

# **The politics of childcare quality in municipalities in Upper Austria**

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## **Abstract**

The literature on public childcare provision focuses mainly on countries as units of analysis and analyses public expenses or enrolment rates. We contribute to existing studies by analyzing the quality of childcare provision at subnational level. Although Austrian municipalities experienced childcare expansion, there are remarkable differences in quality among them. We test four explanations for this variation: party ideology of local councils, party ideology of mayors, women's representation in local councils, and gender of mayors. Our panel regression and mixed-effects models covering 431 municipalities in Upper Austria between 2011 and 2018 reveal that the cabinet share of the Social-Democratic party (SPÖ) and women in local councils show a robust association with higher quality of institutional childcare provision, while the Conservative party (ÖVP) is negatively associated. In contrast, mayors do not matter.

**Keywords:** Austria, family policy, childcare, political parties, women representation

## **1 Introduction**

The topic of work-life balance and the reconciliation of work and family life has become increasingly important in recent years. Public childcare plays a key role in this context. Particularly in rural areas, there is often a lack of public childcare. Therefore, public childcare provision has been expanded in most affluent democracies. In addition to differences across countries, we also find substantial within-country variation.

The existing literature explaining differences in public childcare provision focuses mainly on countries as units of analysis (e.g. Bonoli & Reber, 2010; Hieda, 2013; Wiß & Wohlgemuth, 2023) with only few studies addressing subnational differences (Andronescu & Carnes, 2015; Busemeyer & Seitzl, 2018; Mosimann & Giger, 2008; Walenta-Bergmann, 2023a). Furthermore, almost all studies at national as well as subnational level investigate either public expenses for childcare provision or enrolment rates of children. Both aspects, however, do not allow to draw conclusions on the quality of childcare provision, such as daily/weekly opening hours or closing times per year.

We contribute to the literature by introducing a concept for the measure of childcare quality, developed by the Austrian Chamber of Labour, and apply it to assess their determinants for 429 municipalities in Upper Austria from 2011 to 2018. In line with previous studies, we investigate characteristics of political representatives, controlling for several alternative explanations. We argue that the quality of institutional childcare provision varies by the share of different parties and women in local councils as well as the party attachment and gender of mayors.

The results of existing studies regarding the role of parties for childcare provision are inconclusive, which might be driven by (slightly) different ideological orientations of the same party family across countries. Childcare expenses increase with left parties' cabinet share (Andronescu & Carnes, 2015; Bonoli & Reber, 2010; Busemeyer & Seitzl, 2018; Mosimann &

Giger, 2008; Walenta-Bergmann, 2023a) and left-liberal governments (Hieda, 2013), whilst other studies do not confirm these associations (Bolzendahl, 2011; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2017; Lambert, 2008; Wiß & Wohlgemuth, 2023). These inconsistencies might be driven by measures at the national level, although in many countries, local or regional governments are responsible for childcare (Lambert, 2008). We thus test the role of incumbent parties at the local level in a rather small context (municipalities in one state), assuming rather homogenous behaviour of parties that belong to the same party family.

The literature shows more consistent results regarding the influence of female politicians. Their representation in parliaments and governments increases childcare expenses (Bolzendahl, 2011; Bonoli & Reber, 2010; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2017; Lambert, 2008; Walenta-Bergmann, 2023a; Wiß & Wohlgemuth, 2023). However, we lack knowledge about the politics of the quality of childcare and whether results from country-level studies hold to the local level.

## **2 Childcare provision in Austria**

Similar to most countries, the provision of public childcare varies at the subnational level in Austria. Although childcare rates for 3- to 5-year-olds (from 71% to 94%) and under-threes (from 5% to 29%) have risen sharply in Austria between 1995 and 2021, there are significant subnational differences. While Vienna, for example, recorded the highest rate (44%) for under-threes in 2021, Upper Austria is in second to last place with 20% (Statistik Austria, 2021).

Contrary to this judgement is the decision of the Upper Austrian provincial government in 2018 to introduce afternoon fees for childcare. The ÖVP-FPÖ led government argued this step concerning austerity measures (Kramesberger, 2017). However, differences and seemingly contradictory developments in childcare can be observed not only between the federal provinces but also within Upper Austria at the municipal level, as shown, for example, by the Childcare Atlas of the Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria (Arbeiterkammer OÖ, 2022). This variation could be explained by the division of tasks in childcare. Municipalities play a significant role

and are responsible for ongoing operations, staff, investments, and the expansion of services. The federal province creates framework conditions through legislation and gives grants for ongoing operations (Mitterer et al., 2022, p. 8). To harmonize childcare throughout different federal provinces, the state ties certain conditions to its funds for provinces. The “15a-Vereinbarung” is an agreement between the state and provinces. It provides financial resources to develop and expand childcare. These funds are not for ongoing operations but for investments and expansion of services. Previous goals in this agreement were, for example, a mandatory and free-of-charge kindergarten year. The current deal defines goals like increasing the enrolment rate of under-threes to 33% or a better support ratio for 3 to 6-year-old children (Mitterer et al., 2022, p. 14). However, these goals in the 15a-Vereinbarung are only goals indeed. Detailed legal minimum standards are formulated on a provincial level.

For Upper-Austria, most legislation can be found in the “*Kinderbildungs- und -betreuungsgesetz (Oö. KBBG)*”<sup>1</sup>. This law regulates, for example, the mandatory kindergarten year, the size of groups, support ratios, opening hours, or closing times. As our independent variable, described further down, is strongly influenced by opening hours and closing times, we take a closer look at these categories. Childcare facilities must be open basically five days per week for the whole year. If this is not the case, a justification is needed (§ 6 Oö. KBBG). The weekly opening hours for “*Krabbelstuben*” (under-threes) and “*Kindergartengruppen*” (three to six) are at least 30 and 25 hours. However, it is possible to have opening hours of only 20 if demand is low. To justify or prove low demand, parents and children must be consulted (§ 9 Oö. KBBG). This minimum standard is relatively low compared to the “*Vereinbarkeitsindikator für Familie und Beruf (VIF)*”. The VIF is an indicator, defined in the 15a-Vereinbarung to measure and promote the reconciliation of family and work. It requests 47 opening weeks per year, 45 opening hours weekly, four days with 9.5 opening hours and a lunch

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LROO&Gesetzesnummer=20000460&ShowPrintPreview=True>

offer. In Upper-Austria, around 27% of 0 to 5-year-old children are in childcare facilities that meet VIF standards (Statistik Austria, 2023). A municipality can organise childcare in this range between legal minimum and VIF standards.

