

POWER TO THE WOMEN? VIENNESE JOURNALISM IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Josef Seethaler and Christian Oggolder

With the emergence of the mass press in late nineteenth-century Austria, newspapers provided the main forum for public discourse, and journalism became a source of power. Thus, investigating the participation of women in journalism can also be seen as an analysis of power in the sense of control over (information) resources. Based on one of Foucault's concepts, the study differentiates between changes in the distribution of power inside journalism ('power to') and those forces that had sufficient power ('power over') to promote the involvement of women in the business of daily journalism in Austria during one of its heydays in the 1920s. The editorial line, which provides the central rationale for journalistic action, and market orientation, which provides the main rationale for entrepreneurial action, are considered as the two main factors capable of influencing the participation of women in journalistic power. Furthermore, we ask for biographical circumstances, which promoted women's career opportunities within this male-dominated business.

KEYWORDS: First Austrian Republic, interwar period, media history, women in journalism

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With the emergence of the mass press (in Austria in the late nineteenth century), newspapers provided the main forum for public discourse, and journalism became a source of power. Ever since, the criteria on which journalists act have been increasingly determining which topics and world-views will be discussed in the public arena. The degree of responsibility thus borne underlines the imperative need that the socio-demographic structure of journalism should – ideally, and in a democratic context – broadly match that of the population in whose interests journalism should be acting. This applies with particular force, though not exclusively, to equal treatment of the sexes (Inglehart et al., 2002).

Given the long history of the dominance of a ‘masculine’ professional image in connection with journalism – in particular with (daily) news and current affairs coverage – one initial premise must be that any relaxation of restrictions on entry, and *a fortiori* the granting of access to hitherto excluded categories of person, will be associated with a redistribution of power inside the profession. But as possession of power has a strong inherent tendency to become entrenched, any such process would require suitable internal and external conditions to initiate it and drive it forward.

It is with such issues in mind that the present study sets out to enquire whether, and to what extent, women gained entry to news journalism during the First Austrian Republic (1918–34), that is, during the brief era of democratic structures in the interwar period, and what factors on the media side were conducive to such entry. Placed within an analytical framework of power relations, which focuses less on ‘what power is’ and more on ‘how it operates’ (Deacon, 2002, 91), the study explores the influences journalistic organizations (such as editorial departments) and media organizations, as the two main holders of power in the newspaper industry, exert on the role of women in journalism (and how it was actually configured by female journalists). It is hypothesized that, on the one hand, a particular editorial line and, on the other hand, a particular market position of a newspaper enhanced the participation of women in journalistic activities.

The daily press was chosen as the subject of the study because it, more than anything else, was the forum through which, in the countries of Central and Northern Europe, after the democratization processes of the late nineteenth century, a general political public was enabled to find a voice and become a reality; and it has accordingly – in spite of competition from television – played a role of major importance in political communication ever since (Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Seethaler and Melischek, 2007). No doubt the contribution of women to journalism cannot be adequately determined by focusing on the daily press alone (Beasley, 2001; Kinnebrock, 2009). Nonetheless, the social permeability of journalism must be judged by whether and to what extent it was possible for women to find their way into its ‘core activity’, daily news reporting, and thus to advance ‘from the

women's pages to the front page' (Mills, 1988). Concentration of the study on the metropolis of Vienna, as will be shown below, reflects the availability of sources, which permit a broader, Austria-wide field of enquiry only with regard to certain individual issues.

The First Austrian Republic: Socio-political Changes, and Changes in Media Structure

There were several reasons for choosing the period of the First Republic. On the socio-political front, the women's movement recorded a number of successes. With the founding of the Republic on 12 November 1918, Austria became one of the first few countries worldwide to introduce active as well as passive voting rights for women, and a year later it became possible for girls to be taught at public *Mittelschulen* (secondary schools). The opportunities thus created for participation in political life and for attainment of the university admission qualification, which was no longer burdened by high fees, certainly constituted two of the most important basic preconditions for advance up the – long – road that led to the establishment of social parity for women and men. On the employment scene, in parallel, a sustained restructuring process was under way, pressing vigorously in the same direction. Thus in Vienna there was significant growth between 1910 and 1934 in the proportion of women employed in trade and industry (from 28.4 to 32.4 percent) and in commerce, transport and finance (from 25.1 to 30.6 percent), but, more importantly, there were also considerable increases in the public sector and the free professions (from 21 to 35 percent). This trend, only slightly less marked across Austria as a whole, is evidence that employed status had become a fact of life for a growing contingent of women – even though the social role images failed to keep pace with this development and even though the end of the First Republic saw the conservative government's introduction of measures restricting women's work because of pressures generated by the economic slump (Rigler, 1976, 144–50).

In the daily press sector too there were structural developments that changed the fundamentals of the working environment for the actors concerned. Where the functional proximity of newspaper and party in the early days of the modern party system had brought about a close relationship that was to reach a new and transient high point in the context of communications intensification and the emergence of new political players during the transitional phase 1918–20, now by contrast the young Republic encouraged a process of decoupling of politics and media that had in fact begun before the expiry of the Habsburg monarchy (Melischek and Seethaler, 2005).

It had been as early as the turn of the century (and particularly after the discontinuation of the *Zeitungsstempel* [stamp tax] in 1900), in the tradition of the local press, and made possible by economic, socio-demographic and technical

developments, that the popular, politically independent mass newspaper emerged as a new category and positioned itself successfully in the market. Under democratic conditions this process was bound to gather momentum, because reduction in external sanctioning mechanisms correspondingly enhances the effectiveness of modern news media's logic of action. It was for this reason that, after the transitional phase, the political party press was unable to hold its initial market share of 20 percent. It was only in the late 1920s that it was able to grow its share again, and then only as a result of the decision by the two big parties to launch newspapers that were modelled on the high-circulation popular papers.

