

Austria - Employment Flexibility in a Conservative Welfare Regime

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary literature it is often claimed that globalization and the transition towards a service economy entail a widespread increase in non-standard precarious work and patchwork careers. However, recent empirical studies barely found any evidence that national employment structures have uniformly changed, in whatever direction. For conservative welfare-state regimes, such as Austria, they rather predict the 'male-breadwinner' model and hence, the gendered segmentation of labour to sustain due to institutional path-dependence. In our article we found some evidence for these theses. The proportion as well as the absolute number of women who work-part time has increased over the last 12 years in Austria, while the great majority of men is still employed on a full-time, permanent basis. However, the mean time women stay out of the labour force had strongly declined between 1995 and 2007, indicating that women tend to return earlier to their workplace after giving birth to their children. Moreover, there is some evidence that personal characteristics such as sex, children and education only partly explain the growing proportion of women who work part-time. This phenomenon can also be traced back to the growth of the services sector displaying a much higher degree of flexible work arrangements than production. Since women can primarily be found in services, such as retail trade, health care and personal services, their likelihood of working part-time increases independently of personal characteristics.

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INTRODUCTION

In contrast to a widely used argument in contemporary literature presuming that globalization and the transition towards a service economy entail a widespread increase in non-standard precarious work and patchwork careers (Beck 1986, Sennett 1998), Mills *et al.* (2008) concluded in their recent study that there is barely any evidence that national employment structures have uniformly changed, in whatever direction. Rather, the authors argue that existing cross-country differences in employment regimes have largely remained or even intensified (*ibid.*, 585f.). For conservative welfare-state regimes (Esping-Anderson 1990), such as Austria, they predict the strongly transfer oriented system to maintain its decommodifying effects for those who are economically inactive (Mills *et al.* 2008, 573f.). In this regard women, in particular, will continue to receive financial support when they give priority to family activities, while mid-career male workers are shielded against job-loss or receive welfare- and qualification-sustaining support in case of unemployment. Hence, the ‘male-breadwinner’ model is predicted to sustain due to institutional path-dependence even in times of globalization (*ibid.*). In this regard, trade unions and the system of industrial relations have also contributed to uphold the traditional division of labour in the family and its normative legitimacy in that they maintain large wage differentials between Austrian men and women (Traxler 2001). Since trade unions in Austria can still rely on their institutional embeddedness they are assumed to maintain their crucial role in influencing the employment structure. Established institutions, like sector collective bargaining and labour law in general continue to provide structural power resources and legitimacy to Austrian trade unions irrespective of their actual membership rates (Pernicka 2006, 125).

However, while employment stability for mid-career male workers is traced back to the institutional settings outlined above, competitive pressures unleashed by globalization are supposed to increase flexibility at the margin of the labour market. According to Mills *et al.* (2008, 587), in conservative countries flexibility has been achieved, for instance, by offering older workers generous early retirement, while simultaneously introducing more flexible work forms for younger labour market entrants. Moreover, there exists a wide range of recent international comparative studies that found a relative resilience of the long-term employment relationship in most countries over the past 10 years (Auer/Cazes 2000; Erlinghagen/Knuth 2004; Doogan 2005; Fevre 2007). At the same time younger employees (between 15-24 years of age) were found to face shorter

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employment tenure in comparison to previous cohorts of the same age (Auer/Cazes 2000, 398). Although these findings do not tell about the quality of jobs, they provide valuable insights into the segmentation of the labour market at least as concerns the duration and contractual forms of work relationships across different age groups, industries, genders, family status and educational attainment.

Against this background we address the following questions:

- 1) How has employment flexibility/stability developed over the last 12 years in Austria?
- 2) Does employment stability for male mid-career workers in standard employment persist or is there any evidence for growing flexibility also among this group?
- 3) Are there still differences in the employment stability/flexibility between men and women, and if yes, how can these be explained?

These questions could not be satisfactorily answered until recently due to the lack of long time data series. Austria adopted the labour-force-concept only in 1995 when the country accessed the European Union. Now, several years later, we are in the position to provide an in-depth analysis of the Austrian situation by utilizing labour force data (1995-2007) provided by Statistics Austria. However, there arose some problems concerning the data which had to be dealt with. First of all and especially during the first three years of the survey (1995 to 1998) only insufficient plausibility checks had been applied during and after the survey. Also the routines for imputing missing data had been modified several times during these years. Because of these quality problems retroactive plausibility checks had to be applied and certain cases had to be excluded from the data set used. However, it is barely possible to fully eliminate all quality problems several years after the survey had been conducted and the data been prepared. Furthermore, there have also been changes in the design of the Austrian Labour Force Survey resulting in limited comparability of the data over time. Between the years 1995 and 2003 the Austrian Labour Force Survey was conducted during the spring quarter. From 2004 the survey has covered the entire year. All these data problems and changes in the design of the survey have to be considered when interpreting the data and time series, in particular. In approaching our research questions, we utilized both, descriptive and multivariate statistics.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Based on the assumptions outlined above, we critically tested the thesis that predict conservative welfare systems to maintain or even intensify existing structures of work distribution between men and women and hence, respective labour market segmentation by the example of Austria. In this regard, we discuss

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three key indicators of flexibility, such as the extent and distribution of atypical employment (I), employment tenure and time since last job (II.) and their changes over time. Moreover, we suggest possible explanations for any labour market segmentation by changes in the flexibility or stability of employment.

