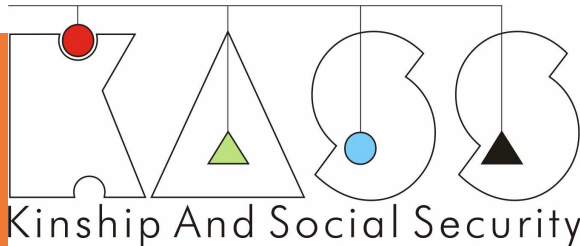




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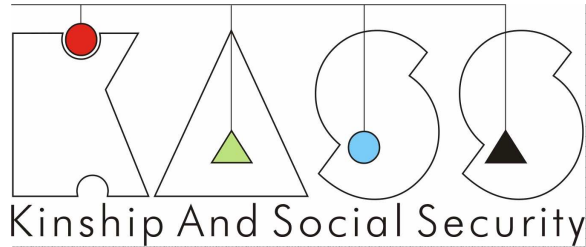


# Kinship and Social Security in Austria

**A social history for the 20th century**

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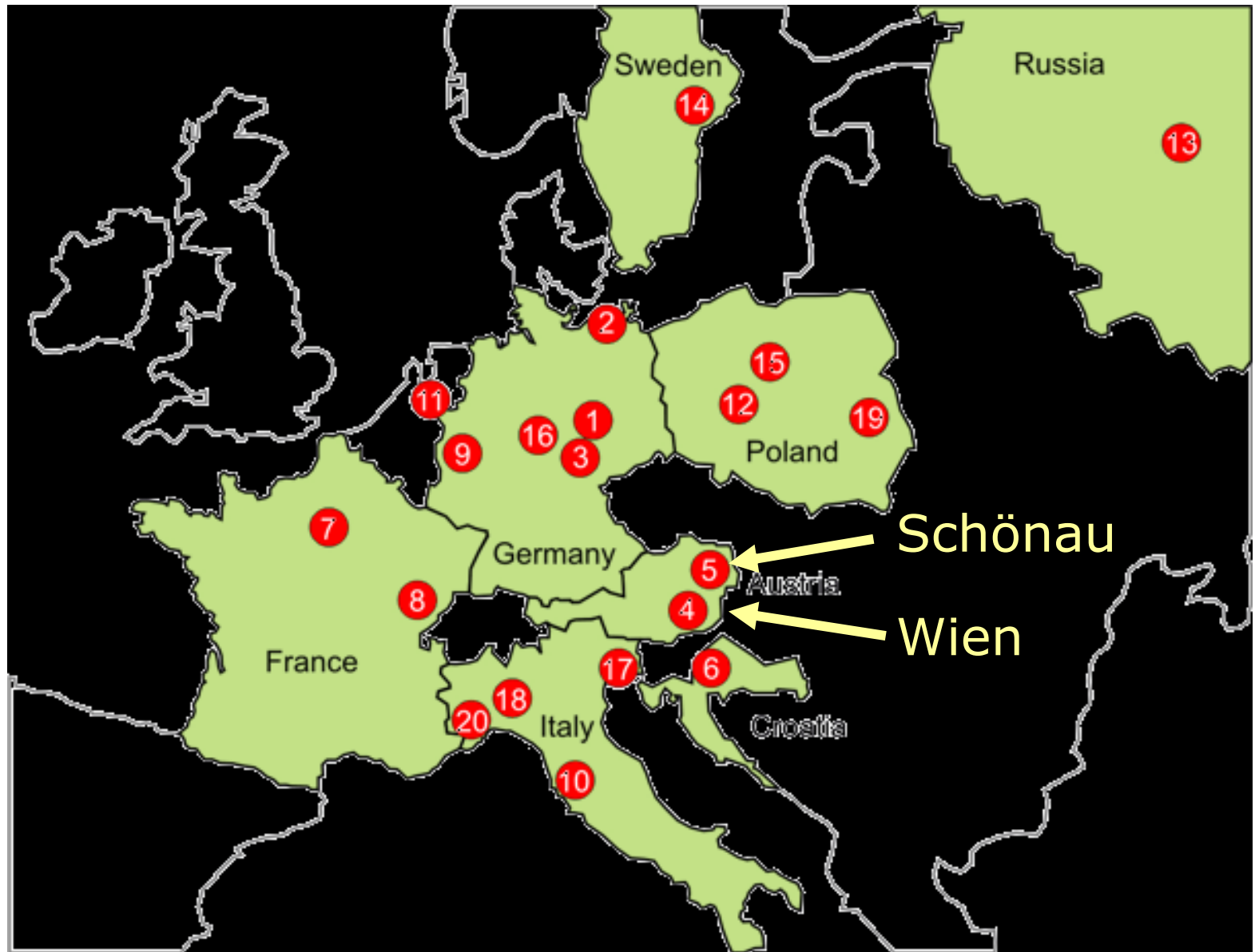
VID-Kolloqium – Vienna, June 4, 2008