In contrast to the traditional party press, the popular papers contributed to expansion of the newspaper public by inclusion of readers from ever wider social strata, a development founded on the steady fall in average cover prices during the entire period from the beginning of the century to the beginning of postwar inflation, and leading in its turn by the beginning of the 1930s to far-reaching market saturation (Melischek and Seethaler, 2000). Market saturation eventually resulted in intensified competition and hence also in greater product differentiation and focus on target groups (in the Vienna of that period, an average day saw the publication of some 25 to 30 daily papers, with a total circulation of up to 1.4 million – this for a population of not quite 1.9 million); this was reflected in the rapid development of cover-price spread, after a long spell of stable, closely bunched prices following the inflation period, to the point where the most expensive titles sold at four times the price of the cheapest. For the majority of newspapers, this meant that, among criteria determining the – thoroughly adaptable – editorial line, reader-paper loyalties to a particular paper now played a more significant role, and loyalty to political institutions correspondingly less.

While fully researched data on the situation of women journalists in Austria following the Second World War have been available since Hausjell's (1989) group-biographical study of daily newspaper journalism at the beginning of the Second Republic, there is still only scanty and fragmentary information relating to the very period in which the development of the press took a course that was to have a sustained impact on the structures of the media system, imposing changes that persist to this day (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). According to the latest survey results, the proportion of women in Austrian journalism stands at 42 percent; their representation is lowest, however, in the daily press sector, at 33.5 percent, and even in Vienna (35 percent) it is only marginally higher (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2007). For purposes of comparison: Hausjell's study (1989, 314) yielded a figure of about 12 percent for the early years of the Second Republic (1945–7), both nationwide and for Vienna; in terms of permanent editorial staff, Vienna was ahead at 8.1 percent (against 7 percent Austria-wide).¹ How this development took off – Beasley and Gibbons (2003, 81) locate it for the United States in the years 1910–20, which

saw a tripling in numbers of permanent full-time female journalists – and what factors were involved is an issue that remains largely unresolved. One solitary dissertation dating from the 1960s provides an indication of the status of female journalists in the First Republic, stating that in 1927 ‘approximately 20 women’ had been employed on the editorial staff on the Vienna daily and weekly newspapers; this would have represented a 5 percent share (Hölzl, 1965, 41). These figures, rated by the dissertation’s author as ‘respectable’, were later interpreted as indicating that Austrian women journalists had not managed during the interwar period to progress towards emancipation (Hausjell, 1989, 318).

The study on which we report in this article is thus an attempt to throw light on a long-neglected chapter of Austrian media and newspaper history through empirical investigation, although it can only supply a part of the necessary systematic analysis of the role played by women in the development of Austrian journalism.

A Theoretical Perspective: Journalism and Power

Issues of social equality invariably being issues of the distribution of social power, as observed in the opening remarks, it appears desirable to base the study on an analytical model that attempts to describe power relations in theoretical terms. Originally formulated by Foucault (1982), the concept has since been applied both to feminist studies and to research in public relations and journalism (e.g. Aldoorey et al., 2008; Allen, 2009; Altmeppen, 2007). Essentially the analysis will begin from a differentiated reading of power as disposal and control over resources and events and will proceed along the two dimensions of ‘power to’ and ‘power over’, that is, with reference to the issues of who holds power and over whom power is exercised. According to these two dimensions, the points of interest are both the distribution of power inside journalism (‘power to’) and those forces that have sufficient power (‘power over’) to secure the involvement of women in the information production process, that is, to give them the opportunity, in the sense of ‘power to’, to do something that without the means of exercising power they could not do. Writing with reference to gender differences in the evaluation of political matters, Bourdieu (1984) noted the great significance of both the right and the authority to argue in political terms (and this reciprocal determination obtains in other spheres besides the political). Professional competence, in this view, is based essentially on social competence, that is on a right granted qua status to exercise a specific capability in practice and thus to have it at one’s disposal: ‘Only those who ought to have it can really acquire it and only those who are authorized to have it feel called upon to acquire it’ (Bourdieu, 1984, 410). Professional competence is intimately linked to the power to exercise it in practice.

Power in journalism, in the sense of ‘power over’, accrues both to journalistic organizations (particularly editorial departments) and to media organizations, which in their respective capacities as organizations of information production and information

distribution share a relationship of reciprocal interdependence, while simultaneously maintaining complex power relations with their outside environment. Journalism – to put it briefly – depends, if it is to fulfil its function, on the resources put at its disposal by the media organizations, and also on information providers from other societal systems such as politics, economics, culture and sport; its activities are influenced by institutional arrangements (ranging from in-house agreements to wage settlements). Media organizations, by contrast, are dependent on the material journalistic organizations produce as well as on funding sources, whether these be advertising clients or political parties; the way they act is determined by competition structures and audience structures. Their capacity, deriving from their core competences, to exercise power over opinion or markets gives journalistic organizations and media organizations alike the means by which, within their mutual relationship, they can pursue their respective interests.