Ad I) In order to examine employment flexibility we concentrate on both, the internal and the external labour market. According to a typology proposed by the OECD (1986, 1998) and extended by Keller/Seifert (2005) two forms of flexibility can be distinguished: internal and external flexibility. Internal flexibility (within a company) relies mainly on changes in working time, leaving the headcount largely untouched, such as for instance, part-time work. External flexibility, on the other hand, uses the traditional approach of varying the number of employees in accordance with a firm's needs (hiring and firing) by utilizing the external labour market, and increasingly also by resorting to fixed-term contracts, temporary agency workers (Keller/Seifert 2005, 307) and new forms of economically dependent self-employed workers. Dependent self-employed workers in Austria are usually either freelance contract holders (*freie Dienstnehmer*) or 'New' self-employed workers (*Neue Selbstständige*) (Pernicka 2006) (see table 1).

Table 1 Different forms of flexibility

	Internal	External
Numerical	Working time accounts Working time adjustments introduced to secure jobs	Hiring and Firing <i>Temporary agency work</i> <i>Fixed-term employment</i> <i>Freelance contracts*</i> <i>New self-employment*</i>
Functional	Further training Work organisation	-
Temporal	<i>Part-time work</i> <i>Limited part-time work*</i> <i>(mini jobs)</i>	Employment subsidized by the labour office for former unemployed people
Wage	<i>Limited part-time work*</i> Performance related pay	Wage cost subsidies

Source: Table is drawn from Keller/Seifert (2005, 308) and *adjusted for Austria by the authors

Those types of flexibility denoted by italic letters refer to atypical or non-standard forms of employment contract that deviate from the standard concept of 'normal' work (Mückenberger 1985; Keller/Seifert 1995, Tálos 1999). The term normal work is commonly used to distinguish between forms of work that include a permanent employment contract, compulsory social insurance contributions, full-time working and a full overlap between working and employment (Keller/Seifert 2005) on the one hand, and non-standard work with a higher risk to become precarious on the other hand. Moreover, atypical employment can be referred to as an expression of employment flexibility for both sides of the labour market. On the demand side, atypical forms of work such as dependent self-employment, part-time work or mini-jobs, tend to provide

employers/clients with flexibility and hence, with a reduction in overall personnel costs (Mühlberger 2000); as regards the supply side of the labour market, some types of non-standard employment can be seen as a reasonable way to overcome times of unemployment or to combine paid labour and family oriented activities such as child rearing (Meager 1996, Cyba 1998). The latter situation often occurs when mothers were supported by national policies, such as maternity leave and pay, and intend to re-enter the labour market. However, by accepting atypical forms of employment mothers tend to become economically dependent on their husbands or partners, because they often decide in favour of non-employment against part-time work and part-time work against full-time employment (Drobnic/Blossfeld 2004, 150).

Ad II) While the level and development of different contractual forms of work reveal the structure and segmentation of employment from a static point of view, they do neither tell about the actual duration of a job engagement nor do they reveal any interruptions of employment or times of non-employment. Young people, in particular, are continuously told to prepare for a flexible labour market with frequent changes between jobs, or between jobs and periods of unemployment. In fact, individuals are told to behave like 'entrepreneurs', to manage their careers efficiently and to remain in a constant state of 'employability' by the means of lifelong education and learning (Voß/Pongratz 1998, Auer/Cazes 2000). However, the question remains whether or not increasing flexibility (measured by the extent of atypical employment) will also affect the labour market processes in terms of a generally higher labour market mobility and a decreasing employment stability ('high-velocity labour market', Erlinghagen/Knuth 2004, 49). In this regard the level and structure of employment tenure, i.e. the length of time a worker has been continually employed by the same employer (Auer/Cazes 2000, 397) and the elapsed time since ceasing last job (time since last job) and their changes over time are useful indicators to approach the dynamic of the labour market. Hence, we regard a decrease in the length of employment tenure and in the time since last job as a sign of increased flexibility.

