this means that many small assets together can create the necessary scale of investment to achieve a common good without risking the poor's livelihoods (ILO 2003).

Taking women as an example of a group that historically has been marginalized, it can be expected that an increase of their participation in society would benefit not only themselves, but also the whole of society. According to the World Bank, an improvement of women's participation in society would equal more efficient institutions and organizations (2012). In the 2012 World Development Report the World Bank provides three distinctive benefits of promoting gender equality. First, an increased women participation in the remunerated economy would generate significant productivity gains through the incorporation of the women into this sphere of the economy. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) fills into this by stating in their 2011 report that closing the gender gap in agricultural yields between women and men would increase agricultural productivity with 2.5 to 4 percent in developing countries, which could pave the way for a decrease in undernourishment numbers with as much as 100-150 million people (FAO 2011). Furthermore, the World Bank states that improving women's status spurs a range of development outcomes, including those pertaining to children. Lastly, they argue that a leveled playing field in terms of a more equal participation in decision-making between women and men will over time lead to more democratic institutions and organizations (World Bank 2012). In this context, sex-disaggregated budgets (SDBs) are important because women, according to the Swedish Cooperative Center (SCC), generally are placed at a disadvantage with fewer economic resources than men if there are not any kinds of mechanisms safeguarding the equality between men and women in the organizations (2011).

1.1. Aim of the Study

I had the opportunity to work as an intern during the beginning of 2012 with the SCC in Guatemala. It is in this context that this study is undertaken. The focus of the paper is to analyze whether a specific type of development support can bring about a more equal distribution of resources and poverty alleviation. This is done by looking at the subject of SDBs. The study aims at contributing to the understanding of SDBs by drawing on the experiences and opinions of Guatemalan cooperative members and staff. Consequently, the research question is: *What are the effects of sex-disaggregated budgets in the case of cooperatives in Guatemala?*

2. Theoretical Framework

To provide an appropriate theoretical context of the studied topic, this section will first examine cooperatives and social change. Thereafter the concept of empowerment will be examined, its definition as well as an operationalization of the concept. Following this, Sen's capability approach will be used to explain the paper's stance on poverty and development. Finally, a theoretical background will be given on gender mainstreaming, since the SDB is a tool by which gender issues can be mainstreamed in organizations.

2.1. Cooperatives and Social Change

The umbrella organization of the global cooperative movement, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), defines a cooperative as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise" (Sukumar 2000: 151). ICA further states that there are seven essential features of the cooperative form of organization. Firstly, cooperatives imply the element of voluntary membership. Secondly, they are democratically governed, meaning that every cooperative member has one vote in times of decision-making. Thirdly, they involve members' economic participation (this can be done in several ways, but most often this means a member fee. However, this can also be complemented by labor as a means of contributing). Fourth, they are independent organizations, autonomous from the state. Fifth, cooperatives provide training for their members through education and information sharing. Sixth, cooperatives collaborate with each other in order to widen and strengthen their influence over local, national and international decision-making in the interest of their members. Lastly, cooperatives entail a concern for the community in which they are situated (Sukumar 2000). Drawing from this, one can interpret that the cooperative organizational model is inherently supportive of social change since it focuses on fulfilling its members' needs and aspirations.

It is important to stress that cooperatives by themselves rarely hold the power to change their surrounding environment. As other organizations they are dependant on a supportive legal framework as well as on state investments (Birdsall 2004). According to Birchall, cooperatives can be seen as an

efficient means to organize the marginalized to raise their voice and as means of generating wealth (2003).

Furthermore, it can be argued that the cooperative requires that the poor hold some sort of asset, meaning that the very poorest with extremely little or nothing to invest, can be expected to be excluded from joining cooperatives (Birchall 2003). Munkner has examined who primarily joins cooperatives and concluded that cooperatives primarily attract those above the threshold of extreme poverty. The extremely poor cannot participate in cooperatives due to their lack of resources, whereas the rich can fend for themselves in the market place more efficiently. The middle layer of people, however, those with some resources, but limited ones, can benefit from cooperatives through collectively organizing with others in the same situation to reap economic and social benefits (Birchall 2003). However, one could argue that cooperatives are indirectly favorable for the extremely poor since one can expect that politics in the longer perspective would reflect a more pro-poor constituency with increasingly more people having a voice in society as a result of people's organization in cooperatives. Also, more resources could be collected through taxes due to higher national incomes. Thus, government funds would increase and with that the possibility to invest in the poorer segments of the population.

2.2. Empowerment

There is a wide range of definitions and approaches used by different actors who study the concept of empowerment. In the broadest sense empowerment can be argued to be about expanding people's capabilities to act on what they see as important in order to live a good life (Kilby 2006). However, the issue of practically expanding people's capabilities is highly contested. To some, the process of empowerment is about removing societal structures hindering people's well-being, whereas others highlight the importance of looking at agency and individuals' role in the process of shaping society. However, most scholars today dismiss this separation of the two concepts, arguing that both are affecting one another (Luttrell et al. 2009).

In an effort to join these views, the gender scholar Longwe created a framework of empowerment encompassing both agency and structural approaches. Longwe stresses the importance of looking at

the empowerment process holistically. The framework proposes five progressively greater levels of empowerment, by which the higher levels are not possible to achieve without having the lower levels put in place. These five steps are welfare, access, conscientisation, mobilization and control (Luttrell et al. 2009).

