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# **The never-ending story of marketization!? Care as a fictitious commodity and points of resistance**



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# Outline

- 1. Care, care regimes and the new story of marketization**
- 2. The never-ending story of marketization!?**
  - 2.1. 24h-care and care agencies**
  - 2.2. Residential care communities**
- 3. Care as a fictitious commodity and points of resistance**

# 1. Care, care regimes and the new story of marketization

## Care

- selfcare and care for others
- activities and relations facing the contingency, precariousness and vulnerability of life
- safeguarding life and serving livelihood
- care as a fundament of individual and societal life contradictory to capitalist principles

## Care regimes

- normative, institutional, discursive, practical organization of paid and unpaid care and care work in societies
- interrelated with employment, welfare, gender, migration ... regimes

# 1. Care, care regimes and the new story of marketization

## Care regimes are ...

- providing care and care work by the corporate market/private sector, state, third sector, private household and social networks
- regulating paid, unpaid and volunteer care work in ‘private’ and ‘public’ spheres
- basing on and building up divisions of labor in employment, welfare, gender, migration ... regimes
- influenced by and referring on different “institutional logics” (Thornton et al.) by orienting on belongings of the market, corporation, profession, state, family, community, religion ...
- embedded in supra-, inter-, trans- and national policies and politics and differing between societies

# 1. Care, care regimes and the new story of marketization

**A new stage of capitalist socialization (Vergesellschaftung) of the social reproduction and care by**

- industrialization and marketization of social reproduction and care (surrogacy, social freezing and other reproduction technologies, digitalization and robotics, wellness industries ...) by the corporate market/private sector, science (r&d), state
- economic shift, (quasi-)marketization and new forms of governance in the state and third sector (from wel- to workfare, from social redistribution to social investment ...)
- commodification/decommodification of care and care and reconfiguration of paid, unpaid and volunteer work in the corporate market/private sector, state, third sector, private household and social networks (professionalization, academization, managerialization, precarization)
- transnationalization of labor, work and politics (transnational actors, agendas, regulations ...)

# 1. Care, care regimes and the new story of marketization

... and interrelated in the sense of “movement/countermovement” (Polanyi) with

- care protests – in the Global North after the 2008-crisis in the context of the austerity schemes – as reaction on the crisis of reproduction in the former well situated welfare states (labor, social, human rights; local/national, trans-, inter-, supranational)
- fundamental criticism of capitalism, discussions about alternatives modes of living and the re-discovering of questions of social justice and solidarity
- new forms of civil society-engagement, volunteer work, caring communities and charity, but also new forms of commodification like “charity economy” (Kessler)

## 2. The never-ending story of marketization!?

### 24h-care and care agencies:

- care as a business case
- transnational commodification of labor and new forms of marketization of care

### Residential care communities:

- civil society initiated care arrangements
- new pathways in the discussion on the welfare state, care provision and division of labor

### “Movement/Countermovement” (Polanyi):

- two cases of commodification (and decommodification) of care work and questions of justice

## 2.1. 24h-care and care agencies

**24h-care:** commodification in form of a worldwide middle class “migrant-in-a-family-care”-arrangement (Bettio et al.), usually as live-in of the female migrant care giver in the household of the care receiver

**care agency:** regional, national or transnational corporate market/private sector or third sector, for profit or non profit care provider specialized on the recruitment of care or domestic workers and offering domestic care and work

**care provision basing on inter- and transnational migration of female workforce:** care arrangements in the Global North and Western Europe at cost of care provision in the Global South and Eastern Europe; extremely differing forms of organization between domestic violence on the one hand and professionalization on the other hand

Fotos: homepage of the care agency



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## 2.1. 24h-care and care agencies

### 24h-care (Austria)

- legalized form of paid domestic care by freelancer/self-employed in form of live-in
- facing and bridging care gaps (eroding gender, inter-generational, family arrangements and lacking welfare state care provision) at low cost
- basing on shuttle migration of female care workers between Eastern Europe and Austria
- undermining employment standards in Austria and extending care gaps in the rudimentary East European welfare states
- accepted or legitimized, criticized or scandalized arrangement

### Offers of care agencies (Vienna)

- female, East European care worker-recruitment
- legal employment conditions and controlled employment standards
- professionalism, competence, certified qualification, further education and training, language competence
- availability, flexibility, financial feasibility, care packages tailor-made to clients' needs
- substitution of family members/relatives
- empathy, sensitiveness, emotion, tender and loving care

## 2.2. Residential care communities

**care arrangements:** organizing care crossing the boarder of 'public' and 'private' care

**initiatives:** founded by family members responding to the daily experienced excessive demands on the one hand and gaps in care provision in the 'private' sphere and by the welfare state on the other hand

**intention:** professional support in small groups with qualified staff and simultaneous participation of family members

**working conditions:** precarious work meeting rather the professional ambitions of care workers than their interests in adequate employment conditions



## 2.2. Residential care communities

### Employment in care communities

- professional care support in small groups
- less time pressure and more flexibility to meet the needs of the care receivers
- allowing the employees to comply better with their professional demands
- slightly better payment
- greater satisfaction in spite of still being in precarious work
- more possibility of participation in the every day organization of work

### Offers of care communities (Germany)

- new forms of participation of member of the family
- ‘private’ and ‘family’ atmosphere in small groups
- the possibility to respond more flexible to the care receivers’ needs
- physical and mental relief of the members of the family
- higher satisfaction of the care receivers and the family members

### 3. Care as a fictitious commodity and points of resistance

- care as a Polanyian „fictitious commodity“: factor of production and element never intended to be marketized and sold
- destruction by commodification of labor and care in the field of care work?
  - fundamental contradiction between capitalist socialization and caring as holistic concept safeguarding life and serving livelihood
  - informalization versus formalization, familialization versus professionalization, new hybrid form of the ‚private‘ and the ‚public‘

### 3. Care as a fictitious commodity and points of resistance

- decent care by precarious work?
  - professional and/versus precarious work
  - global pitting of precarities: self care and care for others of the care receivers at cost of self care and care for others of the care givers
- aspects of movement/countermovement
  - criticism versus legitimation of every day practice
  - criticism of every day practice and the societal lack of care provision
  - local, transnational and global perspectives, criticism and protest

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Empirical projects:

Research training project led by Brigitte Aulenbacher and Maria Dammayr: "Care als Geschäft. Transnationale Arbeitsvermittlung in der 24-Stunden-Betreuung"/Care as business. Transnational recruitment in 24-hour care, term: 03/2016-02/2017, at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz, Austria

Project "Geschlechtergerechte Care-Arrangements? Studie zur Neuverteilung von formeller, informeller sowie professioneller und semi-professioneller Pflegeaufgaben/Gender-equitable care arrangements? Study on the redistribution of formal, informal, professional and semi-professional care work, term: 2013-2015, at the University of Paderborn, led by Birgit Riegraf and Romy Reimer