Beyond the descriptive approach we also employed a multivariate analysis in order to address the questions whether or not and why there are gender related differences in employment stability/flexibility. Recent studies, among which the seminal paper of Schulz/Blossfeld (2006), have revealed the central role of social norms, gender roles and -identities as well as past experiences in explaining prevalent patterns of the intra-household distribution of domestic work and hence, the limited extra-house engagement of married women with children, in particular. According to this study and in contrast to predictions of supply-side economics (c.f. Becker 1998), the rising levels of education and qualification of women have not resulted in overall changes in the distribution of domestic work between man and women. Rather, married mothers with small children still prefer part-time work over full-time work, and in the course of their marriage this attitude has been found to even intensify (Schulz/Blossfeld 2006, 46). However, these findings are primarily concerned with the supply-side of the labour market.

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In order to explain employment patterns in terms of use of different employment categories, we assume the demand side of the labour market as equally important: Most women work in occupations and sectors in which the workers are predominately female while most men work in occupations and sectors in which the workers are predominantly male (Preston 1999, 611). Moreover, while industrial production was and is still regarded as providing relatively stable working conditions – even though temporary agency work in this sector is on its rise, the services and knowledge intensive branches exhibit a relatively large and growing proportion of flexible and non-standard employment contracts (Pernicka/Stadler 2006,12). Since the majority of women work in services, we also expect the majority of women to exhibit flexible work arrangements, regardless of having children or not. Hence, we assume the proportion of atypical employment in a sector as being influenced by the proportion of women who already work in this sector. In this regard, the decision to accept or reject a non-standard employment contract – in particular part-time employment – is expected to be also dependent on the sector in which one works.

This thesis is in line with Becker's (1971) neoclassical approach assuming that employers may have what he termed a taste for discrimination, so that they will act as if there were additional cost when they hire women. Such employers will only hire women if they are willing to work for lower wages (Preston 1999, 617). Since part-time work and most of other flexible work arrangements are assumed to incur lower personnel costs due to lower tax and social security contributions and/or higher efficiency, women are expected to be the main 'target' for managerial behavior towards flexibility. Though based on different assumption, institutional economists (Doeringer/Piore 1971) come to similar conclusions. They point to formal structures found in many organizations and sectors which inhibit market forces. Concerning the labor market as a whole they proposed a dual labour market hypothesis. While the primary sector is characterized by stable working conditions and high union density rates and offer good jobs, career perspectives and decent incomes, the secondary sector is more likely to be located in competitive industries, offering only 'bad' jobs with low income and almost none career perspectives. With only rare exceptions, flexible and part-time jobs fall under the latter category in Austria. Although the dual-labour market hypothesis was conceptualized for the American labour market, for our purposes we can at least infer that the market mechanism play a limited role in explaining employment structures. It is rather institutions and administrative norms that influence the demand and supply of labour across sectors and occupations (Keller 2008, 289). If such norms are at work, they might also influence employers to continuing or even intensifying their 'routine' behavior in offering female workers rather than male workers part-time work irrespective of their qualification or family status. Their routine behavior is considered to derive from previous experiences and the still widespread assumption that female workers only marginally contribute to the household earning regardless whether or not there exist any male income. This assumption is supposed to be also shared by most trade union officials. Since trade unions play a crucial role in reproducing norms in the course of determining wages and working conditions, they are also assumed to influence employment flexibility or stability. In line

with institutional economists, we therefore expect a negative relationship between union strength, measured by union density, and flexible employment. With rising levels of trade union density, i.e. the proportion of employed trade union members divided by the total number of employees, the proportion of flexible employment contracts to total employment in a sector is predicted to decrease.

KEY INDICATORS FOR EMPLOYMENT FLEXIBILITY I – ATYPICAL EMPLOYMENT

In this section we address the question of whether or not the gendered segmentation of the Austrian labour market and the ‘male-breadwinner-model’ have been prevalent even in times of globalisation and current transformations towards a service and knowledge economy. Since flexible work arrangements and part-time work, in particular, provide an opportunity to combine paid labour and family oriented activities, it is primarily women who are expected to choose such forms of employment in Austria. The following figures provide first evidence to this assumption.

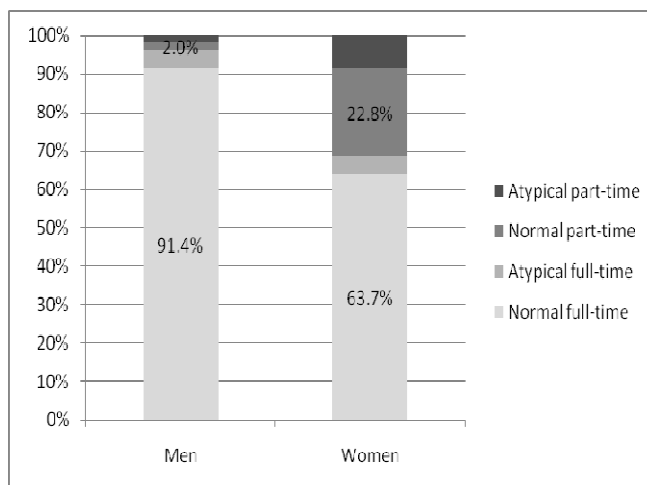


Figure 1 Distribution of employment types of mid-career workers (25-49 years), 2007

Source: Statistics Austria. Labour Force Survey 2007.