The first level Longwe names as crucial to enable empowerment is a basic level of welfare. Welfare here means that basic needs are satisfied through, for instance, access to food, shelter and adequate health care. The second step, which is the first level in which people are considered being empowered, is the level of access. This means an increased share of marginalized people's access to resources relative to more privileged groups. As a third step conscientisation comes. This is defined as the process by which marginalized people realize that their lack of security and opportunity derives not due to themselves, but through the discriminatory practices and rules favoring stronger societal groups. Conscientisation is therefore concerned with a collective urge to action to remove discriminatory practices that hinder marginalized people's rightful access and control over resources. The fourth step is the mobilization of the marginalized. This implies collective action among the poor, identifying the obstacles and acting on the removal of those in order to ensure their rights. The fifth, and final stage in the process of empowerment, is control. The previously marginalized people are now in control of their lives. There is equality in decision-making over the access to resources. People are no longer "handed" resources, but instead actively taking part in decision-making of how to use them. Also, people are in power of shaping their own future as well as having a say about their society's future path (Luttrell et al. 2009).

Adding on to this understanding of empowerment, Kabeer states that empowerment must entail a process of change (Kabeer 2002; 2005). Whereas many define power as the ability to make choices, such a definition can never be translated into the concept of empowerment, according to Kabeer. Consequently, she sees the importance of defining empowerment as a process of acquiring more power over one's life. People who have always been able to lead their own lives successfully can never be called empowered when using Kabeer's concept of empowerment. This is because they have never undergone a process of change, or been disempowered, in the first place.

Consequently, the paper's view on empowerment is that it essentially is about expanding people's capabilities to act on what they see as important in order to live a good life. Moreover, empowerment is seen as a process in which both social structures and agency are acknowledged as interdependent and as equally important. In order to clarify the paper's stance on poverty and development, an account of Sen's capability approach will now be provided for.

2.3. Sen's Capability Approach

In his book "Development As Freedom" Sen puts forward his idea of poverty as "capability deprivation" (Sen 1999). Sen argues that poverty must not be seen as solely income deprivation, but that the concept should take into account all spheres of a person's life. Consequently, one can think of poverty as people's inability to lead such a life that they have reason to value.

Assessing the concept of capabilities, this means what choices a person is able to make that are feasible for her to achieve (Sen 1999). Hence, the capabilities of one person can be seen as a person's freedom to achieve the lifestyle she wants. As a result, Sen does not only focus on what a person can do with regard to her economic assets. Rather he means that all things that a person has reason to value, such as having a fulfilling job, being healthy, feeling self-worth and confidence, matter.

Linking this to the notion of development, Sen states that development can be seen as a "process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy" (Sen 1999: 1). Real freedom here is synonymous with the concept of capabilities and means, therefore, what a person is able to do that she has reason to value. Contrasting this, is the notion of "unfreedoms" that hinder people from fulfilling themselves as human beings. These can consist of, for instance, economic deprivations, which in turn can lead to hunger or the impossibility to satisfy one's need for shelter or adequate clothing. Other unfreedoms can be the result of a lack of public care, which can lead to poorly managed hospitals and schools, depriving people of the opportunity to enjoy qualitative health care and education (Sen 1999).

2.4. Gender Mainstreaming

As proposed by Rees, gender mainstreaming is defined as an "identification of androcentric practices that underpin the organization and its culture as well as its policies and practices, and tackling them"

(2005: 560-561). Moreover, the concept of gender mainstreaming can be understood as a strategy to promote gender equality in organizations (and even states) since it involves the engagement of multiple actors and policies, acknowledging the multiple layers of gender inequality (Sainsbury and Bergquist 2009). Sainsbury and Bergquist state their notion of gender equality through defining it as when “women and men have equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all major areas of life” (2009: 218). Since gender mainstreaming aims at bringing gender equality into the mainstream of organizations, it can be seen as a strategy with transformative potential. Yet, the strategy also faces many challenges since it, according to Verlo, involves a highly political process due to its aim to challenge unequal power structures (2001).

Critics of gender mainstreaming state that there is a risk that it puts aside positive actions for women already implemented (Sainsbury and Bergquist 2009). Or as stated by Pollack and Hafner-Burton: “if gender is everybody’s responsibility in general, then it’s nobody’s responsibility in particular” (2000: 452). Hence, some scholars fear worsened organizational accountability when using gender mainstreaming as a strategy to promote gender equality.

Rees, however, argues that the positive action model of gender equality rarely challenge underlying systems and structures giving rise to gender inequalities, since the projects often tend to be short-term with precarious funding, leaving unequal power structures untouched and therefore unchallenged (2005). Neither does the approach of equal treatment solve unequal power structures between men and women, since the equal treatment approach, in line with the positive action approach, bring “women’s rights into line with those of men” (Rees 2005: 557).

On the contrary, Rees argues that gender mainstreaming has a transformational potential in reshaping the structures underlying the creation of gender inequalities due to its objective to mainstream that concerning gender, making it a key organizational concern (2005). Gender mainstreaming also separates itself from the equal treatment and positive action approach, since its roots lie in the “politics of difference” (Rees 2005: 559). This means that gender mainstreaming as an approach of promoting gender equality not only sees that men differ from women, but that all individuals have unique needs and aspirations. Ultimately, gender mainstreaming aims at removing any hierarchies and power relations based on gender (Rees 2005).

Moreover, a central component of gender mainstreaming is redistribution (Rees 2005). Hence, one can see it as an approach potent to tackle a wide range of inequalities since it challenges any form of domination. Gender mainstreaming includes a wide range of policy tools to make sure that unequal power structures diminish (Rees 2005). For instance, the strategy drives a more thorough approach to resource allocation. It asks questions about how money is spent and to what extent differences between groups, such as men and women, are motivated. One such key tool questioning the allocation of resources is sex-disaggregated statistics, of which SDBs are one part.

