

InTeReg Working Paper No. 07-2003

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March 2003

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on the question how care work within the family can and in Austria actually does contribute to the social integration of women who still do the main part of care work. In this discussion, Austria seems to be an interesting example as major changes in the care arrangement towards payments for care have been realised during the last decade.

Keywords: care, Austria, social integration, lone mothers

1 Introduction

This article focuses on the question how care work within the family can and in Austria actually does contribute to the social integration of women who still do the main part of care work. In this discussion, Austria seems to be an interesting example as major changes in the care arrangement towards *payments for care* have been realised during the last decade. A care allowance for people with a long-term care need was introduced in 1993. In the end of the nineties the introduction of a child care allowance for children up to the age of 3 years was discussed, it has been realised on January 1th, 2002. Both instruments are directed to improve the conditions of informal care within families and to guarantee freedom of choice how to organise care work. So is Austria really on the way to a new care model that will replace the old male breadwinner model? Such a replacement is in fact necessary, as the male breadwinner model becomes more and more in conflict with reality: This can be seen in the increasing number of lone parents, women in poverty, problems with social security for older people, and so on.

In the beginning we describe the Austrian care system. Additionally some figures about female labour market participation are given (chapter 2). In chapter 3 we will have a look on the Austrian care arrangement, especially on the conditions of family care, and examine the position of the Austrian care regime within the international research on welfare regimes. Here we also try to show the reasons why it is necessary to adopt this system. In chapter 4 we first discuss social integration of family care on a theoretical level. Then we verify if the changes that we can observe in Austria right now are reflecting one of these directions. Conclusions and alternatives are discussed in chapter 5.

2 Care work in Austria - some empirical facts

Among the most important characteristics of the Austrian care system are the dominance of informal family care and the scarce provision of services. The family has a dominant role in any area of care work and the welfare state supports the family in fulfilling her obligations. We will show this in detail, following the categories of care work introduced by Bettio/Prechal 1998: Services, time-off and money.

2.1 CHILD CARE

Services

Austria fails to provide even relatively comprehensive child care facilities for children under three years - only 6% of all children in this age group are cared for in a child care institution and nearly three quarters of the existing facilities are situated in Vienna (Hammer 1997). Provision is higher for older pre-school children (66% for the age group from 3 to 6), but there are also large differences between regions (*Bundesländer*), especially concerning opening hours: More than 90% of child care facilities in Western-Austria provide only half-day-services. Most child care facilities are closed during school holidays in summer – that are 9 weeks. Compulsory school hours are very short in Austria, but the supply of out of school care is very limited: Only 17% of all children between 6 and 14 are cared for in such institutions (Hammer 1997).

In the second half of the nineties a special program to rise the supply of child care facilities was realised by governmental subsidies.¹ It helped to reduce the deficit of places for the 3 to 6 years old children. The second stage of the program - subsidies to increase the supply for children under 3 years and for those in school-age - has not been continued after the governmental change in 2000.

A national survey (Hammer 1997) showed a deficit of child care facilities for about 140.000 children, corresponding to one third of the existing places. Leitner/Wroblewski (2000) calculate that 400.000 additional places are necessary to reach the level of Denmark.

Time-off

From 1990 on Austria had a two years parental leave schema that was linked to former labour market participation and provides protection against dismissal and a right to return to the job.² The time-off regulation was combined with parental leave payment: only those with entitlement to parental leave could get parental leave benefit. With the introduction of the child care allowance in 2002 (see "money" below) the system changed significantly: The time-off right is still linked to labour market participation, the child care allowance is not.

98% of all persons on parental leave are women. The take-up rate of parental leave is comparatively high (Bruning/Plantenga 1999, 200): 96% of all women in the age group between 20 and 54 years with

¹ These subsidies were called *Kindergartenmilliarde*.

² The firm has to employ the person for 4 weeks after parental leave. Despite maternity leave (8 weeks before and 8 weeks after birth) fathers can take parental leave as well as mothers. Parents can alternate parental leave twice, the minimum parental leave time is 3 months. There is no quotation for fathers within the time-off regulation.

entitlement to parental leave make use of this right at least once. Only 1% of fathers use their right for parental leave. Almost all women take the whole time of parental leave.

There is the possibility to take part-time leave (for instance 4 years part-time leave instead of 2 years full-time leave). This form of leave is not widespread, because the employer has to agree, because the system is complicated (especially in combination with the new child care allowance) and because of the lack of adequate child care facilities during doing the half job. Additionally many employers are not willing to provide part-time jobs with good quality, therefore taking over a part-time job often means dequalification.

Additionally to parental leave exists a fully paid leave for care reasons (for instance to take care for a sick child) for employed persons. The length of this leave is 1 or 2 weeks per year, depending on the age of the child.

