Women and Men in Political Elite Formation Processes to the Austrian Ministries from 1983-2008

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I. INTRODUCTORY PART

This paper represents the current stage of research of my project. It contains the outline of the thesis, as I have just begun to work on the empirical part some weeks ago and will therefore not be able to present empirical results already.

Now, what will be presented in this paper? First, in the course of the introduction, it will be explained what interests me and how I want to research that (presentation of the topic, the research questions, and – briefly – the methodology), which hypotheses I have about the concerned processes, how this thesis will be structured and, where I am in the current working process.

The introductory part will be followed by the theoretical part, in which it will be shed light on the terms used, the analytical model developed, and the theoretical framework in general. In the next chapter, the methodology shall be explained in detail. Finally, in the last chapter, we will cast a first glance at political elite formation processes to the Austrian ministries.

So, what is the puzzle of the thesis and how shall it be researched? At the heart of this thesis is the question of sex/gender differences in political elite formation processes to the Austrian ministries. The empirical study embraces the period of time between 1983 and 2008 (Cabinet Sinowatz to Gusenbauer) and is illustrated in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Cabinets¹</th>
<th>Period of Government²</th>
<th>Government Constellations³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinowatz</td>
<td>1983-1986</td>
<td>Little Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vranitzky I</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>SPOE-FPOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vranitzky II-V</td>
<td>1987-1997</td>
<td>Grand Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klima</td>
<td>1997-1999</td>
<td>SPOE-OEVP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schüssel I, II</td>
<td>2000-2006</td>
<td>Little Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OEVF-FPOE/BZOE¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gusenbauer</td>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>Grand Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SPOE-OEVP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The indicated names in the first column represent the respective Federal Chancellors.
² The indicated periods of government embrace the official taking office of a government until the official resignation or the day of parliamentary elections, whichever date is first.
³ The first party indicated is the party to which the Federal Chancellor belonged/belongs.
⁴ In April 2005 the FPOE government members, most parliamentary deputies and many other party members of the FPOE, separated themselves from their former party and entered the newly built BZOE, which consecutively replaced the FPOE as governing party.
These 25 years will be inquired empirically in detail, but also embedded (by literature research) into the wider framework of Austrian governments in the Second Republic (therefore, from 1945 onwards).

In the timeframe in question, four political parties governed, namely the SPOE, OEVP, FPOE, and BZOE, and 96 persons were ministers, 27 females, and 69 males.

To take sex/gender as only explanatory variable for the analysis of female and male elite formation processes would be simplistic, as different dimensions (such as for example belonging to the respective party-affiliated associations, a party power base etc.) are at play in the course of recruitment processes. Therefore, these dimensions, which will be further on named “general” conditions in this paper, have to be carved out and bundled first, and then analyzed with respect to sex/gender differences only in a second step.

Although this has to be seen as one research interest, it can be of heuristic advantage to separate these two causes in order not to forget that both has to be explored. The following research questions are formulated in this logic:

1. Who are the Austrian ministers typically (“generally” and sex/gender specifically)?
2. How do political careers of Austrian ministers typically proceed (“generally” and sex/gender specifically)?
3. By whom or by which institution are Austrian ministers typically recruited (“generally” and sex/gender specifically)?
4. Have political elite formation processes of Austrian ministers from 1983 to 2008 changed (“generally” and sex/gender specifically)?

These questions shall be examined in this thesis by biographical research, interviews, and literature research. In the course of the biographical research, biographical data of all Austrian ministers between 1983 and 2008 will be examined, and subsequently patterns of elite formation will be worked out through a typologization of these individual life courses. Additional information of these processes will be acquired through expert interviews in the respective political parties and literature research.