2.5. The Rationale for SDBs

The paper will try to answer the research question through looking at the case of cooperatives in Guatemala supported by the SCC, which is a Swedish non-governmental organization working with development. The SDB means that at least 50 percent of the allocated money in the projects that the SCC is supporting should benefit women. This should be clearly visible in the budgets of the counterpart organizations to the SCC. Historically, women have been discriminated and are still in many parts of the world. Hence, the aim of the SDB is to combat gender inequality (SCC 2011). A more specific reason to implement the SDBs in the work of the SCC is, according to the SCC, that there is a need for budgets specifically addressing gender inequality, since budgets are not gender neutral (2011). Without the instrument of SDBs, there is not any clear demonstration of where the money ends up in projects with regard to how much that goes to women as well as how much that goes to men.

3. The Guatemalan Context

The SCC expertise lies within the topic of cooperative development. The SCC supports national grassroots organizations around the world that in turn often support various smaller organizations in their respective countries. Many of these smaller organizations are cooperatives, but in some cases it can also be associations of different sorts. In other cases the counterpart organizations can be transnational federations connecting organizations across national borders. The context of working with cooperatives in Guatemala, which is the type of organization in focus in this study, includes a range of challenges to be dealt with. Guatemala is a country attaining low socio-economic results, which in some particular areas constitute severe challenges. For instance, more than half of the

Guatemalan population lives under the national poverty line with 16.9 percent of the population living in extreme poverty (below 1.25 US dollars a day). Gross national income (GNI) per capita in Guatemala was in 2011 4067 US dollars (UNDP 2011). However, Guatemala shares similar social development outcomes as countries such as Haiti and Nicaragua, which have GNI per capita on levels much lower than Guatemala. The economic growth has been relatively stable in the latter half of the 20th century averaging 3.9 percent between the years 1950-2000 (Alwang et al. 2004). These figures indicate that Guatemala suffers from extreme income inequality, which also is stated in the 2011 Human Development Report, which puts Guatemala as the eighth worst country in the world when measured by the Gini-coefficient (income inequality between households) (UNDP 2011).

Another feature of the Guatemalan development context is the high number of indigenous people living in the country. More than 40 percent of the Guatemalans are indigenous people, which is the highest number in Central America (CIA 2012). Guatemala is highly divided between the indigenous population and the Mestizo population (mixed European and Native American heritage) and especially in comparison to those of European heritage (Alwang et al. 2004). This divide can be noted in a variety of areas. For instance, the indigenous population constitutes around 60 percent of the country's poor and more than 70 percent of the country's extremely poor people (Alwang et al. 2004). The discrimination of the indigenous people can also be noted in the failure of the part of the Peace Accords of 1995¹ addressing indigenous peoples' rights. This part of the treaty is considered to be the area where there has been the least progress when assessing the Peace Accords as a whole (Swedish Department of Foreign Affairs 2010).

Furthermore, women in Guatemala are severely discriminated as demonstrated in the 2011 Human Development Report that ranks Guatemala as number 131 out of 187 countries in the gender inequality index (UNDP 2011). Women hold only 19 percent of the positions with decision-making power within the state and women's wages are generally much lower than those of men. In average women earn only 55 percent of what men earn. The significant income disparities between men and women are, furthermore, demonstrated by the fact that 74 percent of the top ten percent that earn the

¹ The Peace Accords is a series of agreements undertaken by the Guatemalan government in the wake of the 36 year long civil war taking place between 1960-1996. The first agreements were signed in 1995, whereas the final parts of the treaty was decided upon in 1996 (Alwang et al. 2004).

most in the country are men. On the other side of the spectrum, of the poorest ten percent of the population, 75 percent are women (Ruano and Zumbrano 2006). However, records state that women in average work about eight hours a day in the remunerated economy plus spend six hours of work in the non-remunerated economy, such as in household- and care work (Ruano and Zumbrano 2006). In some rural areas, women might also need to spend extra time to collect water and wood for fuel. Men in Guatemala are not nearly spending as much time on work activities (Ruano and Zumbrano 2006).

With the widespread poverty and income-, ethnic- and gender inequalities combined, Guatemala makes a unique and challenging development case. The country is facing structural challenges of inequality that must be addressed by attempts to remove these structural barriers. As demonstrated, Guatemalan society is deeply segregated between a small minority with access to vast resources and high living standards, whereas over half of the population is living below the national poverty line. As a result, piecemeal efforts to remove these inequalities will not suffice to promote a more pro-poor Guatemalan development path. In the following part of the paper, the methods of the study will be discussed as well as the researcher's own role in the process.

4. Methodology

4.1. Methodological Standpoint

Guided by the chosen research question, a qualitative approach was selected in the form of semi-structured interviews. Consequently, the qualitative approach was seen as the most appropriate of capturing the complex nature of the interviewees' social reality.

Furthermore, a constructivist approach to knowledge has been applied. Bryman defines constructionism as "an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman 2008: 19). This resonates well with my view that social phenomena are something in constant flux and should, hence, be studied as something in movement.

4.2. The Interviewees

Between the dates of the 12th of January and the 14th of March 2012 28 interviews were conducted through four counterpart organizations to the SCC in Guatemala named Utz Che, Fedecovera, Fedecocagua and Fecceg. Nineteen of these interviews were conducted with women cooperative members active in one of the cooperatives supported by one of the four counterpart organizations. The other nine interviews were conducted with staff in either one of the counterpart organizations or with staff in the cooperatives. In the staff group three interviewees were men. The distribution of cooperative women and staff in the different counterpart organizations was as follows:

Organization	Cooperative women	Female staff members	Male staff members
Utz Che	5	1	1
Fedecovera	9	2	1
Fedecocagua	3	0	0
Fecceg	2	3	1

The sample of only female cooperative members in the study had the purpose of assessing the SDBs from the perspective of the primary beneficiaries of the policy. However, if more time and resources had been accessible, a study including also male cooperative members would have amplified the depth. Due to time restrictions, however, I chose to focus on only female cooperative members.