Obviously, childcare quality in a particular municipality is also a question of its financial power. Providing childcare and the compulsory school sector is 19% of all expenses and, therefore, the second biggest expenditure item for municipalities (Biwald & Mitterer, 2021). As already mentioned, the 15a-Vereinbarung finances investments and further developments in childcare. Federal province grants or municipal budgets must finance ongoing operations. It is criticised by municipalities that these funds are often not enough (Mitterer et al., 2022, p. 16). In addition, expenses regarding childcare rise more strongly than income. In Upper Austria, around 38% of all expenditures per child were covered by revenues. The difference must be guaranteed by provincial grants (Mitterer et al., 2022, pp. 32–33). These numbers show that municipalities are confronted with tight budgets. To meet high-quality standards, municipalities have to put effort into planning and organising childcare.

### **3 Theory**

We argue that councillors and mayors are key actors. Their composition or characteristics can explain variation in the quality of childcare at the municipal level because research argues that (national and local) governments are key actors for family policy (Bonoli & Reber, 2010; Busemeyer & Seitzl, 2018; Fleckenstein & Lee, 2020; Morgan, 2013; Walenta-Bergmann, 2023a; Wiß & Wohlgemuth, 2023). We are interested in two types of explanations: Party ideology and representation of women.

#### *3.1 The role of parties for childcare*

Left parties, such as the Social-Democrats (SPÖ), have established a reputation for promoting the growth of welfare expenditure, benefits and services, while conservative parties, such as the

Christian-Democrats have typically shown more reluctance towards endorsing such expansion. Prior research has underscored the inclination of left-leaning parties towards promoting the concept of individual autonomy within society, consequently leading them to advocate for an extensive array of social services provided by the state. This is particularly evident in their support for services that enable parents to combine work and family life (Andronescu & Carnes, 2015; Huber & Stephens, 2001). Left-leaning parties typically advocate for progressive family policies that foster gender equality (Inglehart & Norris, 2000), what translates into their promotion of publicly funded childcare (Bonoli & Reber, 2010; Hieda, 2013). Furthermore, for reasons of electoral competition, women and the high-educated middle class emerge as new (potential) electorates (Häusermann et al., 2013; Morgan, 2013), who favour social investment policies such as public childcare provision (Garritzmann et al., 2018; Han & Kwon, 2020).

Similarly, the genuine voters of Green parties (GRÜNE) – the young, high-educated, and middle-class citizens (Dolezal, 2010; Marks et al., 2021) – share a progressive family ideal and gender equality. Hence, Green parties are clearly related to higher expenses for childcare provision (Röth & Schwander, 2021).

*Hypothesis 1a.* Quality of childcare increases with the cabinet share of the Social-Democrats and the Green party

*Hypothesis 1b.* Quality of childcare increases with a mayor of the Social-Democrats

Christian-Democratic parties (ÖVP), in contrast, have historically played a central role in advocating for the traditional male breadwinner model and the division of gender roles within the family by emphasising the role of the family as the primary caregiver. However, they have adapted their stance on family policy in response to evolving normative values among their constituents, an increasing presence of women in party committees, and the greater participation of women in the workforce. As a result, they now exhibit a greater inclination toward endorsing

policies that support women and families in combining work and family life (Giuliani, 2021; Morgan, 2013; Wiß & Wohlgemuth, 2023). Nevertheless, several studies still confirm a negative effect of religious-conservative parties on childcare expenses at national level (Bonoli & Reber, 2010) and at the subnational level for enrolment rates of children below six years (Walenta-Bergmann, 2023a) as well as for childcare expenses (Mosimann & Giger, 2008). When it comes to the local level, Christian-Democrats in Germany, for example, behave differently at the national level by attempting to curb the growth of childcare provision (Turner, 2011). Therefore, we can assume more prominent differences between Social-Democrats and Christian-Democrats regarding family policy at the local level (for a similar argument, see Andronescu & Carnes, 2015).

The family ideal of populist radical right parties such as the FPÖ is characterised by traditional gender roles. Their authoritarian thinking finds expression in the promotion of traditional social hierarchies and, therefore, in the division of labour between men and women (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2021; Mudde, 2007). It is a man's job to do paid work and feed the family, whilst women are responsible for unpaid care obligations. In fact, populist radical right parties put least emphasis on public childcare provision in their manifestos compared with other party families and their voters oppose more investments in public childcare when compared with the respective country mean (Enggist & Pinggera, 2022). More specifically, the Austrian FPÖ opposes mandatory institutional childcare (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2020) and forcing young mothers to work.

The local council is not alone responsible for political decisions in municipalities. Reforms rarely pass the council without agreement of the head of the council, the mayor. We therefore test the same arguments of parties' cabinet share for the party attachment of mayors.

*Hypothesis 2a.* Quality of childcare decreases with the cabinet share of the Christian-Democratic and Populist Radical Right Party

*Hypothesis 2b.* Quality of childcare decreases with a mayor of the Christian-Democratic and Populist Radical Right Party

### *3.2 The role of female politicians for childcare*

With regard to the political representation of women, we argue that a higher descriptive representation (presence) of women in cabinets leads to a higher substantive representation (Phillips, 1995). Female politicians are more inclined than their male counterparts to address issues specifically concerning women due to their shared experiences and identity (Höhmann, 2020). Women, more than men, continue to experience a disproportionate impact when it comes to issues related to achieving a balance between work and family responsibilities and the organisation of caregiving tasks. Having a higher number of women in political power, known as descriptive representation, therefore enhances the responsiveness of political representatives to matters related to gender equality and policies that benefit women, such as the provision of public childcare (Atchison, 2015; Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005; Swers, 2002).

Similar to the role of party ideology, we argue that not only the gender composition of the local council but also the gender of mayors plays a role for female-friendly policies such as public childcare provision. Women make a difference for female-friendly policies, most notably when they are in leadership positions with greater power than average local council positions (Smith, 2014). In fact, several studies confirm that female mayors spend more on women's issues (Funk & Philips, 2019) and social welfare (Holman, 2014) and, in particular, for services for children (Smith, 2014).

