



Veronika Schwediauer Gender & Governance: Political Elite Formation Processes in Austria from a Feminist Perspective

Research Topic

My dissertation project is dealing with gender differences in political elite formation processes in Austria since 1945 from a feminist perspective.

To narrow the topic I will focus on elite formation processes of Austrian ministers (men and women) from 1983 to 2006 (Cabinet Sinowatz to Schüssel II). Governing parties in this period were SPÖ, ÖVP and FPÖ/BZÖ.

Research Questions

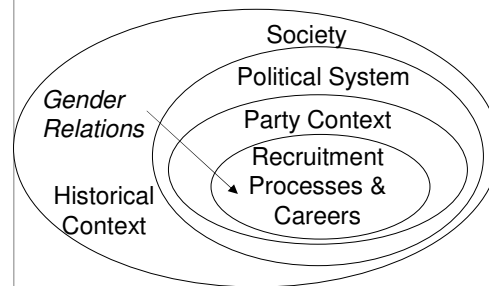
- How do political elite formation processes work?
 - WHO is the political elite and WHY?
 - HOW do political careers typically proceed?
 - BY WHOM are members of the political elite selected and WHY?
- Are there gender specific differences in political elite formation processes?
- Have political elite formation processes from 1983 to 2006 (gender specifically) changed?
- What can be concluded about the gender specific structures in the political field and the state?

Research Objectives

Gender Studies (not Women Studies) provide an appropriate approach to do research on gender inequalities. The comparison of female and male political careers enables me to analyze female gaps in political careers (Where are men but not women? Why?).

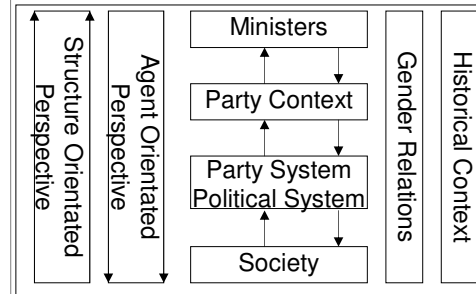
Hypothesis

- There are gender differences in elite formation processes.
- Gender relations and gender inequalities in elite formation processes must not be seen as hazardous occurrences but as products of societal gender relations which structure politics as a whole.



Methodology

I link a structure orientated perspective with an agent orientated perspective:



➤ Life Course Analysis

I will analyze the elite formation processes (from birth until the takeover of a ministry) of the 79 Austrian ministers (men and women) who governed in the period from 1983 to 2006.

➤ Personal Interviews

In order to collect data on subjective evaluations of elite formation processes I will interview a sample of ministers.

Theoretical Framework

The concepts of the masculinity of the state will build the theoretical framework. Embedded in this framework I want to link several unconnected theoretical strands like party research, elite theories, recruitment research and (feminist) state theories in a gender sensitive way.



The Researcher

Veronika Schwediauer was born in Austria in 1982. She completed her studies of Political Science in 2006. For her diploma thesis „Holy Crusade in Iraq?“, she was awarded the *ÖGPW-Nachwuchspreis 2006*. Since then she worked as scientific assistant at the *Gender Kolleg*, as external lecturer and as organizer of conferences at the University of Vienna.

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