Although it is simplistic to call these conditions “general”, these are nevertheless named as such in this paper for the sake of a better readability of the paper and understanding of the reader.
To avoid misunderstandings, it should be clarified that potential candidates for Austrian ministers who were eventually not recruited will not be researched in this thesis. Of course, it could be interesting to compare biographies of successful and non-successful politicians. However, recruitment processes to the Austrian ministries are party internal processes and decisions, wherefore information about all potential candidates for a ministry post in question can not be accessed.

*Which hypotheses will be explored in this thesis?*

1. The main obstacles for women’s representation can be found in the male-dominated, male-organized party-affiliated federations, organizations, and associations, which form powerful factions in the parties and therefore also in the selection processes for the ministries.
2. In contrast to the different ideological positions of the political parties, parties do not differ much with respect to the quantitative and qualitative representation of females in government.
3. Concerning the attribution of positions, a gendered hierarchy of the quality of representation is discernable. For example, women are attributed more powerless ministries such as the portfolios for education, culture, etc. by tendency, whereas men abundantly control the power centers in government such as the ministry of finance, the Federal Chancellery, etc.
4. The specific government constellations influence the quantitative representation of females. When the contingent of ministries for a political party is low or diminished (e.g. during coalitions), the quantitative representation of women is low/diminished, too.

*How will this thesis be structured?* The point of departure of my thesis is its empirical focus, containing the female and male political elite formation processes to the Austrian ministries from 1983 to 2008. This empirical study will be theoretically connected to different ongoing theoretical debates, and embedded into the specificities of the Austrian political field since 1945.

*Where am I in the ongoing research process?* In August 2008 I began to work on the empirical investigation. After the finalization of the empirical survey, I will return to work on the theoretical part.
II. THEORETICAL PART

Definition of the Terms

In my thesis political elites are defined as persons with critical political power, occupying formal or informal positions. The governing elite, exemplified by the Austrian ministers, hold formal positions of political power and can therefore be classified as political elite.

The term political elite formation processes is split up in the terms recruitment and career to embrace the different perspectives of the recruiters (by the term recruitment) and the recruited (by the word career).

Political elite formation processes can be defined as occupational ascendancies, which contain several occupational positions or selecting mechanisms in a (mostly) hierarchical order. A political top position (such as a ministerial post for example) can be understood as only the end point of this hierarchical ascendancy (Herzog 1975, 44).

Development of the Analytical Model

For the analysis of political elite formation processes to the Austrian ministers, the analytical model of Norris/Lovenduski (1995) will be adapted. Norris/Lovenduski (1995, 184) conceptualize recruitment/career analytically on four levels: On the first level systemic factors influencing elite formation processes (legal system, party system, and electoral system) are described. The second level contains factors influencing recruitment within political parties (ideology, organization, rules). The third level comprises individual processes of political elite formation processes (ibid., 15-21, 184), which are divided – in my adaptation of this model – into the terms recruitment and career. The fourth level represents the final outcome of the personnel decisions (ibid.) and is foreclosed in my analytical model as it does not differ much from the third level, from my point of view. This model must be integrated in a societal

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6 from the perspective of the candidates or recruited
7 from the perspective of the recruiters
8 The third factor “the electoral system” is not relevant for the selection of ministers and therefore is excluded.
9 Norris/Lovenduski use the terms “supply-“ and “demand-side” instead.
framework as well as a historical context, and must be extended by sex/gender relations, which are structuring every level of analysis:

![Adapted Analytical Model of Norris/Lovenduski (1995)](image)

The analytical model will serve as an analytical model, as well as a guide for the composition of the theoretical part, and of the part treating Austrian elite formation processes.

**Presentation of the Theoretical Approach**

As explained in the introduction, sex/gender can not be taken as only explanatory variable in the course of elite production. Other criteria, which are important for a political career (e.g. membership in a party affiliated association), have to be carved out first, and then – in a second step – analyzed with respect to possibly existing sex/gender differences.