Note: Normal PT (part-time) refers to work with full social insurance and labour law coverage; atypical PT (part-time) work lacks these entitlements. The same applies to normal FT and atypical FT employment.

In contrast to men the majority of mid-career women (between 25-49 years of age) chose atypical employment relationships rather than full time work in 2007 (see figure 1).

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As discussed above, conservative welfare state-regimes are considered to particularly shield male workers in their mid-career and thereafter. This phenomenon is clearly expressed by the fact, that more than 90 per cent of mid-career male workers exhibit a standard employment relationship, while only two thirds of women in paid employment have a full-time permanent employment contract. 36 per cent of female mid-careers work part-time or in other flexible work arrangements. However, this proportion must be seen in the light of a relatively high labour force participation rate of Austrian mid-career female workers (78.1 per cent in 2007) in comparison to other industrialized countries (EU15: 72.4) (Eurostat, Labour Force Survey 2007).

The existence of children provides the most important explanation for a change in the employment status of mid-career women. With only 12 per cent of all Austrian children below the age of three who are cared for outside the family during daytime, it is mainly women who stay at home to look after them (Statistics Austria 2008). While the proportion of single women without any children in the same household who work full-time is 82 per cent in 2007, only 43 per cent of women with a partner in the same household and a child below the age of 6 is engaged in a full-time relationship (see figure 2). The proportion of part-time work to total employment of the latter group accounts for 38 per cent (6 per cent for single women without a child). In contrast, the already low proportion of male workers with a part-time employment relationship (5.6 %) further decreases in families with children regardless of their age to 4.6 per cent.

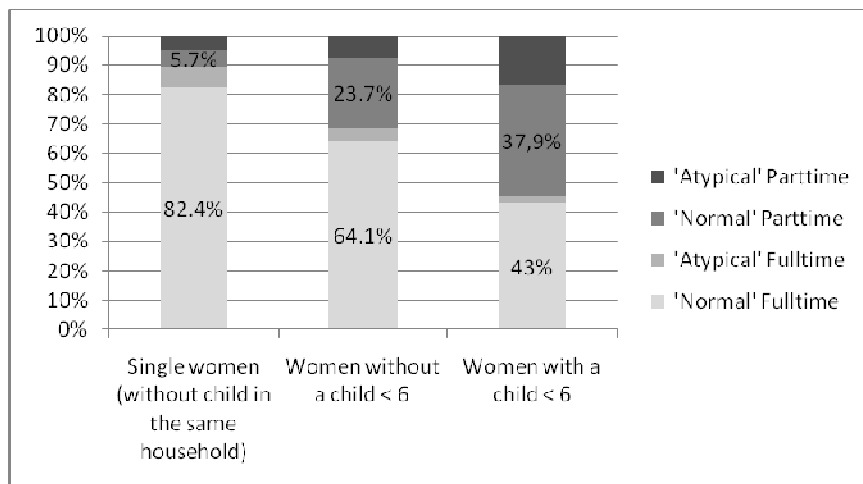


Figure 2 Distribution of employment types of mid-career women (25-49 years), 2007

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey 2007

There is also some evidence that women remain in the status of part-time workers even if their children grow up. Only 64 per cent of women with school age children (compared to 82 having no kids) return to or remain in a full-time

position. These figures provide clear evidence that it is not only still women who are in charge of child rearing and hence, reduce their working time to fulfil this task. Moreover, there are obviously routines or norms at work that induce women to continue their part-time or non employment even if they were able to work full-time.

The dominance and even intensification of the male-breadwinner model becomes more explicit when considering the changes in the employment levels of female workers over the last 12 years in Austria (see figure 3). Although the labour participation rate as well as the absolute number of women engaged in the labour market have increased over the past few years, there is a clear decline in the absolute number of women who work full-time (from 756,300 to 652,100), while part-time work has substantially grown among female workers from 316,700 to 544,900 between the years 1995 and 2007. This development can be traced back to the increase in the proportion of atypical employment to total employment in general and the fact that atypical employment has always been more prevalent among women than among men. This is again partly due to the already mentioned uneven distribution of domestic work that often induces women to reduce their working hours and hence, their available income. As a consequence women tend to become more economically dependent on their partners and/or public support.