The other nine interviews have been conducted with staff in either one of the counterpart organizations or staff in the cooperatives. This element of the study was being considered important in order to grasp the opinions of the primary decision-makers in the counterpart organizations to the SCC as well as in the cooperatives that in turn get their support from these. In regard to the sex distribution of the staff members interviewed in the study, a slight underrepresentation of men can be observed. In the three counterpart organizations where staff members were interviewed, at least one man was represented. Yet, it would have been preferred with a slightly higher male participation in

the interview sample of the staff members since the share of the men represented in this group was only a third. However, with respect to the organizations' wishes for the interview arrangements, this was considered acceptable due to the limited time frame of the study. With regard to the fact that no staff interviews were carried out in the organization of Fedecocagua, time constraints made such an endeavor impossible. However, this would have been desirable since it would have enhanced the study's validity.

4.3. Choosing the Interviewees

The sample can be described as a purposive sample, as the interviewees were chosen on the basis of their relevance to the research question (Bryman 2008). The process of carrying out the interviews was such that I through contacts at the SCC planned the selection of the interviewees in collaboration with the counterpart organizations. However, it was always the counterpart organizations to the SCC that ultimately decided on when, where and with whom to carry out the interviews, as it was their time the research was going to take up. As a result of this, an element of convenience was present in the process of accessing the interviewees as it otherwise would have proved impossible to carry out the 28 interviews within the relatively short time at disposal.

Three factors were taken into account when choosing the sample for the study. Firstly, all of the four counterpart organizations included in the study in turn support cooperatives around Guatemala. This can be seen as an important element when trying to draw conclusions from the interview sample, as the type of organization is the same. However, it is acknowledged that the results of the study are not able to represent the whole of Guatemala. Yet, the conclusions can serve as an important guide for further research on the topic of SDBs. The second purpose of the sample was that the four counterpart organizations to the SCC were mixed organizations, meaning that both men and women are members. This was considered important since it is my view that you best can study the dynamics of gender issues and the effects of gender sensitive budgets in an environment where both men and women are represented. Lastly, none of the organizations had any previous gender policies or activities aimed at increasing the women's participation. Therefore, one can see this as an especially interesting sample for a study of this sort because of the prior lack of gender awareness and lack of interest in promoting women's rights in the organizations before the policy was implemented in 2009.

4.4. The Framework of the Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured meaning that a list of questions was followed in order to enable comparable interviews (for interview guide: see sources). At the same time the semi-structured approach gave the research the flexibility required to follow up on answers of particular interest to me. Consequently, this method of investigation was considered the most suiting in order to fully grasp the interviewees' unique experiences and opinions of the SDBs, while at the same time allowing for comparisons between the interviewees.

The interviews lasted between 12-48 minutes. The location of the interviews varied a great deal, from taking place at the counterpart organizations' main offices, to being held out in the open air by the cooperatives. Also, all of the interviews were conducted in Spanish, either directly or through the link of a translator. I was, as a result, obliged to translate the quotes used in the paper from Spanish into English. This is certainly a delicate thing to do, since translation from one language into another never can depict the exact words from the interviewees. As a result of this, the full, original Spanish transcriptions are available for anyone interested in verifying the results' accuracy in order to give credibility and transparency to the findings presented.

Moreover, all of the nine interviews conducted with the women cooperative members related to the organization of Fedecovera were wholly or partly done through assistance from Q'etchi'-Spanish translators provided to me by Fedecovera. In seven of the cases the interviewees only spoke Q'etchi' during the interviews, whereas two of the interviewees partly spoke Spanish during the interviews, and partly Q'etchi'. This is something that must be highlighted as translations always mean simplifications and loss of nuances in the answers. However, without the use of translators, it would not have been possible to extract information from people belonging to the group of Q'etchi'-speakers. As this group was considered important to include in the study, the negative side of having to translate the interviews from Q'etchi' into Spanish was considered worth the cost.

The interviewees were all informed that their identity was going to be anonymous, hence eliminating any potential fears of sharing negative effects of any part of the SDB. As a result of this, fictitious names are used instead of the interviewees' real names in the presentation of the findings.

4.5. The Researcher's Own Position

My own position throughout the field stay in Guatemala was not only as an independent researcher from Lund University, but also as an intern at the SCC. Consequently, a certain bias may be expected in relation to the given answers by the interviewees, since they at all times were informed that I was studying the topic of SDBs on behalf of the SCC, as well as an independent student at Lund University.

The fact that I was a white, foreign researcher interviewing mostly poor, indigenous cooperative women in Guatemala can be seen as an unbalanced power situation. Hence, the risk of bias can be detected, even though my own observation during the interviews was that the interviewees did not demonstrate reluctance of sharing their opinions and experiences of the SDBs.

4.6. Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was the fact that the details about the contents of the SDBs were not accessed. This can be explained by primarily two reasons. One reason was that the limited time frame of the study gave a limited opportunity to realize such a project because of the extra time demanded. Also, when asking the SCC country staff about the possibility to access the details of the SDBs, I was told that this was not easily done because of the organizations' wish for integrity related to the budgeted activities decided upon. Hence, I did not pursue any attempts of accessing details about the SDBs' content in the researched organizations even though this would have been ideal. However, this is something that would be highly recommendable to include in future studies on SDBs since it then would be possible to assess both the quantitative and qualitative effects of the policy. In future studies the inclusion of a control group would also improve the quality of the study. This control group could be organizations where the SDB is not yet implemented. This would control for changes occurring at a societal level. It would also give further strength to do interviews before and after the implementation of the SDB in order to eliminate biases with regard to time.

5. Results

Some themes were present throughout the interviews. Of these themes, some were considered particularly noteworthy. One key theme identified was the subject of education that resulted in a

range of important spiraling effects, such as self-esteem, gender awareness, participation, cooperative development, income generation and household work distribution. Also, some critical points of the SDBs were raised, making important contributions to the understanding of the policy. In order to clearly provide a picture of the aforementioned key themes, the interview results will now be systematically discussed and analyzed.