Hypothesis 3a: Quality of childcare increases with the cabinet share of women

Hypothesis 3b: Quality of childcare increases with a female mayor



## 4 Data and methods

### 4.1 Dependent variable

Our dependent variable is based on the Childcare Atlas of the Chamber of Labour of Upper Austria. This atlas measures certain quality aspects, especially the availability or childcare offer in municipalities in Upper Austria from 2000 to 2022. The data was collected by the Chamber of Labour itself and the *Institut für empirische Sozialforschung* (IFES). For this purpose, every mayor in Upper Austria got a mail with survey sheets. Mayors who did not react were contacted via telephone. If no survey sheets or no information was transmitted, the municipality was marked as missing (Arbeiterkammer OÖ, 2022). The Atlas identifies six categories from 1A, which is the best (coded as six) over A, to E (coded as one). The categories were formed according to the following four criteria.

- Availability of childcare for under-threes from Monday to Thursday
- Availability of a kindergarten/nursery school with daily opening hours of at least eight hours from Monday to Thursday
- Provision of lunch in institutional childcare facility from at least Monday to Thursday
- Availability of afternoon childcare for primary school children for at least four days weekly till at least 3:00 pm

Category A must meet all four criteria. Category B only 3, etc. Category E does not meet any criteria. Category 1A must meet all four criteria and, in addition, all VIF criteria, which were described above (Arbeiterkammer OÖ & IFES, 2018).

The Childcare Atlas does not measure the quality of childcare as a whole. Important critical figures like group sizes, child-caregiver ratios, time spent with children or the provision of nutritious food, to name a few, do not impact the categories. Some measurement tools include key statistics like these and can present a more holistic picture of childcare (for an overview, look at (López Boo et al., 2016; OECD, 2017). Most research based on a broader and more

holistic definition of quality investigates country differences (Klamert et al., 2013; Tietze et al., 1996). Few studies (for example, Feld Eckhardt & Egert, 2020) deal with childcare quality at a subnational level. This effect is evident as quality datasets are rarely available for the sub-country or even the municipal level.

Another way to look at childcare is through enrolment rates or expenditure for childcare. Enrolment and expenditure rates can allow conclusions to be drawn about the quality to some extent, but especially about the availability of childcare. Even though this kind of data is more easily accessible than quality data at a sub-national level, a broad range of studies, as described further above, focuses on countries as analysis units (Bonoli & Reber, 2010; Hieda, 2013; Wiß & Wohlgemuth, 2023). Fewer studies deal with sub-national differences (Andronescu & Carnes, 2015; Busemeyer & Seitzl, 2018; Mosimann & Giger, 2008; Walenta-Bergmann, 2023a).

The Childcare Atlas goes beyond simple enrolment and expenditure rates. Even though it is not a holistic quality indicator, it offers reliable data for the childcare offer in general, for accessibility and at least one additional quality indicator, namely lunch offer. In addition, and most importantly, the data is available on a municipality level for 22 years.

#### *4.2 Independent variables*

Our explanatory variables are the share of the four most important parties in Austria in all local councils in Upper Austria – the Social-Democratic Party (SPÖ), the Christian-Democrats (ÖVP), the populist radical right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), and the Greens (GRÜNE) –, based on the dataset of Walenta-Bergmann (2023b). This data set also contains information about the party affiliation of mayors, the share of women in local councils, and the gender of mayors.

We add several political and socio-economic control variables to exclude potential alternative explanations. Differences in power dynamics and ideological positions between local, state, and national-level governments, as well as the potential interdependence of regional parties and governments on their national counterparts (referred to as alignment effects), could potentially bias the results (Golden & Picci, 2008; Kleider et al., 2018). Therefore, we include the respective cabinet shares of parties and women at state and federal level.

The financial power per inhabitant – defined in the 1960 District Allocation Act (Bezirksumlagegesetz) as property and local taxes plus revenue shares, debts per inhabitant, and unemployment rate control for the economic power and financial resources of municipalities. The employment rate of women and the share of children below six years account for demand-side factors that might drive childcare provision. Due to potential cultural and logistic differences that might affect the demand and supply of childcare provision, we integrate an urban-rural variable (1 = urban area; 2 = regional area; 3 = rural area). All independent variables enter the models with a one-year lag, assuming that governments in year  $t$  affect childcare provision in year  $t+1$ , because it is unrealistic that the availability of public childcare changes immediately after reform enactment.

### *4.3 Methods*

We test our hypotheses using time-series cross-sectional models. All panel regressions include fixed effects for municipalities and time controlling for time and municipality-invariant factors that might serve as alternative explanations. We thus exclude the cabinet shares of parties and women at federal and national level and the urban-rural measure. We rule out the dependence of the dependent variable on its previous year level (autocorrelation) and non-stationarity by first differencing the dependent variable and adding their lagged level as control variable. Panel-corrected standard-errors counter heteroscedasticity.

As the second estimation strategy, we test the robustness of the panel regression models from the first step with mixed-effects models, including the full set of control variables. This enables us to estimate the effects of variables at different hierarchical levels and for different time periods (years and cabinet terms). The three levels consist of 1271 local councils in 431 municipalities in 9 years. Using level instead of first differenced dependent variables allows for a better interpretation of effect sizes. Cubic splines account for trending, because upwards trending in the childcare atlas categories might be influenced by time trends.

We run separate models for the local council share and party affiliation of mayors for each of the four parties. However, we cannot estimate models for mayors attached to the Green party as there was no green mayor in any municipality in Upper Austria between 2011 and 2018. Furthermore, we control for the cabinet share of the SPÖ at state and national level for the models of the Green party, because they have not been part of the national government between 2011 and 2018.