Applied to the structure of the analytical model that means that conditions of elite formation and (especially) sex/gender relations have partly both to be considered and theoretically conceptualized on the respective level of analysis. The theoretical approach is built – analogous to the analytical model – by three levels: Centrally important are theoretical concepts on recruitment/career (level 1), which have to be theoretically embedded into the political system (level 2) and society (level 3). On level one and two, “general” conditions of elite formation as well as sex/gender relations are of critical interest, whereas on level three only unequal sex/gender relations are thematisized.

On every level of analysis the specificities of the historical context (also displayed in the analytical model) have to be considered as conditions of elite formation as well as sex/gender relations (in these processes and in general) are due to change in the course of time. This is especially valid with respect to the nature of sex/gender relations for the last few decades in
the Western democracies. It must be assumed that the change of sex/gender relations in political elite formation to the Austrian ministries did not take place independently, but was a result of the change of sex/gender relations in the Austrian society.

The heart of the theoretical approach is formed by theoretical concepts dealing with recruitment, career and/or elite building (e.g. Hartmann 2004; Bourdieu 1989; Kaina 2004; Hoffmann-Lange 2006) and concepts occupied with differences of sex/gender to be found in these (e.g. Norris/Lovenduski 1995; Appelt 2004). Of course, theoretical concepts treating (the gendered structures of) elite formation in the political field will be primarily important. However, research works, which analyze (gendered) elite formation processes in other fields (such as medicine etc.) can also be theoretically interesting and will be applied for the further delineation of the analytical model and for the theoretical approach. This theoretical level contains the “micro-level” of elite formation and will be especially important for deriving the empirical criteria, which will be researched in the course of the empirical research, especially in the biographical research.10

Secondly, the political field (e.g. the parties, the state), in which political recruitments take place, have to be taken into account and, especially, the gendered structures of this political field have to be regarded. For this conceptualization, mainly feminist state theories (e.g. Kreisky 1997; Sauer 2001) and theoretical concepts on masculinity can be fruitful, but also research works on political participation and representation of females will be incorporated.

The design of the political field, its structures and its relations of power and domination in the political parties and in the state produce the conditions of career/recruitment as “structure of opportunities” (Herzog 1975). As the state is not sex/gender neutral, but can be characterized as masculine, it can be assumed that different conditions of career/recruitment exist for men and women.

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10 The already existing theoretical work on this level will be depicted in applied form in the empirical chapter by the empirical application of the already theoretically deduced research criteria. For this, please see page 11f.
The masculinity of politics and the state is a product of the establishment of the civic state and the capitalization of society (Kreisky 1997, 167). Public and private spheres have been separated by the modern division of labor and divided between men and women. Sauer (2004, 118f) made a threefold definition of the masculinity of the state: Firstly, positional/nominal masculinity comprising the quantitative overlap of men. Secondly, masculine policy inputs and outputs. Thirdly, masculinity on an institutional and symbolic level: Hierarchical sex/gender segregation organizes the vertical level (females in low positions, men in top positions) and the horizontal level (e.g. unequal distribution of power). "Männerbünde" (which could be translated with “male organized alliances”) (Kreisky 1995) exist on the basis of personal relationships and constitute a certain membership or belonging. The “members” mutually support each other. In this analytical concept formal alliances as well as informal ones are included.

Thirdly, unequal sex/gender relations in society have to be considered. Sex/gender disparities in the political field do not exist independently from society, but are influenced and produced by societal sex/gender relations.
III. METHODOLOGY

Biographical Research

The life courses of the Austrian ministers between 1983 and 2008 will be explored from birth until becoming a minister. In the selected period 208 positions were occupied, of which 166 positions were attributed to males, and 42 to females. In the given period 96 persons governed, 69 men, and 27 women.

For the empirical analysis mainly borrowing from the Life Course Analysis will be made (cf. Lamnek 2005; Sackmann/Wingens 2001). The Life Course Analysis is originally quantitatively oriented; nevertheless, it will be adopted in my research to serve for mainly qualitative ends. In contrast to the Biographical Research Method, which aims at subjective evaluations of personal lives, the Life Course Analysis targets objective biographical data (cf. Lamnek 2005); therefore, it is more suitable for my research.