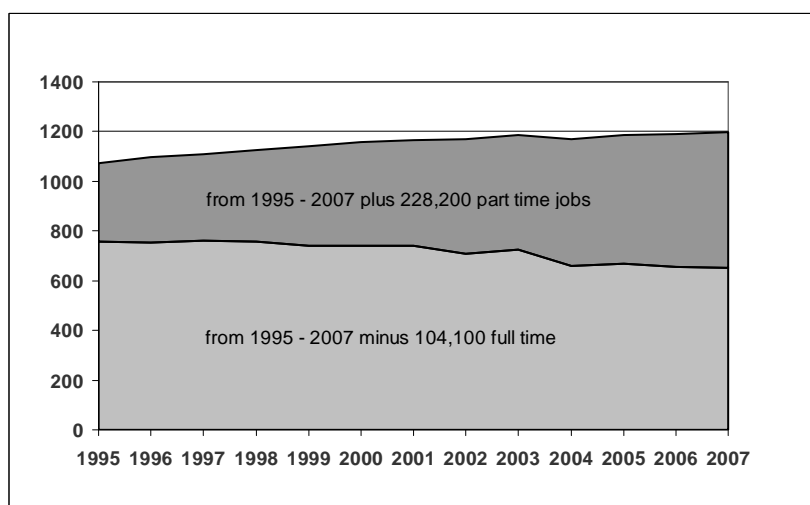


Figure 3 Part-time (< 30 hours) and full-time employment of women between 25-49 years, from 1995-2007, absolute numbers in 1,000

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey, 1995 to 2003 spring quarter, 2004 to 2007 annual average

The following table 2 provides an overview of the proportion of part-time employment to total employment of mid-career workers over the years 1995 and 2007. There is a constant and strong increase in the proportion of part-time work

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(plus 64 per cent) to total employment that can almost completely be traced back to rising levels of women working below 30 hours per week. While almost half of all employed women work part-time, this status applies to only 5.5 per cent of male workers.

Table 2 Total employment and part-time work, by sex (between 25 to 49 years)

Year	Total employment			Part time employment			Rate of Part Time Employment to total employment		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
	In 1,000			In 1,000			In %		
1995	2,465	1,392	1,073	361	44	317	14.6	3.2	29.5
1996	2,478	1,383	1,095	385	44	341	15.5	3.2	31.1
1997	2,519	1,409	1,110	397	46	351	15.7	3.3	31.6
1998	2,530	1,406	1,124	424	55	369	16.8	3.9	32.8
1999	2,543	1,403	1,140	454	52	401	17.8	3.7	35.2
2000	2,563	1,405	1,157	466	50	416	18.2	3.6	36.0
2001	2,583	1,416	1,167	474	49	425	18.4	3.5	36.4
2002	2,534	1,363	1,171	521	58	463	20.5	4.3	39.5
2003	2,589	1,402	1,187	517	54	463	20.0	3.9	39.0
2004	2,521	1,353	1,168	571	60	510	22.6	4.4	43.7
2005	2,550	1,363	1,187	591	70	521	23.2	5.1	43.9
2006	2,555	1,364	1,191	614	80	534	24.0	5.9	44.8
2007	2,598	1,401	1,197	622	77	545	23.9	5.5	45.5

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey, 1995 to 2003 spring quarter, 2004 to 2007 annual average

Note: Part-time employment includes employment below 30 hours/week,

KEY INDICATORS FOR EMPLOYMENT FLEXIBILITY II – EMPLOYMENT TENURE, TIME SINCE LAST JOB

Employment Tenure

Since data on the composition of the workforce with regard to the amount of standard- and non-standard-employment contracts do not contain any information on their duration, we drew on data about the employment tenure as well as about ‘the time elapsed since last job’ to approach the dynamic of the labour market. Figure 4 shows that the level of the employment tenure of mid-age workers (25 – 49 years) has decreased from 9.9 to 9.4 years over the last 12 years in Austria. This indicates that flexibility across all industries has increased for both sexes, though from different starting points. Female workers have always exhibited lower average employment tenure than men. However, despite this their average employment tenure decreased by 7 per cent to 8.5 years, while those of male workers exhibited only a decline by 3 per cent to 10.2 years.