Money

Since 2002 all parents caring for a child get child care allowance (*Kinderbetreuungsgeld*) until the child is 3 years old (if parents share, otherwise 2.5 years).³ With € 436 this allowance is slightly higher than the "old" parental leave payment.⁴ Carers receiving child care allowance are allowed to participate in the labour market up to a yearly income of about 14,500 Euro. This limit is much higher than the maximum income that was allowed while getting parental leave benefit (about € 290 per month). But for employees the system is now more complicated, because time-off regulation and child care allowance follow a different logic. The main problem lies in the different duration: Employed parents can take parental leave up to 2 years, afterwards they lose the protection against dismissal and the right to return to the job. But they can get child care allowance up to 2.5 years (if they don't share).⁵

The expenditures on family and child-related allowances are among the highest in Europe (Bettio/Prechal 1998, 23). Besides the family allowance (*Familienbeihilfe*), which is paid for every child at least until the age of 19, and some indirect benefits (e.g. nearly free school books) there are some more elements in the tax system (single breadwinner tax allowance) (Pastner/Sporrer 1998).

2.2 LONG-TERM CARE

Services

In Austrian social care services have historically been underdeveloped and the bulk of care work has traditionally been carried out by family carers. Institutional care is on a very low level compared with other Western European welfare states. In 1996/97 3.8% of the population aged 60 and older were living in homes (BMUJF 1999). 3% of older people receive home care services (Bettio/Prechal 1998, 35). In the international comparison Austria is rated in the lower midfield.

³ Precondition to get child care allowance is the entitlement to get family allowance (*Familienbeihilfe*). Foreigners living in Austria without entitlement to get family allowance cannot get child care allowance.

⁴ Until 2002 parental leave benefit was € 407 per month. It was paid for a maximum of 2 years, after 1996 six months of the leave were paid only if fathers took them. During maternity leave (8 weeks before and 8 weeks after birth) women still get fully paid. Women without entitlement for parental leave cannot take maternity leave, they get child care allowance after birth.

⁵ Two more examples for problems caused by these separation of time-off and money: (1) Employees can make use of part-time leave (if the employer agrees), but for getting the child care allowance their income has to be under the limit of € 14.500 per year. Therefore part-time leave is not attractive for qualified employees with higher income, especially it is not attractive for fathers. Before 2002 part-time leavers got half of their income and half of the parental leave payment. (2) Under certain conditions employees who use the possibility to earn some money during parental leave can lose the protection against dismissal.

Before the introduction of the long-term care allowance (see below) in 1993, a relatively high level of specific services (like home nursing) was achieved in some provinces, but there was no general approach to develop a comprehensive system of social services. The result was a widely fragmented system (different providers, different forms of provision, different regulations regarding access and finance) and an enormous lack of social services. In 1993 a state-provinces-treaty was completed that made provinces responsible for the further development of social services and residential care-settings, but the payment for care programme did not yet fundamentally change the existing system - there is still an enormous deficit in services. About 14% of long-term care allowance recipients are cared for in residential homes and similar institutions (BMAGS 1998, 66). About half of all recipients use at least once social services (home help, home nursing, escorting services, getting meals and others).⁶ But in most cases social services provide only additional care. Informal care is a prerequisite. Without informal care most persons would not be able to use social services. Therefore the informal sector is playing a key role in long-term care.

Time-off

Employed persons have the right to take one week leave per year for care reasons (for relatives living in the same household). This enables care work in acute cases of illness, but no long-term care. Therefore it is not surprising that many care givers have given up or reduced their own gainful employment to be able to do the family care (Badelt et al. 1997).

Right now an entitlement has been introduced that enables to reduce regular working-time or even give up paid work to care for dying persons (*Sterbekarenz*). This care leave is unpaid, with a maximum length of 6 months, but this time is credited for old age pension.

Money

Since 1993 long-term care allowance (*Pflegegeld*) is paid to people in need of care with at least 50 hours of care needs per month, ranging from € 145 to € 1,531 depending on the level of dependency. The attendance allowance is granted to everyone in need, irrespective of the reason of the handicap, and is paid to the person in need of care. The transfer is a tax-financed cash payment, it is not means-tested and is not part of the insurance-based social security system (Holzmann-Jenkins 1999). 4% of the Austrian population receive the benefit, but only 12% of them got an allowance according to the three highest levels. More than 55% get an allowance according to the two lowest levels, that means not more than € 268 per month (Österle et al. 2001).

2.3 CARE WORK AND FEMALE LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION

The responsibility for caring for children and other people in need of care is located within the triangle of welfare state, labour market and the family. Any care strategy has its specific consequences at the possibilities for women to participate in the labour market in full-time and continuous jobs.

⁶ For detailed information see Österle et al. 2001, Riedel 1999.

Table 2.1 Labour force participation and caring responsibilities among women (25-44 years) in 1997, in %

	with children	without children	total
Employees/ full time	27	68	40
Employees/ part-time	23	10	19
Self-employed	9	5	8
Child care leave	11	0	7
Unemployed	3	3	3
Non-employed	27	14	23
Total	100	100	100
<i>Persons</i>	<i>868,000</i>	<i>407,000</i>	<i>1,275,000</i>

Source: Wörister 1999

Among women without children 83% are in employment, 68% are full-time employed. Among those with children 59% are in employment, only 27% have full-time jobs. Still 27% of women in working age with caring responsibilities are not employed. This number as well as the higher proportion of women with children in part-time work shows the difficulties women have in re-entering a "normal" career after a child care break (Kreimer/Leitner 2002).

