

Abstract

How the Quality of Long-Term Care Services Impacts Caring Relatives' Quality of Life in Austria

Lisa Hanzl, May 2020

This work is motivated by the increasing importance of care work in modern, aging societies. By the year 2030, roughly 76,000 more formal care workers would be necessary to cover the needs of care receivers in Austria; 42,000 solely due to the retirement of care workers (Rappold and Juraszovich, 2019, p.5). This is only one of the reasons why informal care becomes more and more important. Caring relatives are also becoming a group of increasing political importance as the government tries to shift some of the care responsibility to family members and relatives (e.g. the federal state "Burgenland" employed informal care takers as public employees (Land Burgenland and FH Burgenland, 2018)). Hence, caring relatives and their well-being are a pressing topic.

Consequently, in this work I aim to investigate the connection between the quality of long-term care (LTC) services and the quality of life of informal caregivers. Previous literature has found a positive link between the availability of such services and well-being of caring relatives (Wagner and Brandt, 2015; van den Broek and Grundy, 2018; Wagner and Brandt, 2018). To extend this field of research, this work has the objective to investigate how the *quality* of such services influences said well-being of informal caregivers. This issue will be the centre of this research paper. Formulating the problem at hand leads to the following research questions: (1) What is the link between the quality of long-term care (LTC) services in Austria and the quality of life of informal caregivers? (2) How does the quality of care services influence caring relatives? Through which dimensions does this affect informal carers, i.e. in terms of physical, psychological and social well-being? And which areas of life are affected (e.g. domestic, social and work life)?

As this topic is very nuanced and its implications cannot solely be measured in numbers, I will use a mixed methods approach. For the quantitative part the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) will be used to conduct a regression analysis, using an ordered logistic regression model. The qualitative part of this work is split into two major sections. First, the capabilities approach coined by Sen and Nussbaum (Sen, 1985, 1993, 1999; Nussbaum, 2001) is used to create a list of capabilities with specific regards to the topic of care work. The creation of this capability list will be done using a framework that Robeyns (2003) outlined. Secondly, an online questionnaire will be designed based on this list, which aims to survey informal caregivers all over Austria. A qualitative analysis will be performed on the basis of these findings.

The quality of care services is expected to have a positive effect on informal caregivers' well-being. If this holds true, it underlines the need of a strong and high quality (public) care sector.

References

- L. Burgenland and F. Burgenland. *Zukunftsplan Pflege: Bedarfs- und Entwicklungsplanung 2018 - 2030*. Land Burgenland, 2018.
- M. C. Nussbaum. *Women and human development: The capabilities approach*, volume 3. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- E. Rappold and B. Juraszovich. *Pflegepersonal-Bedarfsprognose für Österreich*. Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales, Gesundheit und Konsumentenschutz, Wien, 2019.
- I. Robeyns. Sen's capability approach and gender inequality: selecting relevant capabilities. *Feminist economics*, 9(2-3):61–92, 2003.
- A. Sen. *Commodities and capabilities*. Professor Dr. P. Hennipman lectures in economics. North-Holland Publ. Co, Amsterdam, 1985. ISBN 0444877304. URL <https://permalink.obvsg.at/wuw/AC02159099>.
- A. Sen. Capability and well-being. In *The quality of life*, pages 30–53. Sen, Amartya and Nussbaum, Martha, 1993.
- A. Sen. Commodities and capabilities. *OUP Catalogue*, 1999. 12
- T. van den Broek and E. Grundy. Does long-term care coverage shape the impact of informal care-giving on quality of life? a difference-in-difference approach. *Ageing & Society*, pages 1–18, 2018.
- M. Wagner and M. Brandt. Loneliness among informal caregivers aged 50+ in Europe. *Ageing in Europe: Supporting policies for an inclusive society*, page 179, 2015.
- M. Wagner and M. Brandt. Long-term care provision and the well-being of spousal care-givers: an analysis of 138 european regions. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 73(4): e24–e34, 2018.