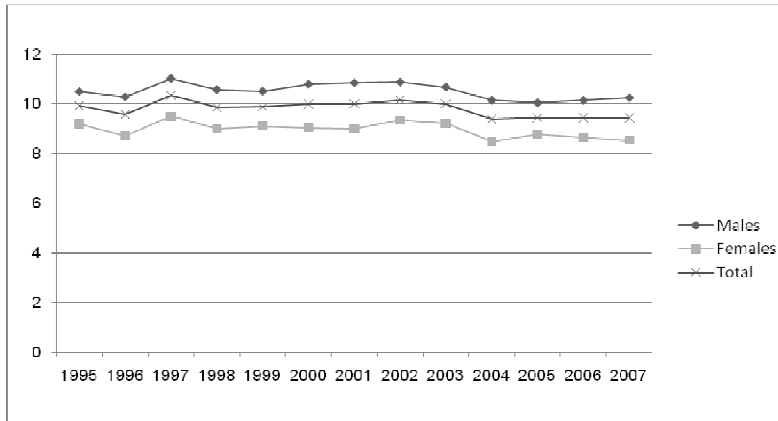


Figure 4 Average employment tenure over time in Austria in years, by sex

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey, 1995 to 2003 spring quarter, 2004 to 2007 annual average

The development in overall employment tenure in Austria is in line with most industrialized countries.

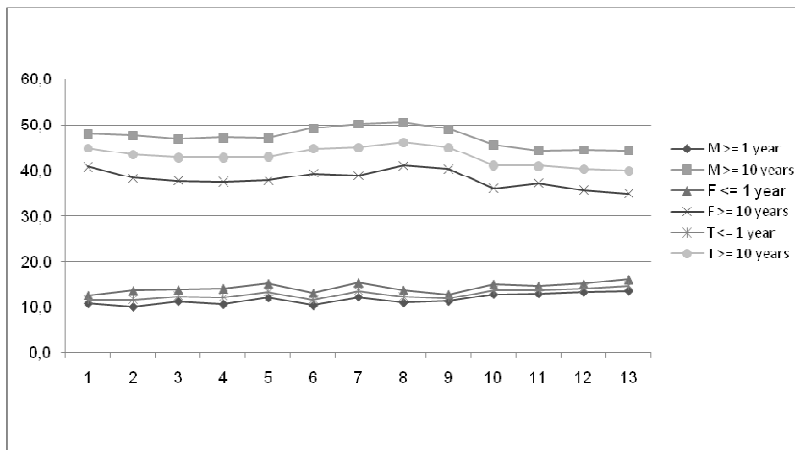


Figure 5 Percentage of mid-career workers (25-49 years) with short and long term employment tenure, 1995-2007

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey, 1995 to 2003 spring quarter, 2004 to 2007 annual average

According to Auer/Cazes (2000, 381), the average tenure in selected European Union countries, the United States and Japan in 1998 was 10.5 years. Austria exhibited average employment tenure of 10.8 years. Since average figures do not mirror the underlying structure of a phenomenon, we also investigated the

distribution of employment tenure by class of tenure. In their study Auer/Cazes, for instance, found clear evidence for cross-country differences, especially at the two extremes (under 1 year; 10 years and over).

However, these aggregate trends do not reflect any changes in the demographic composition of the workforce. Young workers, for instance, are supposed to exhibit shorter average tenures of employment not only because of their recent job entrance, but also because they change jobs more often to accumulate different experiences or they are targets for dismissals (Auer/Cazes 2000, 386). However, figure 6 giving an overview of the age distribution clearly show that all age groups except persons 65 years and older have faced similar changes, i.e. a moderate aggregate decline in average employment tenure over the last 12 years in Austria (1995-2007).

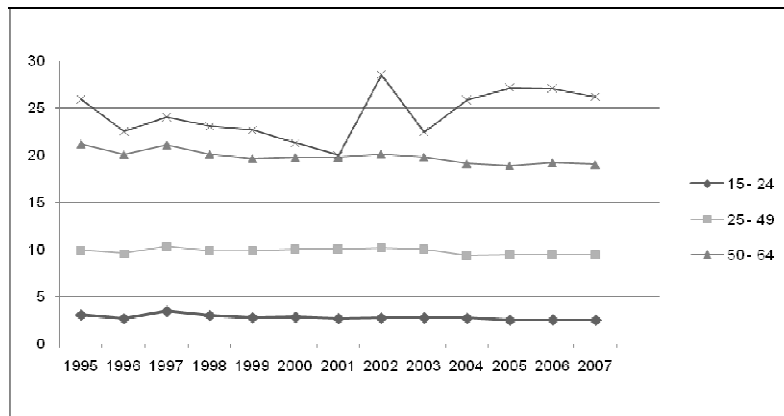


Figure 6 Average employment tenure over time in Austria, by age, 1995-2007

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey, 1995 to 2003 spring quarter, 2004 to 2007 annual average

The results for Austria are in line with data presented by Auer/Cazes (2000, 388) showing that the employment tenure of young workers (age group 15-24) has declined in all the countries considered except Portugal. However, the authors do not interpret this phenomenon as a generalized increase in job instability for young workers. Rather they characterize this group as ‘temporary outsiders’ to the stable segment of the labour market, even though their stay on the outside may be prolonged (ibid., 389).