Arguing further from this, the editorial line, as one of the central journalistic rationales for action, and market orientation, as the guideline for entrepreneurial action, will be defined as the factors capable of influencing the participation of women in journalistic power. Whereas the editorial line in its capacity as the (relatively consistent, but by no means immutable) political decision-making programme of an editorial board contributes very materially to profiling a media product and thus to the generation of audience loyalty (Schenk, 2007), entrepreneurial market orientation targets expansion into new markets and extension of existing markets (Picard and Brody, 1997). Given the relationship of mutual interdependence of journalistic organization and media organization, the two factors can share a common alignment yet still be in a state of mutual tension.

In terms of the socio-political and the press-specific economic conditions obtaining during the First Republic – outlined above – it can be assumed that, notwithstanding traditional gender role ascriptions transcending social boundaries, the according of equal political status to women had found greater acceptance in left and liberal circles, at least as a formal or legalistic notion, as described by Todorov (1991) with regard to the Weimar Republic. Thus the first hypothesis reads as follows: *a left or liberal editorial line ought to correlate with a higher proportion of women editorial staff.*

Similarly, a newspaper seeking to position itself on the market as a newcomer, and hence unable to build on inherited readership structures and reading habits, would come under greater pressure to accept and conform to the changing social and socio-demographic environment. Against the background of the significant rise described above in professional commitment by women, the second hypothesis asserts that media organizations on the lookout for new audience subgroups in the context of a newspaper market that had been set on an expansion course by the foundation of the Republic, and then beset by difficulties in the inflation years of the early 1920s, would have no option but to respond to the changing facts of life and to acquire women readers.

Methodology and Data Sourcing

Extant source material on the status of woman journalists on the Vienna daily newspapers between 1918 and 1934 is heterogeneous, not least because there is no systematic information regarding the editorial staffing. Getting to grips with the issue requires collation of a number of sources. Among the data used, the core resource – here systematically analysed for the first time – has been the member lists, and the membership additions and deletions lists, of the Organisation Wiener Presse (OWP, Press Organization for Vienna), which were published regularly in its newsletter *Der Journalist*.² The OWP had been founded in 1917 as a non-political body analogous to a trade union and representing the interests of Viennese journalists. In contrast to the Journalisten- und Schriftstellerverein Concordia (Concordia Union of Journalists and Writers), which had tradition going back to its foundation in 1859, and which took until 1919 to introduce formal equality of treatment for the sexes, on paper at least, the OWP recognized equal access for men and women from the start. In issues of labour law it was the journalists' negotiating partner for the publishers' organization of that time.

This important role was no doubt one of the reasons for the rapid increase in membership, the figures for which prompted Hölzl (1965, 37) to conclude that, from about 1920 onwards, they conveyed a 'fairly reliable picture of the profession'.³ Membership was open to all editorial staff on daily and weekly newspapers and to correspondents, also to freelance journalists and the correspondents of foreign press organs; and the right of membership was not contingent on journalism being the principal employment.⁴ Full membership lists were published in the newsletter *Der Journalist* only twice, in December 1918 and January 1920, but between these dates, and also subsequently until 1934, records of new and cancelled memberships appeared *in full*, showing the press organs to which these union members belonged. Analysis of this information therefore makes it possible to obtain a relatively full overview of membership trends.

This core resource for the organizational analysis is collated with the results of the Austrian national censuses of 1910 and 1934⁵ and supplemented from statistical data regarding editorial departments and media organizations in the Viennese newspaper industry (Melischek and Seethaler, 1992), as well as from biographical data which provided evidence of the socio-demographic profile of the female journalists. The biographical data were obtained by searching 26 contemporary and recent encyclopaedias (out of a total of 52 volumes or year issues).⁶ Records were kept of all entries mentioning any form of work for a Vienna daily paper. All names collected in this way, along with those from the OWP membership lists and those of female journalists mentioned in newspapers' statutory disclosures, were entered in searches in both the *World Biographical Information System* administered by the K.G. Saur-Verlag⁷ and the Austrian National Library's *Ariadne* database.

Clearly, this approach permits identification only of a particular section of the whole, one that moreover reflects the respective publisher's intentions, because 'it is important to remember the women who made professional reputation in less normative ways, fell into history books purely by chance when a historian unearthed their stories, were discovered by virtue of being related to prominent men, and may have written letters or journal entries that were preserved and collected' (Whitt, 2008, 35). But as Austria does not have editorial archives, the multiple-approach procedure described here represents the only way to surmount the limitations of previous research and to examine the biographical backgrounds of the largest possible, albeit still not representative, group of individuals.⁸

Findings from Organizational Data

In accordance with the methodology described, the findings reported relate to all editorial staff employed on Vienna daily newspapers and also those freelance journalists who are mentioned in the extant information sources as having worked at least temporarily for Vienna daily newspapers. Following the practice observed by the OWP lists of new and cancelled memberships (but also in compliance with the criteria used in the studies by Hausjell and by Kaltenbrunner et al.), freelancers who worked long-term for particular newspapers are assigned to those employers, and those not so assignable are categorized separately.⁹

The figures show that with the passage of time the proportion of women within the overall total number of employees and freelance journalists increased from 4.2 percent at the birth of the Republic to 10.9 percent in December 1933; among staff working in-house, the proportion of women rose from an initial figure of 4.1 percent (1918) to over 9 percent at the end of the Republic (see Figure 1). While still higher growth rates are recorded for freelance journalists working for daily newspapers, the considerably smaller numbers concerned mean that they have little significance overall (see Table 1). That the total membership of the Organisation Wiener Presse remained at a more or less constant level (of about 450 members) following its consolidation in about 1920 may be taken as an indication of the market saturation in the news media sector mentioned in the opening discussion above, which evidently discouraged reinforcement of staffing levels; and the slightly declining trend of the early 1930s even points to staffing reductions at times of increased competition. All the more significance thus attaches to the continuous rise in the number of female journalists, especially as it needs also to be borne in mind that women long remained excluded from journalists' (and other) organizations, admission to any organization consequently entailing the surmounting of a major barrier in terms of social inhibition. Characteristically, the only women appearing in managerial editorial positions (Melischek and Seethaler, 1992) – and working for such diverse publications as *Soziale Revolution* (Elfriede Friedländer), *Welt am*

Morgen (Irene Harand), *Frau* (Ottilie Krautmann), *Österreichischer Beobachter* (Erika Spann-Rheinisch) and *Depeschen* (Anna Twerdy) – were not members of the Organisation der Wiener Presse.