Although the labour market related parental leave schema in Austria could enable women to continue labour market participation while caring, such a continuity is hardly reality. The relatively long leave period in combination with the limited supply of childcare institutions for children under 3 years leads to great problems in re-entering the labour market. "Where leave policies are not backed up by childcare facilities, the system may serve merely to postpone labour market quits rather than providing a genuine bridge back into employment." (Rubery/Fagan 1998, 80). For many mothers taking parental leave is not only a career *break* but an *exit* from the labour market.

It is too early to see the consequences of the separation of the time-off regulation and the leave payment through the new child care allowance for female labour market participation. But based on the experiences of the extension of the leave period from one to two years in 1990 we can expect that difficulties in re-entering a full-time job or a job with a continuous perspective will increase. It has been shown that it is more difficult for women to return to work after a two-year- break than after one year (Neyer 1996). Only one out of three woman returns to work immediately after parental leave, and of these women one out of four loses her job within one year (Neyer et al. 1999).⁷ Child care allowance will be paid for 2.5 years, if parents don't share. At least for women with low income who cannot afford private child care (while working part time) the leave period will be longer. But if they stay at home for 2.5 years they loose their right to return to their working place, because time-off protection is guaranteed only for two years.

The possibility for many women with low income capacities and low qualification to re-enter the labour market is limited to *atypical* employment: part-time jobs in the trading sector or in tourism, temporary employment and so on.⁸ Long leave periods support the development of marginalised labour

⁷ Looking on these numbers it is not astonishing that none of the public financed studies on the effects of the new parental leave model has been published so far.

⁸ Very often women find themselves in so-called "marginal" employment (*geringfügige Beschäftigung*), that is very short part-time employment up to € 309 without social security protection.

market segments for women, providing bad jobs that are compatible with care responsibilities (Bettio/Plantenga 1999).

Information on labour force participation for women with long-term care responsibilities is rather limited. We know, that about 80% of long-term informal care givers are women (in particular daughters, daughters in law and partners), more than 60% of them are in working age and have to deal with the question of combining unpaid care work with paid work. The labour market participation rate of all women between 15 and 65 years is 62.5%, among those providing long-term care just 37.1% (Österle et al. 2001, 15). 38% of these women combining employment and long-term care are working part-time, compared to 30% of all women.

2.4 LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION OF LONE MOTHERS

Lone mothers play an important role in this discussion as they are lone carers and (lone) breadwinners at the same time. In Austria the absolute number of lone parent families is increasing constantly and is lightly over 300,000. That means that one out of 5 families with children under 19 is a lone-parent family. Around 85% of lone parents are lone mothers, and it is this group that we will now focus on.

The labour market participation of lone mothers in Austria is characterised by a very high rate: In 1998, 86% of all lone mothers with children under 15 years were economically active. If the employment rate (without unemployed and care leaves) of lone mother is compared with married/partnered women, the difference is even bigger (see table 2): While 85.7% of lone mothers are active, just 65% of the partnered are. According to this, the part-time rate of lone mothers is much lower. That indicates that for lone mothers a higher number of working hours per week is necessary to have an essential income.

Table 2.2 Labour force participation and caring responsibilities among women (25-44 years) in 1997, in %

	Lone mothers	Partnered mothers
Labour force participation rate*	85.7	65.1
Employment rate**	68.7	54.7
Persons	74,400	402,500
Part-time rate***	35.4	50.5
youngest child under 3 years	44.9	54.4
3-6 years	46.0	55.7
6-15 years	41.4	52.5
Unemployment rate****	7.8	4.0

Sources: Mikrocensus 1998, Amesberger et al. 2001

* Austrian "workforce concept" (Lebensunterhaltskonzept): Employees working more than 12 hours per week

** without persons on care leave and unemployed persons

*** Labour Force Concept (LFC), without persons on care leave

**** LFC.

The difficulties in combining care needs and paid work result in high unemployment of lone mothers, a fact, that relatives their high participation rate.

Re-entering the labour-market after a care leave is rather difficult for lone mothers: Survey results (Schiffbänker et al. 1999) show that one year after the end of paid child care leave partnered mothers are more often successfully integrated in the labour market than lone mothers. At the same time the percentage of those who tried to re-enter, but did not succeed, is twice as high for lone mothers compared to partnered mothers. So these lone mothers highly depend on social transfers and unemployment benefits.

Table 2.3 Employment Situation of women one year after child care leave (in %)

	Lone mothers	Partnered mothers
Employment intended without success	32.9	16.1
No employment intended ("Carers")	9.4	15.3
In active employment	57.7	68.6
More than 30 hours/week	59.6	35.9

Source: Schiffbänker et al. 1999

Main barrier for re-entering is the low number of jobs that provide reduced working hours (corresponding with the opening hours of public care services) as well as a sufficient income. Yet lone mothers have an obviously higher weekly working time than partner mothers. Despite their lone care responsibility, 60% of the active employed work more than 30 hours a week after coming back from care leave, compared to 36% of the employed partnered mothers. There are notable differences concerning the qualification level: Women with better qualification work less hours per week, they gain the necessary income with less working hours.

3 The Austrian Care Arrangement - How does it work?

Child care as well as long-term care in Austria is strongly based on informal care in the family. Social policy gives mainly support by money, in case of child care also by time-off rights, but less by public care services. We will show how this dominance of family care is situated within the context of the Austrian welfare system.