5.1. Education

Throughout the interviews the view that the educational activities had increased for the cooperative women since the implementation of the SDBs was put forward by an overwhelming majority of the interviewees (especially by the cooperative members). This was, for instance, exemplified by staff member Rosa, who described Utz Che's change since the introduction of the SDB as follows:

The way that the SCC is pushing the topic of [gender] equality I find very interesting. Even though this organization [Utz Che] is, like, a lot of men's work, it has succeeded in breaking a barrier. The most significant changes we saw last year through a strategy by Utz Che for the participation of the women. As a result, it provided training for seven women leaders. These women leaders create space within the structure of the organization leading to a women's counsel of the forest community, which will come to fill the void that exists. Another thing is that this also paves the way to educate other women leaders. I think the way that the SCC strategy has assisted us has been very positive, even though many of us do not want to speak about the subject [gender equality]. It is creating new ways of working (Transcriptions: 2-3).

This depiction not only represents a view that cooperatives associated to Utz Che have been receiving education for their women leaders. It also shows that this new influx of resources, specifically targeting women, has made the organization break with old, discriminatory, ways of working, promoting the women's participation. As described in Longwe's framework of empowerment, the issue of education can be seen as a crucial step in the process of empowerment (Luttrell et al. 2009). Education can be argued to promote people's consciousness about societal structures and, if it is the case, of their own subordination in that structure. Hence, education has the potential to create the necessary understanding that there is a need to challenge systems giving rise to unequal power structures. Also the increased education can be seen as an increased access to resources for the women cooperative members in relation to the men. Moreover, Longwe argues that there is a need of

first securing a basic level of welfare in order for empowerment to take place (Luttrell et al. 2009). One can expect that this level of welfare has been achieved for the cooperative women interviewed, since, as argued by Munkner, the extremely poor can be expected to be excluded from joining cooperatives (Birchall 2003). Continuing the assessment of the SDB's effects on education, the cooperative member Flor (Utz Che) mentioned important educational effects in her cooperative. When asked about how she thought that the cooperative was applying the SDB, she answered:

It is very good [the SDB] because the families do not have that much education and there are many difficulties and problems in the homes and this gender workshop I find very helpful. Because the man as much as the woman have the same rights (Transcriptions: 163-164).

As depicted above, Flor clearly states the SDB's importance for the families' education. People in the cooperative are now having an opportunity to receive some education, spurring, for instance, right- and gender awareness. Complementing this view is the perspective of the cooperative member Julia, (Fecceg). Here she answers the question if the work in her cooperative has changed since the SDB's implementation:

Yes. The new thing is that before they [the cooperative] were not giving us this training. If it would not be for the [external] organizations, there would not be any change. Through the organizations they [the women cooperative members] replicate activities concerning gender, and also that concerning self-esteem (Transcriptions: 27).

Julia has experienced that the education received in her cooperative has made the women cooperative members replicate activities discussing gender and activities aimed at improving self-esteem. Both these factors are, arguably, crucial in order to challenge the existing unequal power structures between men and women. Improved gender awareness and confidence can, furthermore, be argued to contribute to the empowerment level of conscientisation (Luttrell et al. 2009). When the women are deprived of self-esteem and gender-awareness due to the structures giving rise to their discrimination, there is not any chance for the women doing what they have reason to value (Sen 1999). On the other hand, when the women's gender awareness is raised and their self-esteem is improved, this can be seen as one form of empowerment of women.

5.2. Gender Awareness and Self-esteem

Furthering looking into the subject of the SDB's effects on gender awareness and self-esteem, one can note several improvements. Looking at the situation in Isabela's cooperative (Fecceg), she describes a feeling of isolation before the launch of the SDB and contrasts this with the changes since:

Well, you rarely left the community. Now we have gotten the opportunity to go on trips outside of the country [to Mexico]. We also went to Peten [northern Guatemala] thanks to the [external] organizations. Well, it opens your eyes. And I tell you: the women that are caught by the ironing board, by the stove; no one will teach us what self-confidence means, what you want or what you do not want, no one. We should always divide our [the women's] time learning something, even though it does not have to be much; some words that we learn and then put into practice (Transcriptions: 31-32).

Here one notes a "mind-opening"-effect for Isabela due to trips outside of the community. Isabela speaks of the fact that the educational activities have led to widened perspectives because of the new opportunities to see and experience new things outside of the home. She also emphasizes that the cooperative women should continually make time to participate in educational activities in order to strengthen themselves. As Isabela further describes, she now realizes the importance of women's education in order for them to break free from the isolation of the home. Returning to the experience of the cooperative member Flor (Utz Che), she shares some life-changing effects since the launch of the policy:

My life has changed. Yes, because, for instance, when I have some problems with my family this workshop is helping me to achieve a change, to later discuss with my children. Because, what I have done primarily is speaking with them [the children] about what the subject means [of gender equality], what it is they [the cooperative] are teaching for it to serve us. And you have to change, because if I am receiving the education and I stay the same it will not help me. But yes, I am receiving training. As a result, I have to realize that I do not have to act the same as before since I experienced this change of life (Transcriptions: 165).

Flor's personal experience depicts an increased gender awareness. Also, she mentions that she is sharing her acquired knowledge with her children so that they will also benefit from the education in the cooperative. Another important point is that she realizes that it is up to her to change her conduct in order for the educational activities to work. This is demonstrated by Flor's increased sense of

control since she now believes that her actions can influence the quality of her and her family's life. Natalia, another cooperative member whose cooperative is associated to Utz Che, depicts a similar empowering experience:

The benefit I sense [of the SDB] is that I can leave the countryside (the community). Because when one leaves [the community] one relaxes. It is not like when you are stuck in the kitchen, right? You experience another environment (Transcriptions: 182).