In comparison to the early postwar years, the proportion of 9.2 percent calculated for the end of the First Republic is only one-quarter below the corresponding figure for 1945/47. The 'increase in the proportion of women in press journalism' noted by Hausjell (1989) for the beginning of the Second Republic is therefore – contrary to widely held assumptions – not ascribable to a 'modernization effort' prompted by the war, and in fact exactly corresponds to the figure that would have been reached in the event of an uninterrupted continuation post-1933 of the then existing trend. The decision in the context of the war economy to train more women in journalism merely cancelled out the numerical reverse that had been imposed on female journalism by the National Socialist government's anti-women policies – although, that said, the harm inflicted by those policies on women's emancipation, a process only just picking up momentum at the end of the First Republic, is in no way 'quantifiable'.

The development that took place in the daily newspaper sector needs to be evaluated against the perspective of the more general changes in employment structures in the public communications field. Here the results of the national censuses of 1910 and 1934 are only a crude indicator, as in 1910 'authors, journalists, editors, independent scholars' were grouped in a single category (see Table 2). It was not until 1934 that the continuing professionalization of journalism was recognized by provision of separate categories for 'editors (of newspapers)' and 'independent scholars, authors, journalists'. In the combined category the proportion of women rose in Vienna from 11.8 to 16.5 percent, while in the subgroup of employees it remained virtually unchanged at rather over 9 percent. (It may be noted in passing that the Vienna data for the whole public communications domain barely differ at all from those for Austria as a whole.) In comparison, the rise in daily newspaper journalism from 4.1 to 9.2 percent mentioned above differs significantly. This may be interpreted as evidence that journalists of both sexes were unusually successful during the First Republic in establishing themselves in news and current affairs journalism.

Placing the Viennese and Austrian situation in the international context is difficult in principle because the demographic entities forming the basis for the various surveys are either barely comparable at all or, at best, only partly. It is not clear, for instance, that the proportion figure of 2.4 percent reported in 1925 for the 'Reichsverband der deutschen Presse' (German Reich Press Association) and that of 2 percent for the French national association of journalists can legitimately be compared with the OWP data. This seems more likely to be possible in the case of census data. As the count here gave Germany a figure of 5.6 percent for the

proportion of women among all editorial staff employed (i.e. not in the daily newspaper sector alone) in 1925 (rising by 1933 to 7.3 percent), and Britain in the mid 1920s a proportion of 5.7 percent, the values for these two countries seem to correlate fairly well with the Austrian record. The proportion reached in the United States in 1920 – 16.7 percent of *all* members of the profession – was probably reached in Austria and in Vienna no earlier than the end of the First Republic (16.1 and 16.5 percent respectively); however, it is not clear whether those covered by the author category, included in Austria, are also included in the American data.¹⁰ While caution must be observed in interpreting all these comparisons, it seems warranted to infer that – contrary to the negative assessments to be found in the secondary literature – the status of women in both Viennese journalism and Austrian journalism in general at least matched the European average.

During the first one-and-a-half decades of democratic experience in Austria, then, the distribution of power within journalism ('power to') shifted slightly in women's favour. The associated enquiry into the nature of the forces that accelerated the process of involving women in the information production process ('power over') will be pursued here by means of studying the gender balance in the individual Vienna daily newspaper editorial staffs on the basis of the hypotheses mentioned above relating to the individual editorial line as one of the most important journalistic decision criteria and to the degree of market orientation as entrepreneurial guideline. From the management perspective, market-oriented policies are most called for when a new product is being launched on the market, when a market is to be expanded, and when audience loyalties need to be refreshed.

Preliminary inspection of the findings relating to editorial staffs brings the overall development described above into sharper focus and relativizes it by showing that only about 60 percent of the daily newspapers represented by the Organisation Wiener Presse (23 of 38) demonstrably employed female journalists, and that only 5 of these 23 newspapers employed more than 3 women who were OWP-listed (see Table 3). By dint of additionally analysing statutory letterhead information it is possible to add further daily newspaper staffs to these 23 newspapers (*Delnické Listy*, *Depeschen/Depeschenblatt*, *Die Frau*, *Der Morgen*, *Österreichischer Beobachter*, *Wiener Zeitung/Wiener Abendpost*, *Die Zeit*), but the uneven distribution remains striking. This makes it all the more necessary to analyse the cases that inaugurated female participation in journalistic power.