## **5 Analysis/results**

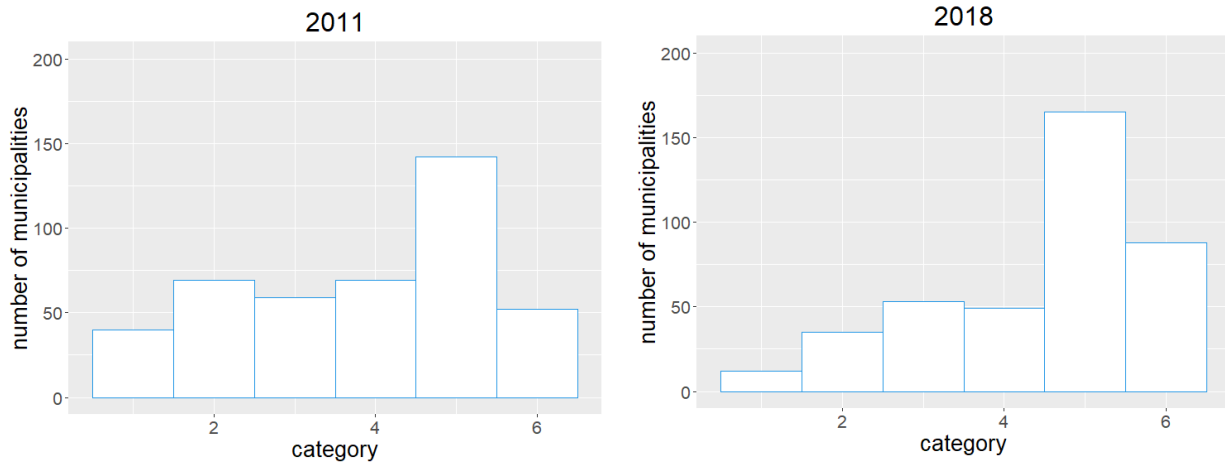
### *5.1 Descriptive results*

Table A.1 in the Appendix shows the descriptive statistics. Over the entire period 2011-2018, the dependent variable ‘childcare atlas category’ – ranging from 1 (lowest quality) to 6 (highest quality) has a mean of 4.16. Furthermore, the quality has risen over the years. In 2011, 194 municipalities had one of the two highest categories (5 or 6). In 2018, this number rose to 253 (Figure 1). In general, we can see an increase in the quality of childcare provision in Upper Austria between 2011 and 2018.

Regarding our explanatory variables, the ÖVP dominates local councils between 2011 and 2018 with a share of 54%, followed by the SPÖ (26%) and FPÖ (16%) (Table A.1). The green party with a share of only 2% plays almost no role in local politics. The ÖVP is even stronger when looking at the party affiliation of mayors. The vast majority of all mayors in Upper Austria

between 2011 and 2018 are members of the ÖVP (74%), followed by 22% SPÖ mayors. Only 2% belong to the FPÖ and there is no single mayor from the GRÜNE. Women are largely underrepresented in local councils with a share of 24% and only 7% of all mayors are female.

*Figure 1.* Distribution of the childcare atlas categories in 2011 and 2018



## 5.2 Regression results

The results of the regression models for the share of parties in local councils are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The regression results for the effect of the party affiliation of mayors are presented in Tables 3 and 4. Tables 1 and 3, estimating time-series cross-section models, refer to short-term effects, whereas Tables 2 and 4, estimating mixed-effects models, represent long-term effects. As already described, the short-term effect is measured through the yearly difference of our dependent variable.

The share of the social-democratic party (SPÖ) in local councils shows a significant and positive association with childcare quality, whilst a higher share of Christian-Democratic party (ÖVP) decreases childcare quality. This means that a greater share of SPÖ-mandates in a local council is related to an increase in the quality of childcare (short-term effect) and to a higher quality in general (long-term effect). For the ÖVP we can observe the opposed effect. These results are robust for both estimation strategies (Table 1 and 2), corroborating the first parts of Hypotheses 1a and 2a. However, we do not find any significant relationship for the council

share of the FPÖ and GRÜNE, what might be related to the latter's low overall presence in local councils.

However, the effect size is, despite its significance, rather small. A 10 percentage points increase of the SPÖ's council share results in an annual growth of 0.1 points in the childcare quality category (Table 1).

Turning to the role of women, both model estimation strategies confirm Hypothesis 3a and the positive relation of female local council members with the quality of childcare. Their effect size is much larger than for parties as a 10 percentage points increase of the share of women in local councils results in an annual growth of 0.7 points in the childcare quality category (Table 1). All control variables in Table 1 are not significantly related to childcare quality. However, a high absolute childcare quality has a negative effect on its annual growth, what is not surprising.

In contrast to the average within municipalities effects in Table 1, several control variables show significant effects in Table 2 that allow for random municipalities effects and therefore hint at systematic differences between municipalities. Public childcare provision is of much higher quality in urban regions compared with rural regions and in municipalities with higher financial power per capita. Whereas debts and unemployment rates do not play any role, a higher potential demand for childcare, measured as female employment rate and the share of children aged six and younger, is related to a better quality. In contrast, the political and gender composition of the state and federal level cannot explain childcare quality.

The mixed-effects models allow to decompose the variance of childcare quality between different levels. Referring to the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) of empty models for all parties reveals that the municipality level explains the largest part of the variance (0.57), followed by the year (0.17). However, 13% of the variance (ICC: 0.13) is related to the local council and therefore potentially to the effect of parties or women. Moreover, the variance

explained by the level of the local council increase to 0.17 – 0.19 considering the models with control variables (Table 2).

*Table 1.* Panel regression models with municipality and time-fixed effects (cabinet share)

	<b>Δ childcare quality category</b>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SPÖ council share (t-1)	0.010** (0.004)			
ÖVP council share (t-1)		-0.006* (0.003)		
FPÖ council share (t-1)			0.003 (0.004)	
GRÜNE council share (t-1)				-0.002 (0.007)
Share of women council members (t-1)	0.071* (0.038)	0.076** (0.038)	0.074* (0.038)	0.074* (0.038)
Financial power (per capita) (t-1)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Debts (per capita) (t-1)	0.005 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
Unemployment rate (t-1)	0.005 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)
Female employment rate (t-1)	0.005 (0.009)	0.005 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)
Share of population ≤ 6 yrs. (t-1)	-0.014 (0.027)	-0.014 (0.027)	-0.016 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.027)
Childcare quality category (t-1)	-0.621*** (0.021)	-0.621*** (0.021)	-0.620*** (0.021)	-0.620*** (0.021)
Observations	2,928	2,928	2,928	2,928
R <sup>2</sup>	0.309	0.308	0.307	0.307
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.186	0.185	0.184	0.183
F Statistic (df = 8; 2485)	138.801***	138.204***	137.488***	137.382***