Remarkably here is Natalia's sense of relief when she, as described, can leave her own house and go outside of her nearby surroundings to experience other places. There she relaxes and feels rejuvenated. Hence, we can note that the SDB has created a new space for Natalia to break with her previous isolation in the home. The staff member Roberto (Fedecovera) further fills into this by stating:

Yes, there are changes [since the SDB]. Before the women did not participate much. They went to meetings and stayed silent. Now you can see it [that the women are silent] in some cases, but not in all. Now there is certain courage, some confidence of taking up a microphone saying to people "look, I think this, I think that" and the men say "ah, my woman has rights in my home, I now understand that I used to behave badly" (Transcriptions: 65).

From Roberto's perspective there has been a significant change with regard to gender awareness and self-esteem for the female cooperative members since the SDB. He describes a situation in which the women before the SDB did not participate much in the cooperatives due to lacking confidence. Now, however, the situation has changed and there are more women with enough courage to say their point of view in, for instance, meetings. Also, the quote indicates that some men have changed their opinion on women's rights to view women more like equals. This implies a considerable potential of the SDB in improving women's status and overall participation.

5.3. Participation

Drawing on the SDBs' effect on the cooperative women's participation, one can state that the policy generally contributes to an improvement, even though it is not a linear process. Staff member Rosa (Utz Che) explains this as follows:

Yes, there is participation of the women. But it is uneven. There are more men participating in advocacy, more men in decision-making positions. In the board of directors, for instance, there is only one woman. She is vice-president. This year she will leave her post and we do not know what she will do now. Now, when it comes to gender equality, this is where there is resistance. For this reason you understand that this is where the training of women leaders comes in and the importance of having resources exclusively assigned for women. This is the difference (Transcriptions: 2).

Rosa clearly states the policy's importance for the cooperative women, since it, according to her, sheds light on the issue of the uneven distribution of resources between men and women. This uneven distribution is demonstrated by the fact that Utz Che is having only one woman participant in the board of directors, and she was, on top of that, about to leave the post. Contrasting this, Julia (Fecceg) puts forward the view that she has observed a significant improvement with regard to the participation of the cooperative women:

The women are now leaders of the organizations [the cooperatives]. Before the women could not participate in the board of directors. Only men said that the women could not go because of the children; that they could not leave the children. That they [the women] should stay at home. But not anymore. Because now the women are those that are progressing the most [...] Here [in Julia's cooperative], we have succeeded in incorporating four women into the board of directors. And in all the organizations [cooperatives associated to Fecceg, receiving support from the SCC] we have two women [represented]. If you go, you will see women in the organizations. One have noted that all the organizations have made big effort to achieve results (Transcriptions: 27)...

Julia's description demonstrates significant changes. One can note that Julia has observed an overall increase in the women's participation. For example, she notes an increased participation of women in the board of directors in her cooperative. Before the SDB's implementation no woman was represented there; now four women are present. Also, Julia mentions the overall increase of women's participation in other cooperatives supported by Fecceg that receive support from the SCC (hence working with SDBs). Before the representation of women in cooperatives' board of directors was unheard of. Yet it seems to be much left to do when, for instance, reminded about Rosa's narrative about the lack of women in the board of directors centrally in Utz Che (Transcriptions: 2). Adding to

this, the cooperative member Doris (Fedecovera) answers the question how the cooperative has realized the implementation of the SDB:

I see that the cooperative is growing, because it is incorporating both men and women. We are educated. Now the women are educated so that we have obligations too, both men and women. We [the women] have the right to participate. We have the right to be part of an organization. We have the right to participate in monitoring organs, in committees... Yes. We have the right to participate as women. Men and women. We have the capacity to participate so that, we, the women, and not only the men, have the right to come with suggestions. Women also have these rights (Transcriptions: 120).

Doris describes a very significant improved personal gender- and right-awareness. She clearly states that the women have the same rights as the men in the cooperative, arguing that women and men should participate on equal grounds. Furthermore, women should, according to Doris, be able to come with suggestions on the cooperative's future to the same extent as the men. Hence, one can interpret Doris story as a process of conscientisation since she now is aware of her rights and able to defend them (Luttrell et al. 2009).

5.4. Cooperative Development

The SDBs' potential in promoting cooperative development is clearly supported by several statements throughout the interviews. For instance, one can see this in cooperative member Isabela's (Fecceg) following statement:

The Fecceg communities [cooperatives] who receive support from the SCC are those that know something about gender equality (Transcriptions 35).

Here one can observe that Isabela notes a difference between Fecceg-supported cooperatives working with SDBs and Fecceg cooperatives that do not in terms of gender equality. This indicates the SDB's positive effect on cooperative development. Moreover, the cooperative member Laura (Fedecovera) demonstrates the SDB's positive influence on cooperative development. Here she talks about what impact the SDB has had on her cooperative (translated from Q'etchi' into Spanish):

Since the implementation of the policy [SDB] they [the cooperative] have promoted the participation of women here in the cooperative. Now they [the cooperative] know that the woman has to have her own space and now they realize that it [the SDB] has strengthened women's participation in all the activities [of the cooperative] (Transcriptions: 88).

Laura has experienced a new focus in the cooperative since the SDB. Now there is awareness that women have to have the same opportunities as men. Also, Laura describes that the cooperative now knows the importance of giving the women their own space. Moreover, she says that women's participation has risen since the implementation of the SDB. The cooperative member Florencia (Fedecovera, translated from Q'etchi' into Spanish) fills into this by elaborating on some effects that she has experienced since the SDB in her cooperative:

Well, before the SCC-project begun [with the SDB] there was participation of women from the point of view that they were associated [to the cooperative], right? But one thing is that they [the women] were associated and another what the SCC did with their implementation [of the SDB] giving a support that is very important, that matters for the whole cooperative organization, making it more productive. At the same time there is the education. Consequently, that is a change, right? That they as a cooperative accepted to receive this support [from the SCC] to make the women cooperative members participate in the project (Transcriptions: 113).