These cases included, on the one hand, *Der Tag* and *Die Stunde*, the first two papers founded under the young Republic to enjoy lasting success, which pursued a left-wing bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic political line respectively; and on the other, the radical left-wing *Der Abend* (with its associated papers *Das Echo* and *Telegraf*), which had originally been launched during the First World War and reappeared, following several censorship-imposed interruptions, from 31 October

1918, that is to say the day after the founding of the Republic of German Austria. All three newspapers meet the conjectured precondition of a customer base in a left-wing and/or liberal milieu. If *Der Tag* supported the Vienna Social Democrats' line in local and regional administration from a bourgeois rather than a class-warfare perspective, it was consistent commitment to the latter perspective that again and again prompted *Der Abend* to adopt a critical stance vis-à-vis the Social Democrats, notwithstanding the ideological affinities. *Die Stunde*, by contrast, was at one with *Der Tag* in their mutual unambiguous support for the democratic and republican constitution. Although it positioned itself in the bourgeois 'camp', *Die Stunde* nonetheless always opposed the radicalization of that grouping and called for a coalition of all democratic forces. Not surprisingly, in 1934 the editors-in-chief of both newspapers, Maximilian Schreier and Josef C. Wirth, were relieved of their duties, and *Der Abend* was shut down (cf. Seethaler and Melischek, 1992).

Where these three new newspapers had faced the challenge of positioning themselves on the market and asserting themselves in competition with existing papers by accessing reader groups of partly different composition, the *Neue Freie Presse* and *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, which were the other two papers in the leading group, along with their sister paper, the *Wiener Mittags-Zeitung*, had been confronted during the early years of the Republic with the difficult situation of having to re-connect with their target readership. Both newspapers belonged to the 'great' liberal press tradition and had roots reaching far back into the Habsburg monarchy era; with the National Council elections of 1920, however, they were forced to accept that the liberal parties supported by them in the past had now been consigned by the electorate's decision to political insignificance – meaning that they had misread the position of their readership. While the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* succeeded in building new reader loyalties (as can be seen from its rising circulation figures) by aligning itself more and more categorically with the Social Democrats, the *Neue Freie Presse* fared less well in evincing greater sympathies for the right, and sought to correct this course by adopting an unequivocal anti-Fascist stance at the beginning of the 1930s. This still failed to stem its steady decrease of sales. Both these newspapers thus conform to the expectation of the journalistic-organizational premise, and from the entrepreneurial point of view they were forced to come to terms with changing social and socio-demographic conditions in the broader context (cf. Matis et al., 2004).

All the papers mentioned here, except *Der Abend*, recruited and served 'a journalist potential and readership spectrum that felt no allegiance to either the "Reds" or the "Blacks", in other words did not wish to have contemporary events interpreted for them from a canonical Marxist or Catholic perspective' (Lehnert, 1995, 440). They sought rather to focus on target groups localized in a similar political-cultural segment: these ranged from bourgeois social reformers identified

with left-wing republicanism, through cultural and economic liberals, to those representing liberal constitutional positions. As this segment largely only came into being during the First Republic, it is likely to have included new groups that had tended hitherto to be excluded from public discourse – groups that potentially included those women whose lives and circumstances were becoming increasingly dominated by paid occupations pursued outside the home. In this connection it needs to be emphasized that after 1920 all other Vienna daily newspapers that had their roots in the tradition of classical liberalism, and so were affected by the changed political environment, swung to a greater or lesser extent to the right, and that none of the other enduringly successful and politically independent daily papers founded during the Republic pursued a left-wing or liberal editorial line (except for the *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, published by the Jewish publishers Jüdische Zeitungs- und Verlags-GmbH and catering for a specific readership segment). *Der Abend* too fits this picture. As a left-wing socialist paper it had to create its readership outside the core milieu in which party loyalty dominated; and at the time the Social Democratic press operating in this milieu employed no higher a proportion of female staff than its Conservative counterpart (in both cases rather above 7 percent). Influences stemming from editorial line and entrepreneurial market orientation, as formulated in the two hypotheses, thus seem to have been generated when the two factors were present *simultaneously*; no evidence was found that either of the hypotheses could apply except alongside the other.

Additional Findings from Collective Biographical Data

For purposes of an initial approach to the issue of in *whom* the right and authority to act as a journalist were now newly invested, the biographical research work provided sufficient material for construction of a database comprising 111 individuals in all. A distinction was again drawn between (employed or freelance) female journalists who could be regarded as attached to one or several newspaper editorial staffs, and those women who worked as freelance authors supplying the press with poems and short stories. Categorization of the 111 women on this basis yielded totals of 59 journalists and 52 authors.

At the end of 1925, that is to say roughly halfway through the First Republic era, the women in the journalist part of the sample were on average 48 years old, while those in the author group had an average age of 53. The average age for the journalist group broadly matched that for Vienna journalists generally: this had been calculated, again with reference to the year 1925, by the Pensionsinstitut für österreichische Journalisten (Austrian Journalist Pensions Institute), for those who were insured and came from Vienna, and was found to be 46 (cf. Hölzl, 1965, 105). When the birth years are grouped by decade, it emerges that the 1870s and 1880s were the decades most heavily represented. In the female author group, by contrast,

it is birth years in the late 1850s and the 1860s that are relatively over-represented (see Figure 2). If one assumes that the role of the female author is historically the earlier role model, it can be contended that there was a reduction in the average age of women working in this professional field. Moreover, comparison with all persons employed in the media sector – based on May 1934 national census data (see Table 4) – strongly suggests that in the sample of 111 women the younger age cohorts are in fact under-represented. It has to be taken into account that biographical handbooks and insurance data may both be skewed in the same direction, as the former will generally mention only individuals who have reached a certain age, while insurance policies are generally more likely to be taken out by individuals who have achieved some status in life and are therefore no longer young.