*Note:*

\* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

*Table 2:* Mixed-effects models (cabinet share)

	<b>Childcare quality category</b>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

SPÖ council share (t-1)	0.004*			
	(0.002)			
ÖVP council share (t-1)		-0.004**		
		(0.002)		
FPÖ council share (t-1)			0.003	
			(0.003)	
GRÜNE council share (t-1)				-0.003
				(0.005)
Share of women council members (t-1)	0.012***	0.012***	0.014***	0.013***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
SPÖ cabinet share state level (t-1)	0.002			0.003
	(0.007)			(0.007)
SPÖ cabinet share federal level (t-1)	-0.010			-0.008
	(0.018)			(0.018)
ÖVP cabinet share state level (t-1)		0.005		
		(0.007)		
ÖVP cabinet share federal level (t-1)		0.071		
		(0.124)		
FPÖ cabinet share state level (t-1)			-0.003	
			(0.004)	
FPÖ cabinet share federal level (t-1)			0.009	
			(0.021)	
Share of women cabinet members state level (t-1)	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Share of women cabinet members federal level (t-1)	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.002
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Urban-rural municipality (t-1)	-0.100*	-0.086	-0.094*	-0.107*
	(0.056)	(0.057)	(0.057)	(0.058)
Financial power (per capita) (t-1)	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**	0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Debts (per capita) (t-1)	-0.002	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Unemployment rate (t-1)	0.019	0.017	0.021	0.023
	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Female employment rate (t-1)	0.016**	0.016**	0.015**	0.015**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Share of population ≤ 6 yrs. (t-1)	0.050**	0.050**	0.046**	0.046**



	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Spline 1	0.312*	0.314*	0.292*	0.293*
	(0.177)	(0.176)	(0.176)	(0.177)
Spline 2	0.114***	0.114***	0.114***	0.114***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Spline 3	0.068**	0.068**	0.069**	0.069**
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.032)
Constant	-624.898*	-633.154*	-585.013*	-585.824*
	(353.554)	(360.020)	(354.213)	(353.630)
$\sigma$ Government	0.356	0.355	0.355	0.353
$\sigma$ Year	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
$\sigma$ Municipality	1.246	1.236	1.240	1.273
$\sigma$ Residual	0.287	0.536	0.287	0.287
N Government	1270	1270	1270	1270
N Year	9	9	9	9
N Municipality	431	431	431	431
ICC Government	0.188	0.167	0.189	0.185
ICC Year	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
ICC Municipality	0.660	0.581	0.659	0.665
Observations	3,347	3,347	3,347	3,347
Log Likelihood	-4,043.240	-4,040.762	-4,044.747	-4,044.086
Akaike Inf. Crit.	8,126.480	8,121.525	8,129.494	8,128.172

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

Neither the party affiliation of mayors nor their gender is significantly related to childcare quality. This applies to both estimation strategies (Table 3 and 4) and confirms the finding of Walenta-Bergmann (2023a) for enrolment rates.

Similar to the models with local council shares, the municipality level explains the largest part of the variance (0.58), followed by the year (0.17) for empty models with mayors. A substantial part of the variance (0.13), however, is explained at the level of mayors. This part increases to 0.17 in the models with all control variables (Table 4).

*Table 3.* Panel regression models with municipality and time fixed effects (mayor)

	$\Delta$ childcare quality category		
	(1)	(2)	(3)

SPÖ mayor (t-1)	-0.115 (0.099)		
ÖVP mayor (t-1)		0.031 (0.095)	
FPÖ mayor (t-1)			0.234 (0.187)
Gender of mayor (t-1)	0.011 (0.136)	0.007 (0.137)	0.003 (0.136)
Financial power (per capita) (t-1)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Debts (per capita) (t-1)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
Unemployment rate (t-1)	0.004 (0.023)	0.005 (0.023)	0.004 (0.022)
Female employment rate (t-1)	0.003 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)
Share of population $\leq$ 6 yrs. (t-1)	-0.014 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.027)	-0.014 (0.027)
Childcare quality category (t-1)	-0.619*** (0.021)	-0.620*** (0.021)	-0.621*** (0.021)
Observations	2,918	2,918	2,918
R <sup>2</sup>	0.305	0.305	0.305
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.181	0.180	0.181
F Statistic (df = 8; 2475)	135.838***	135.559***	135.887***

*Note:* \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

Table 4: Mixed-effects models (mayor)

	Childcare quality category		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
SPÖ mayor (t-1)	-0.035 (0.064)		
ÖVP mayor (t-1)		-0.003 (0.062)	
FPÖ mayor (t-1)			0.196 (0.150)
Gender of mayor (t-1)	0.103 (0.092)	0.102 (0.092)	0.105 (0.092)

SPÖ cabinet share state level (t-1)	0.003 (0.007)		
SPÖ cabinet share federal level (t-1)	-0.009 (0.018)		
ÖVP cabinet share state level (t-1)		0.003 (0.007)	
ÖVP cabinet share federal level (t-1)		0.067 (0.125)	
FPÖ cabinet share state level (t-1)			-0.001 (0.004)
FPÖ cabinet share federal level (t-1)			0.011 (0.021)
Share of women cabinet members state level (t-1)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)
Share of women cabinet members federal level (t-1)	0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)
Urban-rural municipality (t-1)	-0.102* (0.057)	-0.100* (0.057)	-0.100* (0.056)
Financial power (per capita) (t-1)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
Debts (per capita) (t-1)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Unemployment rate (t-1)	0.030 (0.018)	0.029 (0.018)	0.028 (0.018)
Female employment rate (t-1)	0.015** (0.007)	0.016** (0.007)	0.015** (0.007)
Share of population $\leq$ 6 yrs. (t-1)	0.045** (0.021)	0.046** (0.021)	0.046** (0.021)
Spline 1	0.305* (0.178)	0.312* (0.178)	0.311* (0.177)
Spline 2	0.111*** (0.036)	0.111*** (0.036)	0.111*** (0.036)
Spline 3	0.067** (0.032)	0.067** (0.032)	0.067** (0.032)
Constant	-610.311* (356.317)	-627.065* (363.136)	-622.181* (356.407)
$\sigma$ Mayor	0.347	0.348	0.347
$\sigma$ Year	0.000	0.000	0.000
$\sigma$ Municipality	1.360	1.350	1.359