Time since last job

Apart from employment tenures we suggest the indicator ‘time since last job’ in order to capture the alleged general increase in the dynamic of the labour market and to answer the question if these processes affect various groups differently. The mean time elapsed since ceasing last job and its development over time provides insights into the external flexibility of the labour market. A short time since last job might be an indicator for both, the mobility of the labour

force as well as the flexibility on the employers' side. A comparison between mid-age (25 - 49 years) Austrian men and women reveals that the mean time women stay out of the labour force has strongly declined from 9.3 years in 1995 (or 9.8 years in 2000) to 6.7 years in 2007 while there have been only marginal changes for men. Women seem to return earlier to paid employment after childbirth, however, – as has already been discussed above – only on a part-time engagement.

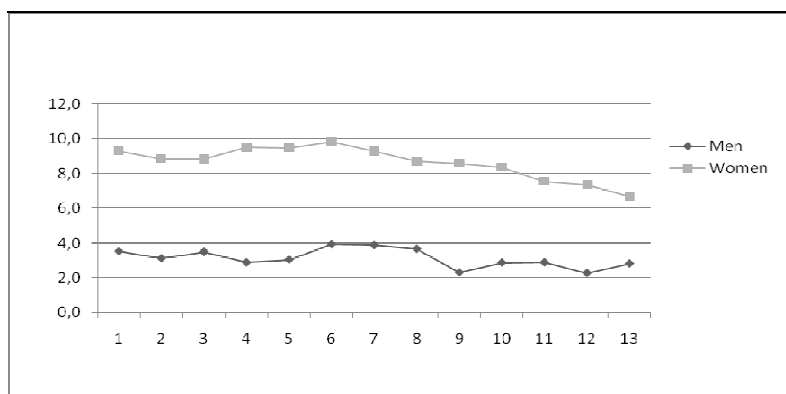


Figure 7 Time since last job, by sex (between 25 and 49 years) from 1995-2007

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey, 1995 to 2003 spring quarter, 2004 to 2007 annual average

This following figure provides additional evidence to the above assumption. While the employment rate of women has continuously increased over the last thirty-six years (since 1971), the most significant rise has been faced by the age groups 35-39 and 40-44 (see figure 8).

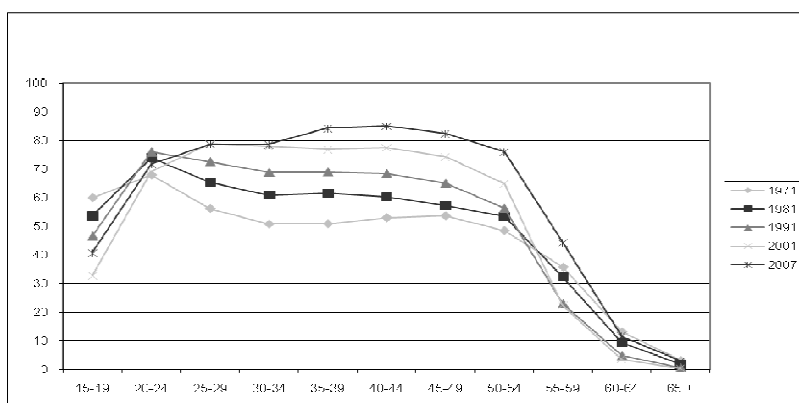


Figure 8 Employment rates of women, by age groups, by selected years

Source: Statistics Austria 1971 – 2001 Census; 2007 Labour Force Survey

DEMAND-SIDE EXPLANATIONS FOR GENDER DIFFERENCES CONCERNING FLEXIBILITY

In addressing the question of why women and men are differently affected by flexible employment conditions, we suggested to also consider the demand side of the labour market. As Preston (1999, 611) states in her historical account of occupational gender segregation, female and male workers concentrate in different occupations and also sectors of the economy. Moreover, the majority of women is expected to face less favorable working conditions than men due to discriminatory behaviour of employers as well as institutional path dependence, including trade union routines. In this regard, part-time employment is not only considered to provide (mostly female) workers with a possibility to reconcile work and family life. Part-time work also enables employers to reduce their overall personnel costs (Mühlberger 2000). If the above theses turn out to be true, the majority of women (with or without a child) should be found in those sectors of the economy that already exhibit a large degree of part-time work. Table 3 clearly confirms this relationship. Pearson’s correlation between the proportion of part-time in a sector and the proportion of women to the total number of employees in a sector is highly significant.