The social background of the women journalists shows in general a relatively high standard of education. Of the approximately 25 percent of them who embarked on higher education, well over one-third finished with a doctorate. This corresponds to an overall proportion of about 10 percent, similar to the figure for the Weimar Republic (Kinnebrock, 2005, 120). A further 10 percent attained professional qualifications as translators, and just under 10 percent qualified as teachers. However, inspection of the biographies for details of the newspapers to which individual journalists were attached yields results that are hardly unexpected: female editorial staff of the former liberal ‘flagship’ newspapers, the *Neue Freie Presse* and the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, came mainly from upper middle-class (*grossbürgerlich*) families,¹¹ most of them securely established in the cultural life of Vienna, some of them still living up to the tradition of nineteenth-century ‘Salon’ culture. One prominent example of this would be Alice Schmutzer, whose home was a meeting place for many of those engaged in the creative arts, including literature – notably Arthur Schnitzler, Hermann Broch and Stefan Zweig. By contrast, the female editorial staff of the ‘mid-market’ papers *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Der Tag* consisted, as far as it has been possible to ascertain to date, of women from the middle classes, and those at the Christian Socialist *Reichspost* were from civil service families. It is without exception only in Social Democratic and Communist papers that one also comes across female journalists from under-privileged social classes, women committed to the goals of the labour movement who were using their work in journalism as a means of realizing those goals. Such commitment often went hand in hand with acceptance of important party functions, sometimes in international organizations. The most prominent example of this is Adelheid Popp, daughter of a weaver, who was employed as a maidservant and seamstress and was later to become an elected representative both at municipal council level and on the National Council. As a general rule, however, the social profile of left-wing female journalists seems to have been more heterogeneous than that of their female colleagues of the bourgeois press, as some of the women who became involved

were from an upper middle-class background. Two examples that may be cited here are Oda Olberg-Lerda – the daughter of a high-ranking German naval officer – and Käthe Leichter, who came from a ‘wealthy assimilated Jewish family’ and was murdered in 1942 in the Ravensbrück concentration camp.

It is worthy of note that of the 14 proven women’s movement activists mainly associated either with the newspapers upholding the ‘classical’ liberal tradition or the Social Democratic press, almost 80 percent were born before 1880. This may well be attributable to a development parallel with that noted by Kinnebrock (2005) for the Weimar Republic – a diminishing of the role played by the women’s movement in journalism that suggests that, for younger female journalists, the movement’s achievements ‘were by now taken for granted and [that these women] had learnt the journalism trade independently of the women’s movement’. Another consequence of this incipient professionalization was a first breach in the traditional segregation between ‘hard’ reporting areas for men and ‘soft’ topics handled by women (see Figure 3). Thus, while over half the female journalists worked for their paper’s *feuilleton* section or culture desk, only 50 percent of them were there in the traditional literary author role, and over time increasingly (correlating with the high proportion of younger age-bands) as critic or arts and sciences editor. About one women journalist in seven, as far as can be ascertained, wrote for the women’s and fashion pages, and this doubtless had to do with the discovery of women as consumers (Oliver, 2009, 8). What is particularly surprising, however, is that almost 30 percent of the female journalists worked in the politics sections or as foreign correspondents. This was the most emphatic of the advances made into one of the former ‘masculine domains’ and is a further reflection of the importance – discussed above – of the editorial line in relation to equal treatment of the sexes: When women did succeed in establishing themselves in political coverage, this was in the left-wing press three times out of five.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent and conditions of the involvement of women in news journalism in Vienna during the First Republic. During this era, women were granted a lot of formal rights and opportunities to participate in political, social and professional life. At the same time, the democratic structures of the newly founded Republic fostered the importance of a free and widely shared public discourse, which required maintaining equal capabilities for participation among the greatest possible number of people. The news media as the main forum for public discourse was awarded an essential role in the political process, but also in the realms of economy and culture. Thus, journalism became a source of power.

Accordingly, in the main part of the investigation, concepts from power theory were used, in relation both to managing editors and to publishers (as the two

primary holders of power in the areas of information production and information distribution), to define factors that can be credited with the potential to upset the status quo in the distribution of journalistic power in favour of increased access to the profession by women.

Through evaluation of all available membership data for the Organisation Wiener Presse, a continuous rise was observed, more marked here than across the public communications sector as a whole, in the proportion of female journalists working for the daily newspaper editorial departments either in an in-house staff capacity or as freelancers. With regard to the power theory based hypotheses, that a left-wing or left-liberal editorial line might have had a favourable effect on the share of journalistic power attained by women and that a similar effect might have occurred when a newspaper company had to position or re-position itself on the market, clear evidence was found in such cases where both factors *coincided*, that is, when a new left-wing or left-liberal newspaper was introduced in the market or an existing one – under the pressure of changed readership structures – had to open up target audiences including new reader groups.

The professional positions made newly available to women in this way were taken up primarily – relative to the female journalists already in post – by women of a younger average age, educated to a relatively high level, and coming from a social background that often corresponded to that of the respective readership. Their role in the editorial offices was primarily to write for the culture pages; however, they were not slow to emancipate themselves from the feuilleton author stereotype and earned recognition as knowledgeable writers on art, science and education. A particularly surprising finding is that the proportion of women employed on the newspapers' political sections was almost 30 percent. All the same, there can be no question here of a general structural characteristic, as three-fifths of these political women journalists worked for socialist newspapers. But in a qualitative respect they can be seen as the driving force of the progress towards a new image for the professional women journalist, one that after the setbacks inflicted by National Socialism was to need a long recovery time before reasserting itself.