The research questions (delineated in detail in the introductory part) can be transformed into various criteria, which will be further carved out and amended through further theoretical readings and the conducted interviews in the future research progress.

The first methodical step embraces the research and description of the biographical data as dense as possible. For this, biographical information will be entered in respective columns in an Excel-matrix, representing the theoretically deduced criteria.

The biographical information will be investigated in books (e.g. autobiographies), in journals, in newspapers, in different databases (such as the International Biographical Archive of the Munzinger Archive for example), online, and by inquiries in the respective parties for suitable documents and/or information. At the moment, I am thinking of different ways to amend the biographical data: Probably, additional biographical information will be collected by questionnaires, orally or in written form.

Subsequently follows the second methodical step, the qualitative and quantitative interpretation of the biographical data. Quantitatively, data such as age at party entry or at entry into a ministry, duration of a career until becoming a minister, etc. will be worked out, compared, and graphically depicted. The biographical data of the concerned ministers will be compared cross-sectionally in order to “detect” regularities or patterns, which will be classified into “types of political elite formation” in a third methodical step (cf. Lamnek
2005, 683): First a classification of typical elite formation processes across party- and sex/gender-differences will be carried out. Secondly, career/recruitment processes will be classified party-specifically. In both parts a further classification along sex/gender lines will be conducted. The derived career and recruitment patterns will then be compared to the already existing patterns in the literature (cf. Herzog 1975; Naßmacher 1968; Pelinka 1970).

The different dimensions that will be researched in the course of the biographical survey can be bundled in three umbrella criteria: biographical background, resources & motivation, and political career. These will be depicted in the following:

Concerning the biographical background, ascriptive criteria (sex/gender, race and class) will be researched and analyzed with respect to a possible relation (cf. Hoffmann-Lange 2006, 63). Hartmann (2004, 17) for example states that sex/gender specific and class specific opening/closure are closely linked.

Also, social, economic, and cultural capital (cf. Hartmann 2004, Bourdieu 1989; Rebenstorf 1997, 133f) will be investigated in the family and in the life of the individual politicians by different dimensions such as highest formal education attainment of the parents (social, cultural capital) and highest professional status of the parents (social, economic capital). For an embracing understanding not only the highest educational and professional status of the respective politician will be inquired, but her/his whole biographical educational and professional process will be researched.

Additionally, several criteria will be analyzed to complete the biographical social profile: date of birth, birthplace, marital status, number of children, etc.

The date of birth serves as attribute for a classification of generations. Birthplaces inform about the rural/urban origin of the politician. A quantitative overlap of urban politicians is probable because of the better accessibility to politics. Information about the familial status is researched as family can function as support network as well as double burden (especially for women). Also, a sex/gender comparison about the familial background could be interesting.

Successful politicians have to be equipped with resources and motivation, for which the social background is decisive. Norris/Lovenduski (1995, 143) define resources & motivation as “a range of assets which can be employed to advantage in pursuing a political career“,
which includes “personal income, union sponsorship, time, political experience, and support networks“.

As the research focuses on successful politicians, it must be assumed that motivation and time were sufficient and will therefore be cast out in the investigation.

Political experience will be further differentiated into political skills, specific knowledge, and administrative competence. Specific knowledge can result from a specific education/occupation, whereas the conduct of a major organization or enterprise for example can be interpreted as administrative competence (Müller 2006b, 182).

Network is understood in a relatively broad sense because of the strong institutional interweaving of the political parties in Austria with different organizations/federations. All memberships and functions in every party-affiliated organization/federation will be depicted.

To capture the political career, all occupations/functions in party organizations and political institutions (such as the parliament etc.) will be investigated.

Quantitative research data (such as career duration, age at entry in politics/government etc.) will complement the mainly qualitative research criteria.