The normative context

Family obligations have always played an important role in the Austrian welfare state. Family work is primarily done by women, the family ideology of "separated spheres" is still dominant, visible in a strict gender division of family work. In this normative context family working women are socially integrated and accepted and are supported by the state by payments for care based on a transfer-orientated policy. There is no special activation programme for caring women, particularly since the Austrian government is a conservative one (2000). But it has to be mentioned that this "stay-at-home-policy" is just valid for partnered mothers, not for lone mothers (see last chapter).

Austrian employment policy shows contradictions as the aim to increase female labour market participation is confronted with the aim to "let the carers care": *"Above all there is one principle problem which blocks a consistent mainstreaming policy in Austria: Traditional division of labour, according to which women have the sole responsibility for care duties, still is dominant. Women can/shall very well pursue some gainful working activity, but their first priority should however always be family work."* (Pastner 2000, 14).⁹

Social rights

Social rights of family carers are mainly realised by the relation to the breadwinner. That makes clear how difficult the situation is for lone mothers without a breadwinner. Different improvements have been started during the nineties, but they just concern certain subgroups and special aspects. Therefore social integration of carers is rather heterogeneous:

- *Employees taking only parental leave for caring:* They stay within the social security system and have social rights by their own.¹⁰
- *Full-time housewives:* Their social rights depend fully on a breadwinner.
- *Carers with discontinuous labour market careers:* Women belonging to this large group because of career interruptions, part-time phases, jobs without social security protection and so on have problems to gain sufficient social rights by their own. Long caring-phases cause problems especially for pension rights.¹¹ Pension points for child care (4 years per child, additionally to employment) are a positive aspect. But it is not enough to compensate the shortage of social rights while caring.
- *Lone mothers:* They gain social rights by labour market participation. They cannot afford to take long care leaves.

⁹ See Pastner 2000 and Leitner/Wroblewski 2000 for a detailed analysis of the Austrian employment strategy (National Action Plan for Employment).

¹⁰ This works under the precondition that they re-enter the labour market successfully, which is not the case for a large part of women taking parental leave. For details see Neyer 1996, Neyer et al. 1999.

¹¹ Whether they have enough years of active employment, whether they earn enough to get a sufficient pension, ... for details see Wörister 2001.

- *Long-term care*: Providing unpaid long-term care in the informal sector does not guarantee access to social rights. Just a small group of carers receives financial support in the form of a subsidy for the contributions to the pension insurance.¹² But the employee's part of the contributions has to be paid by themselves, which means that additional financial resources are necessary. Most care givers depend on social rights either from labour market participation (that may be difficult to realise beside time-intensive long-term care), or on getting transfers (pension, social assistance (*Sozialhilfe*)). Other carers depend on their partners, only access to health insurance is costless for them (*Mitversicherung*).

Income

Caring responsibilities and the related reduction of working time and career interruptions have large effects on the income situation of women - Austria is one of the countries with a very high gender wage gap (see Böheim et al. 2001, Gregoritsch et al. 2000). Although the Austrian care policy is centred around money, carers don't get a sufficient income for their care work:

- *Child care allowance* is paid until the child is 3 years (if parents share). This money does not guarantee economic independence, with € 436 per month it is below the social assistance-level. But it makes quitting the labour market easier, at least for women with a low qualification level.
- Most carers doing long-term care receive only *symbolic payments* (Österle et al. 2001). Only in a very limited number of cases regular employment contracts that would guarantee a sufficient income have been established. This means that long-term carers are depending on a breadwinner or the state (see social rights). So symbolic payments reinforce the pressure for informal care and family dependency (Ungerson 1997).

Austria - still a strong breadwinner welfare state

The Austrian welfare system is usually classified as a conservative, corporatist welfare regime, in which welfare is geared towards status maintenance of established groups in society via social security contributions (Esping-Andersen 1990). From a feminist point of view this classification has provoked critical comments concerning its gender-blindness, because women disappear from the analysis as soon as they disappear from the labour market (Lewis 1992).

One of the attempts to gender the existing typologies is the *breadwinner*-categorisation of Lewis and Ostner (1994). They show that – corresponding to the purposes of the welfare regime – there are different forms of division of paid and unpaid work between women and men. So women's dependences on a male breadwinner may differ. Lewis/Ostner describe three types of breadwinner: *Strong* breadwinner model (Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Netherlands, Ireland), *moderate* breadwinner model (France, Belgium) and the *weak* breadwinner model (Sweden, Finland, Denmark). Austria is classified as a strong breadwinner state because of the low supply rate with care services, especially for younger children and persons in need for care. Doing informal care women depend strongly on a male breadwinner.

Millar and Warman (1995) describe the Austrian care system with *nuclear family*, while Bettio/Plantenga (1999) characterise Austria (like Germany) as a *publicly financed private care system* with a large private informal care sector based on the obligation within the family to care. The state gives financial support to the family.

¹² Since 2002 this subsidy is paid for care-level 4 and higher.

Challenges to the Austrian care arrangement

The actual arrangement is widely based on the traditional nuclear family concept as part of a well functioning breadwinner model that does not exist any more. Increasing female labour market participation, the high divorce-rate and the increasing number of lone parents represent some of the challenges to the male breadwinner model.¹³

These problems – and the crisis in the Austrian care system - are part of the discussion about social protection in age for women (BMFV 1997, Wörister 2001, Mairhuber 2000) as well as in the increasing divorce-rate and the missing social protection for these women in older-age. Both meet in a higher poverty-risk for women (see Schmidt/Heitzmann 2001). The continuous increase of lone parents (mainly women) is investigated and discussed in different publications (Schiffbänker et al. 1999, Amesberger et al. 2001).