$\sigma$ Residual	0.287	0.288	0.288
N Mayor	1268	1268	1268
N Year	9	9	9
N Municipality	431	431	431
ICC Mayor	0.174	0.175	0.174
ICC Year	0.000	0.000	0.000
ICC Municipality	0.682	0.680	0.682
Observations	3,337	3,337	3,337
Log Likelihood	-4,038.005	-4,036.251	-4,036.987
Akaike Inf. Crit.	8,116.010	8,112.502	8,113.974

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

### 5.3 Robustness tests

Several model specifications test the robustness of our findings. By removing three control variables (share of women council members, unemployment rate, employment rate of women), we can estimate the models for a much longer period of time. The results for the years 2004 to 2018 (Table A.2 and A.3 for council share, and Table A.4 and A.5 for mayors) confirm the findings for party effects of our main models. The only difference is the positive significant effect of FPÖ mayors in the panel regression models (Table A.4), but this variable fails to reach conventional levels of significance in all other model specifications and estimation strategies and therefore is not robust. The panel regression models with random instead of two-way fixed effects and a level instead of first difference dependent variable shows no significant effects for parties and women (Table A.6 and A.7). This confirms that changes within rather than systematic differences between municipalities matter for childcare quality. Lastly, using only municipality instead of two-way fixed effects (Table A.8 and A.9) reveals the same findings as our main models.

## 6 Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to determine the political drivers of childcare quality in municipalities in Upper Austria. We introduce a novel measure of childcare quality as developed by the

Chamber of Labour allowing to assess in particular the accessibility and opening times of public childcare provision. Investigating childcare quality in all 431 municipalities of Upper Austria allows to rule out alternative explanations such as different historical developments or culture and norms, that cannot be accounted for in most studies comparing countries.

In line with our hypotheses, we find that a higher share of the Social-Democratic party SPÖ increases childcare quality, whilst more local council members of the Christian-Democratic ÖVP reduce the quality. However, we cannot confirm the hypothesised positive (negative) effect for the council share of the green (populist radical right) party. Women in local councils have a positive effect on childcare quality, corroborating our hypothesis. In contrast, we have to reject our hypotheses for mayors. Neither their party affiliation nor their gender are systematically related to childcare quality. It might be that the council as a joint decision-making body is more decisive for the politics of municipalities rather than mayors.

Our findings add to the literature – that mostly analyses countries as units of analyses – more fine-grained knowledge about within-country differences and determinants of childcare provision across municipalities. Moreover, we complement studies that investigate spending levels or enrolment rates by focusing on quality aspects of childcare provision.

The availability of data, in particular lacking socio-economic measures at the level of municipalities, limit the time period of our analysis. Furthermore, due to no data collection in the years of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Chamber of Labour, together with a change in the measure of childcare quality, we cannot cover the most recent years. Accessibility and opening times are, of course, only one – but very crucial – part of the quality of childcare. Future studies might extend our analyses to further quality issues such as staff-children ratios, costs, and availability. Moreover, it would be interesting to figure out whether our findings hold under different contexts for municipalities in other countries.

As a more general implication, voting for the Social-Democratic party and placing more women in local councils might be a wise strategy to increase childcare quality. Although the

Christian-Democratic party ÖVP is good at announcing additional funds for childcare at state and federal level, it does not manage to improve the quality at the municipal level, but on the contrary, even reduces it.

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## 8 Appendix

Table A.1. Descriptive statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
gesamt	3,407	4.16	1.46	1	6
gesamt_growth	3,405	0.08	0.68	-4	5
strength_spoe	3,446	26.41	14.69	0.00	78.95
strength_oevp	3,446	53.79	17.06	10.81	100.00
strength_fpoe	3,446	15.57	10.86	0.00	61.54
strength_gruene	3,446	2.37	4.77	0.00	24.00
W_quote	3,446	23.47	9.41	0.00	48.00
gem_mayor_party_SPOE	3,436	0.22	0.41	0	1
gem_mayor_party_OEVP	3,436	0.74	0.44	0	1
gem_mayor_party_FPOE	3,436	0.02	0.15	0	1
gem_mayor_gender	3,436	0.07	0.25	0	1
strength_spoe_LR	3,452	18.05	5.38	11.11	22.22
strength_spoe_BR	3,452	43.74	16.55	0	50
strength_oevp_LR	3,452	51.38	5.38	44.44	55.56
strength_oevp_BR	3,452	50.89	2.36	50.00	57.14
strength_fpoe_LR	3,452	19.45	10.76	11.11	33.33
strength_fpoe_BR	3,452	5.36	14.18	0.00	42.86
strength_gruene_LR	3,452	11.11	0.00	11.11	11.11
strength_gruene_BR	3,452	0.00	0.00	0	0
W_LR_quote	3,452	15.28	7.74	0.00	22.22
W_BR_quote	3,452	31.02	6.05	25.00	37.50
gem_urban_rural_number	3,446	2.80	0.56	1	3
FK_Kopfquote2	3,426	12.58	13.78	0.35	218.85
schulden_kopf	3,414	19.54	13.84	0.03	145.36
al_quote	3,449	3.20	1.46	0.33	12.41
erwerb_frauen_quote	3,452	72.02	4.05	56.05	86.05
bev_u6_quote	3,452	6.09	1.03	2.12	11.87

Table A.2. Panel regression models with municipality and time fixed effects 2004-2018 (cabinet share)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	gesamt_growth			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
lag(strength_spo)	0.005** (0.002)			
lag(strength_oevp)		-0.005*** (0.002)		
lag(strength_fpoe)			0.003 (0.003)	
lag(strength_gruene)				0.002 (0.004)
lag(FK_Kopfquote2)	-0.0004 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.0002 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)
lag(schulden_kopf)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	-0.012 (0.016)	-0.013 (0.016)	-0.014 (0.016)	-0.013 (0.016)
lag(gesamt)	-0.437*** (0.013)	-0.437*** (0.013)	-0.436*** (0.013)	-0.436*** (0.013)
Observations	5,498	5,498	5,498	5,498
R <sup>2</sup>	0.215	0.215	0.214	0.214
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.145	0.146	0.145	0.145
F Statistic (df = 5; 5052)	275.968***	277.454***	275.076***	274.752***