**Expert Interviews**

Interviews with different party experts (also ex-ministers for example) will be conducted in order to collect data on evaluations of political elite formation processes and expert knowledge about these processes (cf. Dexter 2006/1969; Lilleker 2003; Gläser/Laudel 2004). By these interviews, I hope to get information about the significance of non-researchable factors such as friendship for example.
IV. ELITE PRODUCTION FOR THE AUSTRIAN MINISTRIES – A FIRST GLIMPSE

Again, a look at the analytical model can help to visualize the conception of this chapter. Once more, the importance of the “historical context” respectively the significance of change in the course of time has to be stressed. Processes of recruitment/career (and the inherent sex/gender relations in these) have changed over the last few decades and are also due to change according to the varying conditions at the time being (e.g. different government constellations). These different influential factors have to be considered in the research process.

**Societal Factors**

Gender relations and their change over time in the Austrian society have to be factored in. Obviously, the conceptualization of the societal level is still a weak point in the overall conception of the thesis. At the current stage, it is planned to capture (the change of) sex/gender relations in the Austrian society by different readings and statistics (e.g. of women in work life etc.).

**Systemic Factors**

Legally, the recruitment into the Austrian government has to take place by appointment/nomination and every person over 19 can be appointed as minister (Art. 70 B-VG).

In the Austrian party state, political parties serve as gatekeepers for political elite recruitment (Hardmeier 2004, 157). Formally, government members are proposed by the Federal Chancellor. In actual fact, the selection procedures of political personnel are processes within the parties.
Party Context

In the political parties, manifold practices have evolved with respect to the recruitment of political personnel. In the recruitment decisions, the party leader, the leadership of the party and different powerful party factions have to be taken into account (cf. Müller 2006b, 174).

Career patterns in the Social Democratic Party (SPOE) are dominated by ascendancy in the party hierarchy (member → Person of Confidence\textsuperscript{11} → top position) and in the union, the “Oesterreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund”. Furthermore, a membership in the Socialist Student Organization\textsuperscript{12} or in the Socialist Association of Academics\textsuperscript{13} can be of advantage (cf. Pelinka 1970, 535ff; Dachs/Gerlich/Müller 1995, 634). Also, the allocation of several posts is due to the organization of women in the party\textsuperscript{14}, as well as to several federal state party organizations and some party organizations of the districts (Nick/Pelinka 1996, 78).

In the Austrian People’s Party (OEVP) personnel recruitments are usually conducted within the three party-affiliated associations: the Association of Economy\textsuperscript{15}, the Association of Peasants\textsuperscript{16}, and the Association of Employees\textsuperscript{17}. Especially the first two organizations in connection with the Federal Economic Chamber and the Federal Chamber of Peasants represent crucial recruitment agencies for the OEVP (Pelinka 1970, 539). The Association of Employees has increasingly lost ground over the last few decades (Nick/Pelinka 1996, 79). In contrast to this, the state party organizations were able to gain influence since the 1980s.

\textsuperscript{11} “Vertrauensperson” in German
\textsuperscript{12} Verband Sozialistischer StudentInnen (VSSTOE)
\textsuperscript{13} Bund Sozialistischer AkademikerInnen (BSA)
\textsuperscript{14} SPOE Bundesfrauen
\textsuperscript{15} Oesterreichischer Wirtschaftsbund (OEWB)
\textsuperscript{16} Oesterreichischer Bauernbund (OEBB)
\textsuperscript{17} Oesterreichischer Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmerbund (OEAAB)
Of advantage for a career in the OEVP in general is a belonging to the “Oesterreichischer Cartellverband”, an umbrella organization of catholic student associations (cf. Müller 2006a; Pelinka 1970).