Another problem that is part of the political discussion is about care activities by people from abroad (mainly Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary). These foreigners are really “cheap” care persons on the black market who guarantee the well-functioning of the long term care at least in Eastern Austria. They make possible that care is done, but without any social integration. This strategy easily gets in conflict with the restrictive Austrian policy on foreigners (see Österle et al. 2001).

How does Austria meet these challenges?

- There is no considerable trend towards a *more service orientated care regime*. The expansion of services is still a political goal, but much weaker than before 2000.¹⁴
- In the second half of the nineties some small attempts have been made to bring more fathers into care work and to *change the traditional division of labour*. But as long as the wage gap is high and child care allowance is fixed at a relatively low rate, many families cannot afford that the father takes a significant part of the leave period.¹⁵
- As we have seen before, actual Austrian care policy has its main emphasis *on supporting informal care* by payments and transfers. We will have a closer look on this policy in the next section.

¹³ Further reasons are: the demographic change, the changing system of values and norms, insufficient male incomes,...

¹⁴ Even before 2000 there was no significant expansion of social care services.

¹⁵ It has to be mentioned that the minimum leave period a person has to take is 3 months.

4 The social integration of family care in Austria

The care related reforms during the nineties (long-term care allowance, child care allowance, small social security reforms like pension points for child care) could be interpreted as an attempt to increase social security as well as the income position of informal family carers. Therefore Austria seems to be on the way to transform the male breadwinner model into a care model that is still based on family care, but with high support through the welfare state. Social integration of family care should be possible without depending on a male breadwinner (or, at least, dependence should be reduced significantly). We want to analyse whether the developments in the Austrian care sector can indeed be interpreted as such a beginning transformation towards a modified care model.

4.1 THE CAREGIVING-PARITY / CAREGIVER-SOCIAL-WAGE MODEL

The relevance of care work in analysing welfare states has been part of the feminist critique on the welfare state typology of Esping-Anderson (1990). Researchers have started to incorporate care into welfare state classifications (like the breadwinner classification of Lewis/Ostner 1994), or they have tried to develop "care models" (e.g. Knijn/Kremer 1997) and to identify them in existing welfare states (e.g. Anttonen/Sipilä 1996, Bettio/Plantenga 1999). Austria seems to be on the way to a care model in which family care still plays the dominant role, but with a much higher responsibility of the welfare state for organising and financing family care. A similar approach can be found in Fraser (1994), and in an application of her model on lone mothers in Lewis/Hobson (1997).

Fraser (1994) started with the role of the "old gender order" (that means male breadwinner model) for the current crisis of the welfare state and tried to find models for the post-industrial welfare state with a "new gender order" that is premised on gender equity. We take her emancipatory vision as starting point for analysing the new orientation of Austrian welfare state policy.

Fraser shows two different kinds of answers for an emancipatory vision of the welfare state:

- The *Universal Breadwinner Model* aims to foster gender equity by promoting women's employment and is mainly based on the provision of day-care and services to permit women to become equal participants to men in the labour market.
- The *Caregiving Parity Model* would promote equity of women and men through support of women's informal care work. The centrepiece of this model is state provision of caregiver allowances.

Because of the developments in Austrian care policy, the latter seems to be of some relevance, so we will have a closer look on it now.

The aim of the *Caregiving Parity Model* is not to make women's lives the same as men's, but to make the difference costless (Fraser 1994, 606), or at least to reduce the costs significantly. Women doing informal care work should be able to be breadwinners on the base of care work. Measures for such a model would be caregiver allowances, compulsory and subsidised social insurance for persons working in the household, social rights on the bases of unpaid work, or an unconditional basic income. The most important thing is to ensure continuity of all the basic welfare benefits and the various forms of

insurance.¹⁶ It is also important that benefits and payments are high enough, otherwise it would not be possible to reduce the costs of the difference between market work and care work significantly. Since care work rarely takes up the entire working life, access to the labour market, particularly in the form of part-time jobs in the beginning, is required. Flexible careers, like alternating spells of full-time employment, spells of full-time care work, spells that combine part-time employment with part-time care and so on, should have equal outcomes in terms of income and social security like regular labour market careers.

Fraser (1994) is mainly interested in the emancipatory vision of the models, but it seems obvious, that a *Caregiving Parity Model* would improve the conditions of informal care work and so the social integration of informal carers significantly. The realisation of such a care model would do a good job in preventing poverty by guaranteeing better individual social rights for carers, it would prevent exploitable dependency, it would contribute to the reduction of the income gap and the time gap (double burden through paid and unpaid work for women), and it would start at least some weakening of androcentric values. The main disadvantages are the fixation of the traditional gender specific division of labour and marginalisation of carers within the employment sector and accordingly in the other spheres of life (Fraser 1994, 605 ff.). But in relation to the existing breadwinner model it would be in any way an improvement.

