



Veronika Schwediauer

# Same Same But Different: Sex/Gender Differences in Political Recruitment to the Austrian Government

## Research Puzzle

My dissertation project is dealing with sex/gender differences in the recruitment processes of the Austrian ministers between 1966 and 2006. Governing parties were the SPÖ, the ÖVP and the FPÖ/BZÖ.

## Methods

1. **A Biographical Analysis** targeted factual biographical data of the ministers according to criteria such as political career, social structure or family status.
2. **15 Qualitative Expert Interviews with Episodic Elements** were carried out with major party proponents in order to get expert knowledge. Most of them were ministers in the time frame and were asked for their personal story of recruitment as well (episodic elements).
3. **Short Case Studies** illustrate the mechanisms of recruitments and careers in individual lives.
4. **An analysis of the Austrian cabinets** shows the quantitative and qualitative representation of females and males. The latter targets the sexed-/gendered distribution of portfolios with their different power statuses.

## Theoretical Concept

Analytically, four levels are distinguished: society, political field, party, and recruitment processes in the narrow sense. On all levels, sex/gender relations are in effect.

The political field will be theorized with Bourdieu: It is defined as a field of forces with a specific structure of relations of forces. The actors occupy positions, dependent on their disposal over political capital. The positions of the agents have to be seen in relation to each other.

→ In the recruitment processes within the parties, the pivotal party groups (occupying strong positions in the parties) need to be regarded in the recruitment by including someone in government who *belongs* to them (a delegate). By that a certain power balance within the party is established.

I argue that the institutions (e.g. the party groups) pertain over a certain sex/gender class: The most powerful party players are rather male organized.

→ Hence, the selectors are mainly male.

→ On the side of the recruited, males pertain over better structure of opportunities as they have

better possibilities to access the mostly male organized powerful party institutions and to climb the career ladder.

## Main Findings

### The Selectors:

In all parties, the party leader is the central angle point in the recruitment processes. He (sic!) has to consider the main pillars of the party in government. These embrace the unions and the women's organization in the SPÖ; the leagues in the ÖVP; and in all parties the strong regional parties. In the FPÖ, the personal recruitment pattern by the party leaders is the strongest.

→ The party leaders and most proponents of these party groups are male. Hence, it depends on men, if women are selected for government.

### The Recruited:

Among the ministers are fewer women than men. (Party) politics and – in the case of the SPÖ and the ÖVP – the social partnership are the two main career channels, of which the former dominates. Women rather come through the party career path than via the social partners, compared to men. The social partnership largely is disadvantageous for women. Within the party career route, females

tend to stem from regional (party) politics than from the national layer. Within the social partnership, most institutions, like the Chamber of Economy for example, are male organized as concerns the produced ministers.

### Allocated Portfolios:

The allocation of positions shows a horizontal division between men and women: Whereas the rather powerful portfolios such as the Federal Chancellery, Finance or Economy are male dominated, women occupy less powerful ministries. The distribution also reflects traditional gender roles: Whereas men are allocated to Agriculture or Defense, women are responsible for Education, Family, Health or Social Affairs.



## The Researcher

Veronika Schwediauer was born in Austria in 1982. She completed her studies of Political Science in 2006. Since then she worked as scientific assistant, as external lecturer, as organizer of conferences at the University of Vienna, and participated in research projects. She spent a term at the London School of Governance in 2009.

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