In the Freedom Party of Austria (FPOE) the pattern of personal recruitment is dominated by Joerg Haider since his takeover of the party in the late 1980s. Also after he had resigned as party leader in 2000, he remained the centre of the party. The youth organization of the party\textsuperscript{18} and the fraternities serve as pools for candidates (cf. Niederkofler 2004, 399f; Luther 2006).

For the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZOE), it must be assumed that the selection of political personnel was highly influenced by Joerg Haider, who separated the BZOE from the FPOE in 2005. As scientific research is lacking, elite formation processes in the BZOE have to be further explored.

Regarding the representation of women, positive or negative discrimination is possible. Also, it can be differentiated in direct and indirect (as an anticipated reaction of the electorate) discrimination (Norris/Lovenduski 1995, 107). Political parties need not be preclusive for women, but practically most of the barriers to political participation/representation for women can be found within political parties (Lukoschat 1998, 124). Established party practices of appointments are usually highly discriminatory for women. Most of the different internal party factions can be characterised as male dominated. The three associations of the Austrian People’s Party\textsuperscript{19}, the unions, the fraternities as well as the different state party organizations can be described as what Kreisky (1995, 1997) calls “männerbündisch” (male organized) and are also responsible for the weak representation of women in the political sphere (Appelt 1995, 611). The women’s party organizations as catalysts for female careers are relatively weak in comparison (Niederkofler 2004). As party affiliated organizations and party organizations are critical in the selection process of personnel, belonging or membership to one of these groups is often essential for pursuing a political career (Pelinka 1970). The male dominated structures discriminate women; hence, women are often lacking this resource.

\textsuperscript{18} Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend Oesterreich (RFJ)
\textsuperscript{19} Association of Economy, Association of Peasants, and Association of Employees
The ideological standpoints highly influence the definition of women’s quotas and the power of women’s organizations in the parties. The Social Democratic Party has a female quota of 40%. The Austrian People’s Party has a contingent for women of one third (Steininger 2006, 248). In the Freedom Party of Austria a quota does not exist. Also, its women’s organization is the weakest compared to the others (Niederkofler 2004). In the Alliance for the Future of Austria a women’s organization is entirely absent.

**Career & Recruitment Processes to the Austrian ministries**

The analysis of social structures and careers of Austrian ministers between 1945 and 1987 shows that the typical government member is male, 50 years old and has a higher education diploma (Müller/Philipp/Steininger 1988, 143).

Helen Postranecky of the Communist Party of Austria was the first female governmental member of the Second Republic. She was part of the provisional government Renner in 1945 as “under state secretary” (which corresponds to the position of “state secretaries” today). Only in 1966 the first female minister was appointed: Grete Rehor of the Austrian People’s Party was the first female social minister. Although women were part of consecutive governments, a significant quantitative increase of the female proportion in Austrian governments was long in coming: Until 1990 only one or two women were represented in the respective governments; in the cabinet of Vranitzky III five women were ministers for the first time. Since then, the female percentage in the Austrian governments slowly climbed. But the quantitative increase of women in governments can not be equated with a female rise of power, as the quantitative lack of representation still goes hand in hand with sex/gender disparities as concerns the *quality* of representation. Women are by tendency appointed to the more subordinate posts. But also if recruited as minister, females are often allocated “women specific” portfolios such as education, social affaires, health, culture, etc. These portfolios have a lower power status than the usually male dominated powerful positions as Minister of Finance, Economy, or as Vice or Federal Chancellor (cf. Steininger 2006). The attribution of portfolios along traditional gender ascriptions has to be – at least partly – related to gender divided “images” emanating from the societal level.

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20 Initiative Freiheitlicher Frauen (IFF)
The specific constellations of the particular government must be viewed from a gender critical perspective. As Neyer (1985, 104) states, specific constellations are more (dis)advantageous for women than others. For example, women are more likely to be selected in a majority government. The growth of women’s representation in government until 1990 went along with an enlargement of the government (Niederkofler 2004, 380). This points out that in times of scarce resources of offices women are saved (Neyer 1985, 104).
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