Based on Fraser's models Lewis and Hobson (1997) proposed a framework for care regimes: The *Parent-Worker Model* and the *Caregiver Social Wage Model*. Both models represent two alternatives for recognising caring activities through the welfare state and both reveal coherent strategies for the organisation of paid and unpaid work. "*The caregiver social wage model assumes that all mothers will be carers and that lone mothers are entitled to care benefits equivalent to an adequate wage for the duration of the childrearing years.*" (Lewis/Hobson 1997, 15). In contrast, the *Parent-Worker Model* assumes that mothers are active labour force participants and that care services and parental leave arrangements are available and affordable for them. Lewis and Hobson have a specific focus on lone mothers, the *Parent-Worker Model* should offer them inclusion in the labour market and a "*social wage to make labour market participation possible.*" (Lewis/Hobson 1997, 16). Both models should result in coherent policy solutions that enable lone mothers to form autonomous households with a low risk of poverty and stigmatisation. Given these outcomes both models would provide a much better recognition of care work than the traditional breadwinner model.¹⁷

4.2 DOES THE AUSTRIAN CARE ARRANGEMENT FIT INTO A CAREGIVING SOCIAL WAGE MODEL?

Based on the theoretical findings above, we want to analyse this question for three groups of carers: lone mothers, partnered mothers and long-term carers.

Lone mothers

For the group of lone mothers the necessity to find an alternative to the traditional breadwinner model is obvious - there is no male breadwinner. Additionally, if the care work of lone mothers is recognised by the welfare state in an adequate way this strategy can be applied to other groups of carers. We will

¹⁶ Therefore a two years parental leave schema is not a suitable instrument.

¹⁷ As far as it concerns the equality dimension, the possible disadvantages of a welfare state model centred around informal care (marginalisation, increasing of gender segregation in the labour market and in society) have to be taken into account. Fraser (1994) looks for a third model to avoid this disadvantages: The *Universal Caregiver Model*.

look now at the way the Austrian welfare state offers social integration for lone mothers doing care work.

As we have seen in chapter 2.4, Austrian lone mothers show high labour force participation, but also high unemployment rates. This indicates the problems lone mothers have in returning to the labour market after parental leave, or, more generally spoken, the "reconciliation problem" is of specific and high relevance for them. The high unemployment rate of lone mothers with very young children results from the lack of institutional places for children under 3 years as well as the organisational deficits of existing places (for instance opening hours, see chapter 2.1). Additionally, lone mothers are more dependent on the existence of an informal network for child care than other carers to meet specific care demands.¹⁸ Austrian lone mothers need this informal care networks not only for these specific circumstances, but also for compensating the deficits in the institutional care area. Without such informal networks many lone mothers are not able to return to the job they had before parental leave, either they have to accept jobs with relatively bad conditions, or they are unemployed - with consequences on their standard of living.

The employment situation of Austrian lone mothers puts them in a Parent/Worker Model following Lewis and Hobson (1997), but without elements of a "social wage": Care services are not available and affordable for them sufficiently, they experience disadvantages in the parental leave system and in care leave for sick children in comparison to partnered mothers.¹⁹ Following the ideal types of care regimes developed by Lewis and Hobson (1997), lone mothers should show low rates of poverty, they should be able to form independent households and they should not suffer from stigmatisation. In Austria lone mothers do not meet these criteria:

- The *poverty risk* of Austrian lone mother families is rather high. The equivalence-income of lone mother households lies between 24 and 35% (depending on the calculation of the equivalence income) under the income of all households of employees (Amesberger et al. 2001, 22f.). Lone mothers are exposed to poverty during parental leave as well as afterwards. Child care allowance (as well as the former parental leave benefit) is only a low flat-rate payment and not high enough to support a family without an additional breadwinner. The earning-limit while getting child care allowance is rather high (see chapter 2.1), therefore mothers could work part-time and get some reward for their care work - a good solution for lone mothers. But this solution presupposes the existence of affordable child care facilities while lone mothers do their part-time job – but as we have seen before there are large deficits especially for children under 3 years. For most lone mothers the sum of earning and child care allowance is not sufficient without additional resources. If they don't have resources, this combination of part-time work and part-time care is not affordable for them, they have to earn more and therefore engage more in paid work. But again, re-entering the labour market after parental leave may fail by the problems of finding adequate child care. Lone mothers get unemployment benefits more often than partnered mothers (Schiffbänker et al. 1999). But this transfer cannot reduce the poverty risk for most lone mothers because there is no sufficient minimum level in the Austrian unemployment system.
- Lone mothers are sometimes not able to *form independent households* at the „normal“ standard: They live relatively seldom in their own house or apartment compared to partnered mothers,

¹⁸ Illness of children, over-work in the evening, on weekends, normal work on Saturdays in the retail sector and so on, see Amesberger et al. 2001.

¹⁹ Families can get child care allowance for three years when fathers take over at least 6 months. Lone mothers receive child care allowance maximal for 2,5 years. Both parents can take leave to care for sick children (1 to 2 weeks per year, see 2.1).

most of them live in rented housing. They show a higher dependency on social housing and the non-profit housing sector, but the supply of such homes is limited and not available in all parts of Austria.