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A.3. Mixed-effects models 2004-2018 (cabinet share)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	gesamt			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
lag(strength_spoec)	0.005*** (0.001)			
lag(strength_gruene)				-0.0004 (0.004)
lag(strength_spoec_LR)	0.002 (0.004)			0.003 (0.004)
lag(strength_spoec_BR)	0.005** (0.002)			0.005** (0.002)
lag(strength_oevp)		-0.004*** (0.001)		
lag(strength_oevp_LR)		-0.005 (0.008)		
lag(strength_oevp_BR)		-0.011 (0.007)		
lag(strength_fpoe)			-0.002 (0.002)	
lag(strength_fpoe_LR)			-0.005 (0.005)	
lag(strength_fpoe_BR)			0.016* (0.008)	
lag(W_LR_quote)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.002 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)
lag(W_BR_quote)	0.010* (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)	0.010* (0.006)	0.010* (0.005)
lag(gem_urban_rural_number)	-0.004 (0.039)	0.006 (0.040)	-0.018 (0.039)	-0.016 (0.040)
lag(FK_Kopfquote2)	0.003** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.003** (0.001)
lag(schulden_kopf)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	0.014 (0.015)	0.012 (0.015)	0.009 (0.015)	0.008 (0.014)
qlspline(year, 3)1	0.095** (0.046)	0.155*** (0.021)	0.252*** (0.048)	0.094** (0.045)
qlspline(year, 3)2	0.172***	0.174***	0.173***	0.173***

	(0.023)	(0.030)	(0.020)	(0.023)
qlspline(year, 3)3	0.097***	0.070*	0.120***	0.096***
	(0.024)	(0.037)	(0.040)	(0.024)
Constant	-187.372**	-308.358***	-502.622***	-186.414**
	(91.118)	(42.840)	(96.722)	(90.677)
<hr/>				
Observations	5,917	5,917	5,917	5,917
Log Likelihood	-6,801.701	-6,800.705	-6,805.149	-6,806.148
Akaike Inf. Crit.	13,637.400	13,635.410	13,644.300	13,646.300
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	13,751.060	13,749.070	13,757.950	13,759.950
<hr/>				
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Table A.4. Panel regression models with municipality and time fixed effects 2004-2018 (mayor)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	gesamt_growth		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
lag(gem_mayor_party_SPOE)	-0.048 (0.061)		
lag(gem_mayor_party_OEVP)		-0.031 (0.058)	
lag(gem_mayor_party_FPOE)			0.279* (0.152)
lag(gem_mayor_gender)	-0.031 (0.068)	-0.040 (0.068)	-0.035 (0.068)
lag(FK_Kopfquote2)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)
lag(schulden_kopf)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	-0.014 (0.016)	-0.014 (0.016)	-0.013 (0.016)
lag(gesamt)	-0.436*** (0.013)	-0.436*** (0.013)	-0.437*** (0.013)
Observations	5,486	5,486	5,486
R <sup>2</sup>	0.214	0.214	0.214
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.144	0.144	0.145
F Statistic (df = 6; 5039)	228.387***	228.298***	229.053***
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Table A.5. Mixed-effects models 2004-2018 (mayor)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	(1)	gesamt (2)	(3)
lag(gem_mayor_party_SPOE)	-0.001 (0.045)		
lag(gem_mayor_party_OEVP)		-0.049 (0.043)	
lag(gem_mayor_party_FPOE)			0.202 (0.123)
lag(gem_mayor_gender)	0.079 (0.064)	0.071 (0.064)	0.079 (0.064)
lag(strength_spoes_LR)	0.003 (0.004)		
lag(strength_spoes_BR)	0.005** (0.002)		
lag(strength_oevp_LR)		-0.006 (0.008)	
lag(strength_oevp_BR)		-0.011 (0.007)	
lag(strength_fpoes_LR)			-0.006 (0.005)
lag(strength_fpoes_BR)			0.016* (0.008)
lag(W_LR_quote)	-0.001 (0.003)	0.002 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.004)
lag(W_BR_quote)	0.010* (0.005)	0.009 (0.006)	0.010* (0.006)
lag(gem_urban_rural_number)	-0.014 (0.039)	-0.009 (0.039)	-0.013 (0.039)
lag(FK_Kopfquote2)	0.002** (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)
lag(schulden_kopf)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	0.008 (0.015)	0.009 (0.015)	0.008 (0.015)
qlspline(year, 3)1	0.095** (0.045)	0.153*** (0.021)	0.251*** (0.048)

qlspline(year, 3)2	0.173*** (0.023)	0.175*** (0.030)	0.172*** (0.020)
qlspline(year, 3)3	0.096*** (0.024)	0.071* (0.037)	0.120*** (0.040)
Constant	-187.526** (90.853)	-304.054*** (42.627)	-500.910*** (96.991)
Observations	5,905	5,905	5,905
Log Likelihood	-6,795.562	-6,793.082	-6,791.988
Akaike Inf. Crit.	13,627.120	13,622.170	13,619.980
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	13,747.430	13,742.470	13,740.280
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		