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1. The proportional value calculated by the authors from Hausjell's (1989) absolute figures applies to permanent editorial staff and freelance staff – as do the data provided in Kaltenbrunner et al. (2007).
 2. Czypin (1996) uses the membership list published in *Der Journalist* in January 1920 in her dissertation.
 3. Comparison of the overall number of OWP members in June 1933 with the national census results of March 1934 shows the ratio of OWP-registered daily newspaper staff journalists to total newspaper employees in Vienna as being over 70 percent.
 4. See § 4 of the OWP's constitution, as quoted by Hölzl (1965, 36). Editorial staff included a category listed as 'editorial stenographers', who did not in fact undertake secretarial duties but were responsible for 'receiving and categorizing news items', in preparation for 'work at the editorial desk' at a later stage (see Internationales Arbeitsamt, 1928, 18).
 5. The results of the 1920 and 1923 censuses are unreliable owing to inadequate preparation and will not be used here.
 6. For bibliographical data see www.oeaw.ac.at/cmc/hypress
 7. See: www.degruyter.de/cont/fb/nw/nwWbis.cfm
 8. The authors are greatly indebted to Magister Ingrid Serini for the biographical research undertaken.
 9. The membership figures reported will necessarily differ from those that the *Journalist* published annually (except in 1925) and with men and women listed together, because that information relates to calendar years, whereas the analyses described here are based on counts made for specific dates (31 December of each relevant year).
 10. On the data reported for France, Britain and the United States, see Internationales Arbeitsamt (1928, 30); for Germany cf. Sitter (1998, 169f.).
 11. Families of lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, military officers and senior civil servants.

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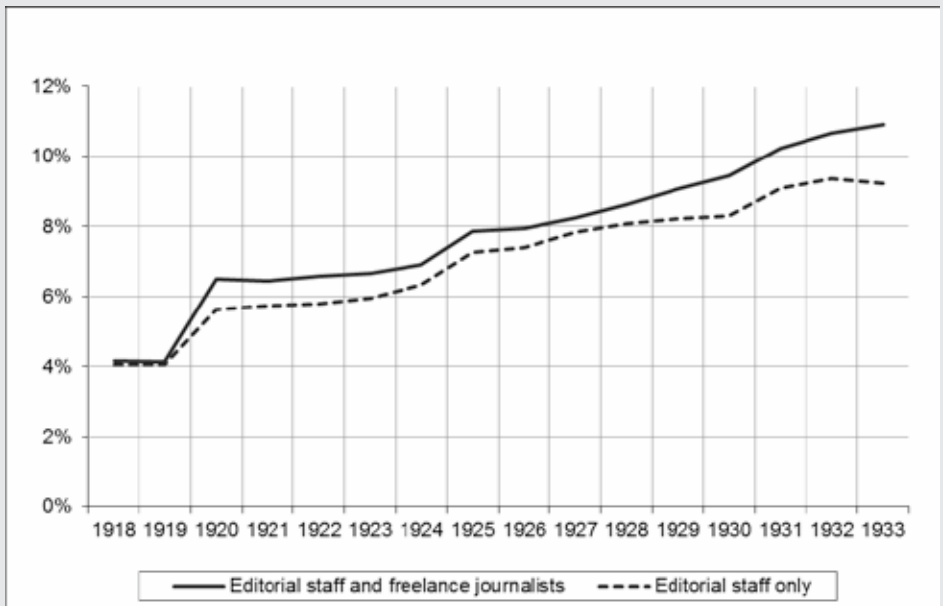
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FIGURES

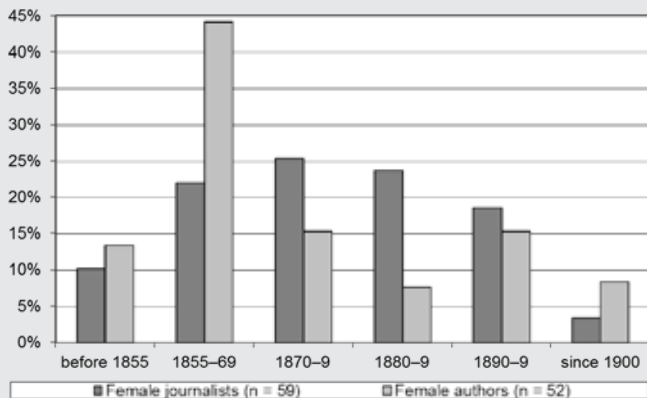
1. WOMEN IN VIENNESE JOURNALISM: DAILY NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL STAFF AND FREELANCE WOMEN JOURNALISTS, 1918–33



Figures valid: 31 December

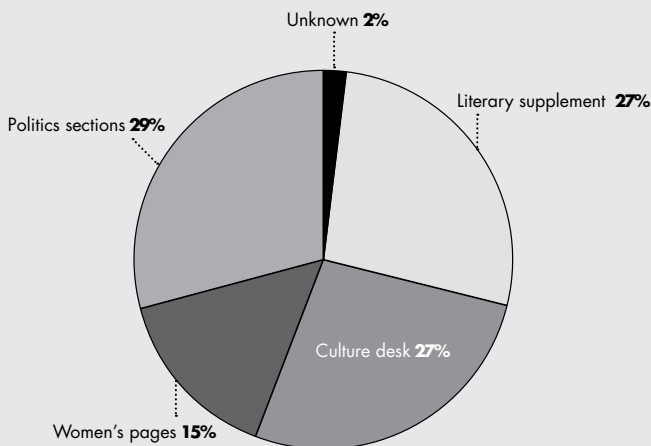
Sources: Der Journalist, own computations

2. YEAR OF BIRTH OF VIENNA FEMALE DAILY NEWSPAPER REPORTERS AND FEMALE AUTHORS



Sources: Various dictionaries of biography and databases (see www.oeaw.ac.at/cmc/hypress).