- Austrian lone mothers are less confronted with *stigmatisation* than with ignorance. The rate of illegitimate birth is traditionally high in Austria, so lone mothers are not only the consequence of increasing divorce rates. But they don't fit into the Austrian norms of intact families, therefore they are widely ignored by family policy and the welfare state. We can see this again in the discrimination of lone mothers in regulations on the duration of parental leave benefits and the child care allowance (see above). Lone mothers themselves feel stigmatisation: In a survey 30% of lone mothers express the feeling not being accepted as "full" family (Amesberger et al. 2001). Many lone mothers feel stigmatised by employers who have the prejudice that lone mothers are not available, flexible and so on.

In conclusion, Austrian lone mothers show employment rates like in a Parent/Worker Model, but without the characteristics developed by Lewis/Hobson (1997). Strell and Duncan (2001, 156) state in their analyses of Austrian lone mothers: *"They are forced into the labour market rather than enabled to take part in it, and their participation does not ensure social integration or an escape from poverty. Perhaps this can best be conceptualised as the "negative" version of the Parent/Worker model, as opposed to the Lewis-Hobson ideal type which assumes positive outcomes for lone mothers."*

Partnered/married mothers

Partnered mothers show a lower participation rate as lone mothers as well as women without children (see chapter 2.3), for all characteristics of the ideal type care regimes they show much better outcomes than lone mothers. Therefore partnered mothers are positioned in the Caregiving Social Wage Model. From the point of view for an alternative welfare state model to the traditional breadwinner model this is no progress - the Caregiving Social Wage Model for partnered mothers is more or less a modified form of the male breadwinner model. Partnered mothers have access to financial and social security only through an employed husband or (with restrictions) partner. The ability to form a household and protection from poverty are guaranteed as long as there is a husband or partner. The Austrian welfare system provides various forms of support and transfers for families, but caring mothers don't get any direct reward for their caring activities.

Long time carers

Most of the care work concerning elderly, sick and disabled persons is done within the family by women without explicit payment and without social security. With the long-term care allowance the state recognises the costs for care work to a certain extent, therefore this allowance can be seen as part of a care supporting model. But the carers themselves are widely ignored as addressees of the Austrian welfare state policies: Long-term care allowance is paid to the *person in need of care*, without any obligation to pay for informal care or to use care services. Most of long-term carers only get symbolic payments from long-term care allowance receivers. These payments contribute more to increase inequalities than to improve the situation of carers, because of the inherent trend to get „cheap“ informal care and care services from the black market, especially from migrants. Social rights derived from care work are limited to a small group of carers and accessible only for those with extra resources (see chapter 3). Regarding the situation of the carers, the long-term care allowance fits into the

traditional breadwinner model.²⁰ A development into the direction of a Caregiving Parity Model does not take place.

Hammer/Österle (2001) use the concept of defamilialisation to analyse the situation in long-term careers in Austria. They define defamilialisation as follows: "the concept captures the potential of social policies to offer freedom of choice either to provide unpaid work within the family under conditions which secure an acceptable standard of living or not to provide unpaid care work and to secure an acceptable standard of living via labour force participation." (same, 3). Defamilialisation has to be seen as a process, each country has its position within this process. The degree of defamilialisation in Austria is very low (Hammer/Österle 2001, 12), because of the limited access to social rights and the income situation of long-term carers. From the gender perspective inequalities and the traditional division of labour are perpetualised. "As social service provision is not adequate and female access to paid work often hindered, freedom of choice not to provide informal care is still a long way to go." (Hammer/Österle 2001, 12).

²⁰ It has to be noted that the long-term care allowance schema provided major improvements for the persons in need of care.

5 Conclusions and further discussion

The *defamilialisation* concept as well as the ideal types of the Parent/Worker and the Caregiving Social Wage Models have the aim to create a new framework for welfare state policy that recognises care work without discriminatory effects and that guarantees real freedom of choice. Parents and long-term carers should have the choice whether they take over care work by themselves or use social care services or a combination of both. This means a double demand on the welfare state: Several care models (maybe there are more than the models identified by Lewis/Hobson 1997) should be possible (freedom of choice) *and* the welfare state should guarantee adequate conditions for each model. Such a welfare state would represent a high degree of defamilialisation.

The Austrian welfare state shows deficits on both dimensions: Carers don't have the choice how to care work and how to combine it with paid work, and the conditions for each form of caring are not satisfying. Partnered mothers and long-term carers are situated in some kind of a Caregiving Social Wage Model with strong dependency from a breadwinner, lone mothers find themselves in a Parent/Worker Model without an adequate standard of living. Therefore the actual Austrian welfare state does not show a progressive development into the direction of a new, not breadwinner-oriented care model.

For lone mothers it seems obvious what has to be changed: They need care services and time-off arrangements to be able to combine paid employment and care work. For long-term carers and partnered mothers the solution is not that clear. A reduction of the breadwinner elements in Austrian social policy is necessary, but without being part of a comprehensive transformation of the welfare state this may lead to a situation where all carers find themselves in the position of lone mothers – in a “negative” version of a Parent/Worker Model. Such tendencies are already visible (see Mairhuber 1999, 2000). Because of the traditional view on families and care of the political parties in the government we cannot expect that the necessary changes for a “good” Parent/Worker Model will take place soon. A development to a Caregiving Parity Model following Fraser (1994) would be very costly and seems not be realistic, neither. Additionally, such a care regime would have strong effects on marginalisation and gender segregation.