Table A.6. Panel regression models with random effects and level variable (cabinet share)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	gesamt			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
lag(strength_spoep)	-0.001 (0.001)			
lag(strength_oevp)		0.0001 (0.001)		
lag(strength_fpoe)			0.001 (0.002)	
lag(strength_gruene)				0.003 (0.004)
lag(W_quote)	0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)
lag(strength_spoep_LR)	0.001 (0.006)			0.001 (0.006)
lag(strength_spoep_BR)	0.011*** (0.003)			0.011*** (0.003)
lag(strength_oevp_LR)		0.001 (0.006)		
lag(strength_oevp_BR)		-0.074*** (0.024)		
lag(strength_fpoe_LR)			-0.001 (0.003)	
lag(strength_fpoe_BR)			-0.012*** (0.004)	
lag(W_LR_quote)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
lag(W_BR_quote)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
lag(gem_urban_rural_number)	0.002 (0.037)	0.002 (0.037)	0.002 (0.037)	0.008 (0.038)
lag(FK_Kopfquote)	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.0003** (0.0001)
lag(schulden_kopf)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002* (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)
lag(al_quote)	0.031* (0.017)	0.030* (0.017)	0.029* (0.017)	0.030* (0.017)

lag(erwerb_frauen_quote)	0.007 (0.006)	0.007 (0.006)	0.007 (0.006)	0.008 (0.006)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	-0.024 (0.018)	-0.023 (0.018)	-0.023 (0.018)	-0.023 (0.018)
as.numeric(year)	0.019 (0.024)	0.019 (0.024)	0.019 (0.024)	0.019 (0.024)
lag(gesamt)	0.742*** (0.014)	0.741*** (0.014)	0.741*** (0.014)	0.739*** (0.014)
Constant	-0.414 (0.558)	3.772** (1.523)	0.114 (0.523)	-0.466 (0.557)
Observations	3,316	3,316	3,316	3,316
R <sup>2</sup>	0.603	0.603	0.603	0.604
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.602	0.602	0.602	0.602
F Statistic	5,023.598***	5,023.176***	5,023.029***	5,024.483***

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A.7. Panel regression models with random effects and level variable (mayor)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	(1)	gesamt (2)	(3)
lag(gem_mayor_party_SPOE)	-0.028 (0.046)		
lag(gem_mayor_party_OEVP)		0.045 (0.043)	
lag(gem_mayor_party_FPOE)			-0.042 (0.118)
lag(gem_mayor_gender)	0.037 (0.071)	0.039 (0.071)	0.034 (0.071)
lag(strength_spo_e_LR)	-0.00005 (0.006)		
lag(strength_spo_e_BR)	0.011*** (0.003)		
lag(strength_oevp_LR)		-0.0002 (0.006)	
lag(strength_oevp_BR)		-0.077*** (0.024)	
lag(strength_fpo_e_LR)			-0.00001 (0.003)
lag(strength_fpo_e_BR)			-0.013*** (0.004)
lag(W_LR_quote)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)
lag(W_BR_quote)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
lag(gem_urban_rural_number)	-0.0002 (0.037)	-0.001 (0.037)	0.002 (0.037)
lag(FK_Kopfquote)	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.0003** (0.0001)
lag(schulden_kopf)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)
lag(al_quote)	0.037** (0.017)	0.038** (0.017)	0.035** (0.017)
lag(erwerb_frauen_quote)	0.008 (0.006)	0.008 (0.006)	0.008 (0.006)

lag(bev_u6_quote)	-0.025 (0.018)	-0.026 (0.018)	-0.024 (0.018)
as.numeric(year)	0.015 (0.024)	0.015 (0.024)	0.015 (0.024)
lag(gesamt)	0.748*** (0.013)	0.748*** (0.013)	0.747*** (0.013)
Constant	-0.434 (0.557)	3.951*** (1.527)	0.101 (0.526)
Observations	3,306	3,306	3,306
R <sup>2</sup>	0.603	0.603	0.603
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.602	0.602	0.602
F Statistic	5,005.773***	5,007.932***	5,005.013***

*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A.8. Panel regression models with municipality fixed effects (cabinet share)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	gesamt_growth			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
lag(strength_spoep)	0.010** (0.004)			
lag(strength_oevp)		-0.006* (0.003)		
lag(strength_fpoe)			0.003 (0.004)	
lag(strength_gruene)				-0.002 (0.007)
lag(W_quote)	0.071* (0.038)	0.076** (0.038)	0.074* (0.038)	0.074* (0.038)
lag(strength_spoep_LR)	0.003 (0.005)			0.007 (0.005)
lag(strength_oevp_LR)		0.009* (0.005)		
lag(strength_fpoe_LR)			-0.005 (0.003)	
lag(W_LR_quote)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
lag(W_BR_quote)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)
lag(FK_Kopfquote2)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
lag(schulden_kopf)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
lag(al_quote)	0.006 (0.022)	0.008 (0.022)	0.008 (0.022)	0.008 (0.022)
lag(erwerb_frauen_quote)	0.005 (0.009)	0.005 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	-0.014 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.027)	-0.016 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.027)
as.numeric(year)	0.068*** (0.020)	0.067*** (0.020)	0.068*** (0.020)	0.068*** (0.020)
lag(gesamt)	-0.621*** (0.021)	-0.621*** (0.021)	-0.620*** (0.021)	-0.619*** (0.021)

Observations	2,928	2,928	2,928	2,928
R <sup>2</sup>	0.310	0.309	0.308	0.308
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.188	0.187	0.185	0.185
F Statistic (df = 12; 2487)	93.045***	92.648***	92.169***	92.099***

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*Note:* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

Table A.9. Panel regression models with municipality fixed effects (mayor)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	gesamt_growth		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
lag(gem_mayor_party_SPOE)	-0.115 (0.099)		
lag(gem_mayor_party_OEVP)		0.031 (0.095)	
lag(gem_mayor_party_FPOE)			0.233 (0.187)
lag(gem_mayor_gender)	0.010 (0.136)	0.007 (0.137)	0.003 (0.136)
lag(strength_spo LR)	0.007 (0.005)		
lag(strength_oevp_LR)		0.007 (0.005)	
lag(strength_fpoe_LR)			-0.003 (0.003)
lag(W_LR_quote)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
lag(W_BR_quote)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)	0.002 (0.004)
lag(FK_Kopfquote2)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
lag(schulden_kopf)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)
lag(al_quote)	0.006 (0.022)	0.007 (0.022)	0.006 (0.022)
lag(erwerb_frauen_quote)	0.004 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)	0.004 (0.009)
lag(bev_u6_quote)	-0.014 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.027)	-0.015 (0.027)
as.numeric(year)	0.068*** (0.020)	0.067*** (0.020)	0.067*** (0.020)
lag(gesamt)	-0.619*** (0.021)	-0.619*** (0.021)	-0.621*** (0.021)
Observations	2,918	2,918	2,918
R <sup>2</sup>	0.306	0.306	0.306

Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.183	0.182	0.183
F Statistic (df = 12; 2477)	91.046***	90.860***	91.078***
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		