In the quote one notes the SDB's positive effect on women's participation. The SDB has contributed making the cooperative more inclusive, demonstrated by the fact that women before were accepted as members, but not as active participants, according to Florencia. Contrasting Florencia's personal experience with Sen's concept of poverty, one can argue that the cooperative women before the SDB's implementation were deprived of the capability of fully participating in the cooperative. According to Sen, this can be seen as one dimension of poverty since they were not able to act on what they had reason to value; taking part in the cooperative's development and decision-making (Sen 1999). As a result, one can understand the cooperative's change as one step of abolishing this dimension of poverty. Even though the women cooperative members could not be seen as being poor from a strict economical point of view, they certainly were not able to fully engage in the cooperative to the same extent as the men were. Continuing the assessment of cooperative development, staff member Raul (Fecceg) shares his view on how the cooperatives associated to Fecceg have been affected by the SDB:

The project [the SDB] has given us the opportunity to see to a population that has undergone more hardships than all of our male cooperative members. They [the men] are poor, but the women [also] face other things, leaving them with more hardships. Consequently, it [the SDB] serves us in order to educate the women so that they can improve their quality of life (Transcriptions: 14).

Raul highlights the women's additional obstacles besides their economic poverty. He stresses that education is a key tool that the SDB has enabled Fecceg to invest in. As a result, one can interpret the SDB implementation in Fecceg as spurring organizational change. A new gender perspective has been mainstreamed into the everyday activities of the organization. It has been acknowledged that women have been discriminated in the past, which is now addressed by educating the women. As stated by Rees, gender mainstreaming (in which SDBs are included) has this transformational potential (2005). Moreover, a central component of gender mainstreaming is to redistribute resources in order to efficiently address gender inequalities (Rees 2005). According to Raul, this was done in Fecceg through focusing on women education. Furthering elaborating on the topic of gender mainstreaming, the staff member Roberto (Fedecovera) describes the change of his organization:

For us [Fedecovera] it [the SDB] has been very positive because it has been addressing an area [gender equality] that was not considered before. Consequently, I think that this situation has meant changes in the way people think in the organization. Now they [people related to Fedecovera] are trying to influence the thinking of the board of directors and the women. Now there are training sessions aimed at the board of directors and workshops specifically focused on the women. Also there are workshops for mixed groups [with both men and women], education for youth, men and women. As a result, it [Fedecovera] is trying to implement this at all levels to make us change rapidly (Transcriptions: 63-64).

According to Roberto, the SDB has brought important organizational changes for Fedecovera. Roberto argues that the policy has strengthened the previously marginalized cooperative women. Now, for instance, they receive education and so do the board of directors in the attempt to make the organization change behavior.

5.5. Income Generation

Turning our focus to the economic changes of the SDB, staff member Gabriela (Fecceg) elaborates on what she has observed:

Well, as I said it is the opportunity that men as much as women can sell their coffee. [...] As a result the volume [of coffee] increases. This has benefitted them [the women]. The direct focus on women has helped a lot. They have not only been trained with regard to the production of coffee, but also in organizing, self-confidence, all that. Also, they now dedicate themselves on bee keeping, which generates incomes. This improves their [food] consumption since it is part of eliminating sugar [in their diet] since they now have honey that is natural (Transcriptions: 20).

Here one can note that there has been an equalization of opportunities between the men and the women. Now women can commercialize coffee to a higher extent than before because of the new focus that the SDB has brought. Gabriela highlights that the cooperative women have accessed training in how to produce coffee more efficiently, but also that they have received other educational activities on organization, confidence and so on. Moreover, the cooperative women have learned how to make honey, improving the women's diet since they now do not eat as much sugar as before. This process can be understood as an increase of the women's access to resources (Luttrell et al. 2009). Following the same theme, cooperative member Isabela (Fecceg) shares her experiences on the SDB's economic effects:

Last year it [Fecceg] got organized and it began working with [gender] promoters in all the areas. I was one of them. I have worked with three communities teaching them [cooperative women] about ecological fertilizers. Also I taught them about gender equality and self-esteem. Moreover, I gave workshops on values as well as about food security that we can achieve. [...] We [the women] learned how to make candles and souvenirs. This we did with the aim so that we would have enough [food] not making us dependent on only the coffee (Transcriptions: 30).

From Isabela's story we can note an increase in educational activities aiming at the cooperative women on both the topic of food security and gender issues and confidence. In the pursuit of improving food security, the women were given training on how to diversify their economy through working with more income generating sources than coffee. The women are now given the opportunity

to receive education on a wide range of areas. This enables them to participate more efficiently in the cooperative as well as to improve their overall economic security.

5.6. Household Work Distribution

Looking at the topic of household work distribution, the translator summarized cooperative member Eliza's (Fedecovera) answer on the question if the household work had changed since the SDB (translated from Q'etchi' into Spanish):

She says yes. The husband has gone fetching wood, he has gone harvesting the maize and also, if it is necessary, graining the maize when she is sick. In this way he has assisted her. Also, he has helped by washing the clothes. But this is in occasions when she is sick (transcriptions: 83).

In this quote one notes that Eliza has been given some more help in the home. However, this more equal distribution of household tasks seems to be restricted only to times when Eliza is sick. Consequently, one could state that the distribution of household work is slightly more equal than before the SDB, but not near an equal state. One can understand this change of behavior as an initiated process of change (Kabeer 2002; 2005). Continuing the analysis on household work distribution, cooperative member Sayra (Fedecovera) explains her changed view since the SDB. Here she answers if the household work now works differently:

Yes, it is very different. Because I have learned that not only I as a women can do this [household tasks]. Also, you [men] can do that that I can do (transcriptions: 102).

