

Track #9: Kritik der Arbeit

Alternative: Track #8: Verteilungsfragen im Kapitalismus

Anmerkung: Der Beitrag wird in Deutsch verfasst und gehalten. Der Abstract ist jedoch auf Englisch, weil der geplante Beitrag auf meiner Masterarbeit basiert, die ich gerade auf Englisch schreibe.

Working time and gender equity in Austria

Even in the year 2015 important differences between men and women persist in Austria and everywhere else around the globe. One area where gender differences become obvious is in the field of working time. Working time distribution between men and women is still very unequal. Women work fewer hours in paid employment than men do. A large proportion of female employees work part-time, in order to be able to reconcile family and work. Conversely, men usually work full-time and work more overtime hours than female employees do. When taking a closer look at unpaid work, such as care work and household activities it becomes obvious that women do a larger proportion of it than men do. Even though many women have entered the labour market in the last fifty years, there has been little change regarding the fathers' allocation of time between paid employment and work at home. Austria still adheres to the male breadwinner model, which poses several problems. First, this model reproduces the existing gender roles. Men are supposed to earn the family income. Women should stay home and care for the children. It is difficult to achieve gender equality when the political system encourages the male breadwinner model. For instance with generous and long maternity leaves, mothers are encouraged to withdraw from the labor market. Second, the current welfare state is in crisis owing to the fact that nowadays reality is substantially different from the times when the welfare state was initially created. It became more difficult to earn enough income to sustain the whole family; divorce rates have been going up, the occurrence of the "ideal" family consisting of father, mothers and children is declining, etc.

In order to strive for more gender equity, it is of great significance to reorganize the working sphere. Working hours in paid and unpaid work should be distributed more equally between the genders.

The trick is to imagine a social world in which citizens' lives integrate wage earning, caregiving, community activism, political participation, and involvement in the associational life of civil society—while also leaving time for some fun. This world is not likely to come into being in

the immediate future, but it is the only imaginable postindustrial world that promises true gender equity. And unless we are guided by this vision now, we will never get any closer to achieving it (Fraser 1997:62)

To create a world where gender plays no role, it is essential to understand the mechanisms that determine the gender-specific differences. This paper deals with the issue in the Austrian context and focuses on gender equity and gender-specific differences in working time. The paper will consist of a detailed description of the gender-specific differences concerning working time and a policy analysis regarding the relevant areas with the help of the transformative approach by Nancy Fraser. She proposes seven normative principles and declares that the full meaning of gender equity can only be realized when the following seven principles are fulfilled:

1. The Antipoverty Principle
2. The Antiexploitation Principle
3. The Income-Equality Principle
4. The Leisure-Time-Equality Principle
5. The Equality-of-Respect Principle
6. The Antimarginalization Principle
7. The Antiaandrocentrism Principle

In the end, I hope to be able to present some policy recommendations with the insights gained through the analysis.