Table 3 Correlation between the proportion of part-time work per sector and the proportion of women/sector (2007)

		Proportion of women/sector	Proportion of part-time/sector
Proportion of part-time work/sector	Pearson’s Correlation	1,000	,930**
	N	11	11
Proportion of women/sector	Pearson’s Correlation	,930**	1,000
	N	11	11

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey 2007

*Note:*** $p \leq 0,01$

While the industrial sector is still providing relatively secure working conditions, i.e. permanent, full-time employment contracts, the services are characterized by a high degree of flexibility. In line with our assumptions, female workers can primarily be found in the latter, such as in wholesale and retail trade, human health and social work activities and personal services (see table 4). As regards trade union behavior, we assumed a high union density to correspond with low rates of part-time work and vice versa. This prediction turned out to be correct (Pearson’s correlation: $-.682$), however, it did not reach statistical significance (0.09).

Table 4 Proportion of part-time work and female workers in different sectors of the economy (Nace), in percent (2007)

Sector	Proportion of part-time work*	Proportion of women	Proportion of women with child <15	Net trade union density
Manufacturing	8.6	26.4	31.8	56.50**
Construction	6.4	12.2	37.7	47.90**
Wholesale and retail trade	23.5	54.6	36.0	14.70**
Accommodation	22.6	66.6	32.6	22.1***
Transport	10.4	26.9	31.5	60.3**
Financial services	16.5	48.4	30.8	14.5**
Real estate activities	26.4	49.2	33.1	-
Public administration	14.0	42.7	30.6	64.9****
Education	25.5	71.3	34.5	-
Human health and social work	29.5	76.3	33.6	-
Other Service Activities	25.6	57.0	33.1	-

Source: Statistics Austria, Labour Force Survey 2007

Note:

* part-time work < 30 hours

** Data from 1997 (Ebbinghaus/ Visser 2000)

*** Density of the GGA (blue collar workers union of hotels and restaurants) (Traxler *et al.* 2008)

**** Unweighted average of net densities of GÖD (union of federal and provincial public services) and GGB (union of municipal and local public services)

In order to ascertain the net effect of personal and sector-related characteristics on the probability to work part-time or full-time, we conducted a logistic regression as the appropriate statistical procedure because the dependent variable took a dichotomous form (part-time/ full-time work). Table 5 reports the results. In respect of personal characteristics, it can be seen that gender, children and education influences the likelihood to work part-time. In particular, women face 11 times higher likelihood to work part-time than men. Children also increase the odds of working part-time. The likelihood to work part-time is somewhat higher for women with small children than with school age children compared to women without any children. This may be due to the perception that children become less dependent during the school age years thus facilitating women's greater participation in paid employment activity (Walsh 1999, 197). Education increases the chance to work full-time by 82 per cent (apprenticeship) and by 60

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per cent (university degree) compared to compulsory school as highest level of education.

Table 5 Estimates for the probability of working part-time or full-time

Variable	β Estimates	Odds Ratio
<i>Personal</i>		
Sex	2.422**	11.263
Children (0-6)	1.168**	3.216
Children (6-15)	.778**	2.176
Education (apprenticeship)	-.201*	.818
Education (A-levels)	-.144	.866
Education (university)	-.520**	.595
<i>Sector-related</i>		
Services sector	.623**	1.865
N	9613	
-2LL	6602.297	
Prediction Success (%)	29.6	

Note:

* $p \leq 0,05$, ** $p \leq 0,01$

Concerning the question whether or not the economic sector in which one works influences the probability to work part-time, we included a dichotomous variable into our model, differentiating between the secondary sector (here: industry and construction) and the services sector. In accordance with our prediction the likelihood to work part-time increases when crossing sector lines from production to the services sector by 187 per cent. Since the majority of women work in the services sector, their ‘decision’ to work part-time at least can be partly attributed to the demand side of the labour market. Hence, it is not only personal characteristics that induce women to choose part-time work rather than full-time employment, but also sector specific institutional routines that influence whether or not full-time work is an available option. In total, the model predicts about 30 per cent of the variation of the dependent variable.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that employment flexibility is still a female phenomenon in Austria. Despite their rising labour force participation, the absolute number as well the proportion of women in part-time employment relationships have grown over the last 12 years. Almost 36 per cent of all employed women between 25 and 49 years of age work part-time or in other flexible work arrangements, while 90 per cent of male workers are engaged on a full-time, permanent employment

relationship. In this respect, the 'male breadwinner model' can be regarded as still intact, inducing women to cease paid employment or to reduce their working hours after child-birth. However, although their average employment tenure decreased to an average of 8.5 years in 2007, there is some evidence that women tend to return earlier to paid work after childbirth. The mean time women stay out of the labour force declined from 9.3 years in 1995 to 6.7 years in 2007, suggesting that women might intend to stay employable or at least need the income. However, apart from personal characteristics, such as sex, education and children, we suggested to also take account of the demand side of the labour market. The socioeconomic transfer towards services, in particular, has changed the employment structure as a whole. The services sector exhibits a much higher degree of flexible work arrangements than production. Since women can primarily be found in services, such as retail trade, health care and personal services, their likelihood of working part-time increases independently of personal characteristics.

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