Conception problems

The situation of partnered mothers shows the problem of finding an adequate definition of *social integration*: Related to the Austrian welfare system, partnered mothers are socially integrated: Full-time family care for children under three years is seen as the best way children of this age group should be cared for, afterwards the combination part-time employment and part-time care is the most accepted form. In both cases these mothers get social security and income via the male breadwinner. Such a definition of social integration cannot meet criteria like personal autonomy, independence or gender equity. At the moment Austrian family policy works directly into the other direction: „*So most of the family support available is more a help for breadwinner husbands who are thereby better enabled to afford a home-making wife.*“ (Strell/Duncan 2001, 157). This development has to be criticised not only from a theoretical emancipatory point of view, but also from a practical one: Because of increasing divorce rates the model does not work for more and more women anymore.

Lewis and Hobson (1997) developed the care regimes with the focus on lone mothers. We suppose that an incorporation of partnered mothers and long-term carers is possible. Such a modification would

correspond to the work of Fraser (1994), who wanted to create perspectives of a new gender order for the whole welfare state. But for such a modification of the Care Regimes of Lewis/Hobson (1997) theoretical work is necessary, especially for the role of partnered mothers and long-term carers. At the moment, the Caregiving Model of Lewis and Hobson shows large similarity with the traditional breadwinner model for these groups (see description of the characteristics of the Caregiving Model on page 15 in Lewis/Hobson 1997). It has to be worked out which criteria can be found to make such a model a progress in relation to the traditional breadwinner model *for all carers*, or whether such a model cannot provide an adequate solution for some groups of carers.

Are "transitional labour markets" an alternative?

It should be analysed whether the concept of *transitional labour markets* developed by Schmid (1998) would be an alternative. Following Schmid (1998, 2) the main reason for the development of transitional labour markets is as follows: "*The argument is that the borders between the labour market and other social systems have to become more open for transitory states between paid work and gainful non-market activities which preserve and enhance future employability.*" A new definition, a new concept of full employment is required, because "*Participation in the labour market is fundamental for social integration. Unemployment, therefore, is one of the main channels of social exclusion for it prevents people from exchanging their labour services and their productive knowledge*" (Schmid 1998, 1).²¹ The important ideas from a gender perspective are the redistribution of working time between men and women and the integration of intermediate phases like training and retraining, temporary part-time work, sabbaticals, parental leaves as "transitional employment" into the "normal" labour market standard.²² This concept seems to be useful for Austria because the Austrian labour market is already characterised by several types of transitions. Not only parental leave arrangements, also transitions *into* and *out* of the educational system and transitions into retirement are popular. The positive development of labour market figures is mainly the result of flexible labour supply of young and elderly people, especially women (Pichelmann et al. 1998).

The Austrian parental leave system has been a relatively well developed form of transition (Behning/Leitner 1998), other possible forms like sabbaticals or a right of working time reduction for private reasons have been in discussion, but not institutionalised. But the data on re-entry of women after parental leave point to the deficits that already existed before the introduction of the child care allowance (Leitner/Kreimer 2000). While the transition *out of paid work into care work* is well defined the transition *back to paid work* is not. At the end of the nineties there have been proposals to improve conditions for re-entering the labour market, but the new conservative government did not follow these proposals. They introduced the child care allowance, which has weakened the function of parental leave as a transitional phase.

For long-term carers no transitional labour market exists up to now. There have been proposals to bind part of the long-term care allowance to formal social services (for instance through vouchers) with the aim to increase the supply of social services and with that formal employment possibilities for caring women (Blumberger/Dornmayr 1998). Together with initiatives to increase the qualification for such carers and with subsidies for social security contributions, long-term care phases could be organized as

²¹ Schmid's concept of *new full employment* is based on an average working time of about 30 hours a week over a life cycle of both men and women, with a concrete working time varying around this standard according to economic conditions and individual circumstances.

²² Schmid (1998) presents 5 types of transitional employment: Transitions within the labour market (between full-time and part-time, self-employment and dependent employment ...), transitions between employment and unemployment, between education or training

transitional phases. But these proposals are not relevant in the ongoing discussion about long-term care. The only reform that has been realised recently is the introduction of an unpaid leave to care for dying persons. This specific measure does not intend to introduce a transitional labour market for the whole area of long-term care.

Despite these problems in Austria, it has to be asked on a general level how these transitions can be organised without discriminatory effects.²³ A gender-neutral and non-discriminatory concept of transitional labour markets would require a comprehensive change in the gender-specific division of labour, especially an equal participation of men in family work (Fraser 1994). What would a gender-neutral transition, for instance, parental leave, look like?

and employment, from employment to retirement and transitions between unpaid private work and paid market work. For female labour market participation the first and the last types are of special interest.

²³ Schmid (2000) has developed 4 general criteria for transitional labour markets: *Empowerment* (would require a well-developed infrastructure for caring and for keeping employability during such phases), *Sustainable Employment and Income* (would require an organisation of family time-off allowances in analogy to unemployment benefits), *Flexible co-ordination* (for instance flexible arrangements like “parental leave accounts”) and *Co-operation* (requires regulations allowing a parallel instead of a sequential organisation of family time-off).

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