3. THE EDITORIAL DEPARTMENTS TO WHICH FEMALE VIENNA DAILY NEWSPAPER JOURNALISTS WERE ATTACHED



Sources: Various dictionaries of biography and databases (see www.oeaw.ac.at/cmc/hypress).

TABLES**1. WOMEN IN VIENNESE JOURNALISM: DAILY NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL STAFF AND FREELANCE WOMEN JOURNALISTS, 1918–33**

	Editorial staff			Freelance journalists		
	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%
1918	345	14	4.1	16	1	6.3
1919	347	14	4.0	16	1	6.3
1920	462	26	5.6	76	9	11.8
1921	470	27	5.7	74	8	10.8
1922	500	29	5.8	77	9	11.7
1923	487	29	6.0	68	8	11.8
1924	474	30	6.3	61	7	11.4
1925	482	35	7.3	53	7	13.2
1926	487	36	7.4	55	7	12.7
1927	498	39	7.8	60	7	11.7
1928	495	40	8.1	62	8	12.9
1929	499	41	8.2	64	10	15.6
1930	495	41	8.3	66	12	18.2
1931	485	44	9.1	63	12	19.1
1932	471	44	9.3	63	13	20.6
1933	467	43	9.2	65	15	23.1

Figures valid: 31 December

Sources: Der Journalist, own computations.

2. JOURNALISM IN AUSTRIA: 1910 AND 1934 COMPARED

	Authors, Journalists, editors, private scholars					
	Total			Employees		
	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%
	Vienna					
1910	1.471	174	11.8	641	59	9.2
1934	2.423	399	16.5	1.025	98	9.6
thereof: editors	710	57	8.0	662	54	8.2
	Austrian provinces (without Vienna)					
1910	332	43	13.0	130	6	4.6
1934	680	100	14.7	309	25	8.1
thereof: editors	247	19	7.7	239	19	7.9
	Austria					
1910	1.803	217	12.0	771	65	8.4
1934	3.103	499	16.1	1.334	123	9.2
thereof: editors	957	76	7.9	901	73	8.1

Sources: *Österreichische Statistik*, N.F. (New Series), Vol. 3, 2/1914, pp. 45 and 53; 3/1914, pp. 45 and 53; 4/1915, pp. 45 and 53; 5/1915, p. 39; 7/1915, pp. 51 and 75 (authors' computations of all-Austria figures on the basis of the individual *Länder* [federal states]); Bundesamt für Statistik (ed.): *Die Ergebnisse der österreichischen Volkszählung vom 22. März 1934*, Vol. 2. Vienna 1935, p. 312. The 1910 figures do not include Burgenland (then part of Hungary)

3. FEMALE EDITORIAL STAFF AND FEMALE FREELANCERS EMPLOYED BY VIENNA DAILY NEWSPAPERS, 1918–33

Editorial staffs including at least four female journalists

	Total	Women	%
<i>Der Tag</i>	14	4	28.6
<i>Der Abend</i> (with its associated paper <i>Das Echo</i> and <i>Telegraf</i>)	43	11	25.6
<i>Die Stunde</i>	20	5	25.0
<i>Neue Freie Presse</i>	83	14	16.9
Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung (with its associated paper Wiener Mittags-Zeitung)	49	6	12.3

Editorial staffs with up to three female journalists

<i>Arbeiter-Zeitung</i>	<i>Neues Wiener Extrablatt</i>
<i>Deutsch-österreichische Tageszeitung</i>	<i>Neues Wiener Journal</i>
<i>Fremden-Blatt</i>	<i>Neues Wiener Tagblatt</i>
<i>Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung</i>	<i>Reichspost</i>
<i>Jövö</i>	<i>Die Rote Fahne</i>
<i>Das Kleine Blatt</i>	<i>Wiener Mittagspost</i>
<i>Der Neue Tag</i>	<i>Wiener Morgenzeitung</i>
<i>Die Neue Zeitung</i>	<i>Wiener Neuestes Nachrichten</i>
<i>Neues 8 Uhr-Blatt</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitung</i>

Sources: *Der Journalist*, own computations

Note

On the evidence of statutory letterhead information, women were also employed on the editorial staff of the following newspapers: *Delnické Listy*, *Depeschen/Depeschenblatt*, *Die Frau*, *Der Morgen*, *Österreichischer Beobachter*, *Wiener Zeitung/Wiener Abendpost*, *Die Zeit*. In all these cases, however, no biographical data is available.

4. AGE-BANDS OF EMPLOYED FEMALE AND MALE EDITORIAL STAFF IN AUSTRIA, 1934

	Female editorial staff		Male editorial staff	
	Total	%	Total	%
20 – 9 years	12	16.4	109	13.2
30 – 9 years	27	37.0	249	30.1
40 – 9 years	21	28.8	229	27.7
50 – 9 years	8	11.0	165	20.0
60 – 9 years	5	6.8	54	6.5
Over 70 years	0	0.0	21	2.5
Total	73	100.0	827	100.0

Sources: Bundesamt für Statistik (ed.): *Die Ergebnisse der österreichischen Volkszählung vom 22. März 1934*. Vienna 1935. (The overall figure for men is 1 lower than in the overall totals [cf. Table 2]; which of the two figures is correct is no longer ascertainable.)