Here we can clearly see that Sayra has gotten an insight that women and men can do the same things, hence questioning any differences existent due to factors such as sex. One can view this as a process of conscientisation since she now sees that there are not any good reasons for an unequal distribution of household work (Luttrell et al. 2009).

5.7. Critical Views

Assessing some important points made on the SDBs' nature, staff member Rosa (Utz Che) nuances the policy's potential:

It is in the productive chains that the unbalance is in the mixed organizations that were benefitted [by the SCC]. The bulk of the participation is that of men. (...) The resources benefitting the people economically always go to men. One reason for this is the nature of the organization, which is a forest community organization. And in the national context the forest is an area commonly being considered as something belonging to men. Even though the activities of the women exist they are not valued. This you do not see in the budget (transcriptions: 2).

Rosa is stating that the economic support Utz Che is giving to their members mainly ends up in male hands. Also, the SDB does not reveal any of the discriminatory practices still unfolding in the organization, such as, the still low participation of the women. This should, arguably, raise some concerns about the content of the budgeted activities decided upon in Utz Che. Are the resources not benefitting the cooperative women to a satisfactory high extent even though the SDB is demanding that half of the budget goes to women? Complementing Rosa's view is staff member Misha (Fecceg). Here she elaborates on the SDBs' strengths and weaknesses:

I feel like it is a very potent monitoring measure, very simple, interesting. Also, it has its weaknesses because in the end the spending on women or men does not necessarily mean that we get a profound and sustainable effect. (...) However, it has potential when accompanied with a strong [organizational] commitment, a potent gender policy and a good staff team that believe in what they are doing. Consequently, it is a very simple, and at the same time, very graphical measure, right? (...) Another strength is, for instance, that it is very good in distributing the work that we [Fecceg] are doing. You can say how many percent of your budget that is going directly to activities aimed at women (transcriptions: 47-48).

Misha stresses the importance of looking at the SDB soberly. For instance, one should take into account that the SDB's function of distributing resources equally between men and women does not on its own lead to profound and sustainable effects on gender equality. This is because the SDB does not say anything about the budgets' content but only that resources are distributed equally between men and women. Yet, Misha argues that the SDB helps to safeguard that at least some resources go to women, despite of how critical one might be of the activities as such. Moreover, Misha argues that the SDB can have transformational effects when accompanied with carefully evaluated activities.

6. Conclusions

Going back to the aim of the study, the research question was: *What are the effects of sex-disaggregated budgets in the case of cooperatives in Guatemala?* The interview data has clearly indicated that there have been significant positive effects of the SDB. One of the most significant changes observed by the interviewees is the overall increase in access to resources for the cooperative women. This is perhaps best demonstrated by many cooperative women's depictions of that they have received more education in the cooperatives than prior to the SDB. At the same time, there is not any hard evidence on the SDBs' long-term sustainability since the policy has been at work only for some years. Consequently, it remains to be seen if the SDBs have the potential in sustainably promoting gender equality in the researched organizations or if it just a temporary effect that can get reversed.

Furthermore, the increased educational activities for the cooperative women have led to several spiraling effects, according to the interviewees. For instance, many cooperative women have experienced an improved self-esteem and gender awareness. This, in turn, has led to important gains in overall cooperative development and participation of the women in the cooperatives. However, the effects seem to be weaker with regard to the participation on the top levels in the organizations, which still seem to be dominated by men. Linking this to some critical points made on the SDB, it is important to not forget about the importance of the SDBs' contents. This is something that this study could not elaborate on because of the study's limitations. However, a closer examination of the SDBs' contents would be highly relevant for future studies on SDBs to look at, since it would greatly enhance the understanding of the policy. Moreover, it could contribute to see what types of activities are more efficient in promoting women empowerment.

When examining Longwe's framework of empowerment one might be critical towards its claimed encompassing character (Luttrell et al. 2009). When assessing the interview data as a whole, one can note that the subject of space was mentioned as an important effect of the SDB with regard to the cooperative women. For instance, when cooperative member Natalia got the opportunity to leave her community, she felt relaxed and able to take on challenges with new energy (Transcriptions: 182). This indicates that not only Longwe's proposed five levels of empowerment matter, but also that space can play an important role in the process of empowerment, which indicates the need for further studies on the topic.

Looking at the interviewees' perceptions on the economic effects of the SDB, there were not any strong accounts on significantly improved economic situations. However, one can note that several interviewees observed an increased economic independence and income diversification due to increased education for the cooperative women. Furthermore, the women's improved self-esteem and gender awareness led to some changes with regard to the household work distribution. Some women now question an unequal distribution of the work in the home. Yet, it seems to be much left to do in order to change the actual distribution of the household tasks.

In sum, it can be argued that the SDBs have had positive development effects in the studied cooperatives. However, legitimizing reforms in the pursuit of gender equality should never primarily be about the utility it can have for society or organizations. Rather it should be seen as enabling women to lead full and dignified lives as full members of society. Skjeie and Teigen state that it becomes dangerous when women as a group become a means to use for utility reasons since it marginalizes the concept of equality. As Skjeie and Teigen wonder: "What if women's equal participation does not change priorities or enforce productivity? Should existing regulations for gender balance then be abolished? (Skjeie and Teigen 2005: 192)" The obvious answer to this question is no. Yet, utility arguments remain strong in the political debate on gender equality.

I conclude that the SDB has demonstrated a substantial potential in promoting gender equality and development objectives at a more general level in the organizations included in the study. Consequently, further research on the topic of SDBs is very much needed in order to promote an efficient system of development cooperation that actively takes a stance for increased gender equality.

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