## Project outline

- Interdisciplinary EU-project in 8 European countries.
- **Aim:** investigating the role of family networks as sources of security and mutual assistance
- **Outline:** Project combines
  - historical-sociological analysis for the 20th century
  - New empirical findings from ethnographic fieldwork at 19 sites in 8 countries
  - Current trends of KASS can only be understood in the broader context of history

# Participating countries



# Contents of the historical- sociological analysis

- **Cultural Background**
  - Development of Gender relations
  - ... Inter-generational relations
  - ... Family forms
- **Structural Background**
  - Availability and stability of family and kin
  - Life course and intergenerational relations
- **Institutional Background**
  - Legal background for family relations (1811-2001)
  - The development of inheritance law
- **Chronology of the Austrian Welfare State –  
Effects on the social security network of family and kin**

# Chronology of Welfare Policy from 1850-2005

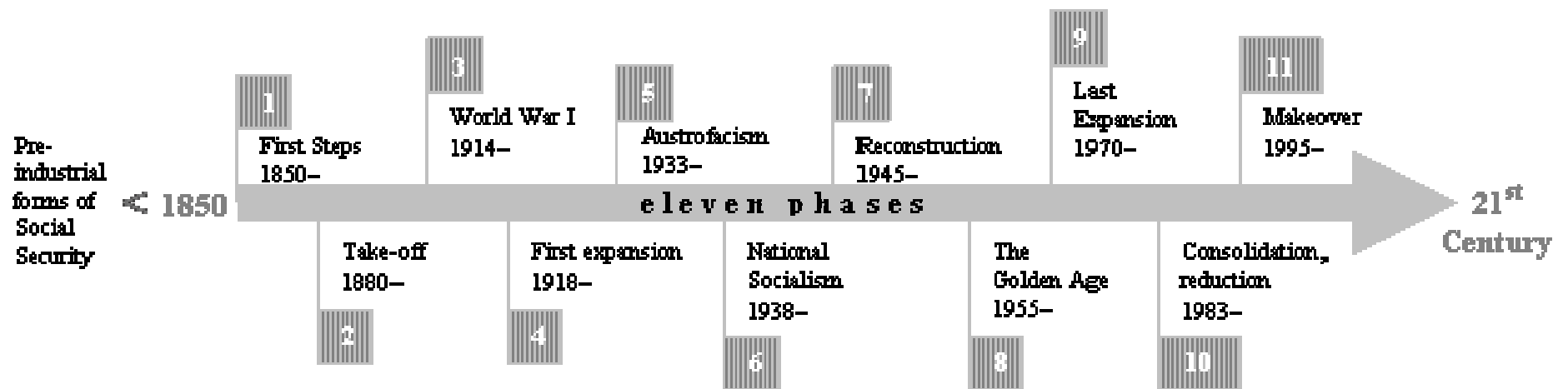


Figure: Chronology of the welfare state - Eleven phases

Source: ÖIF

# Dawn of the welfare state (1850-1880)

- Reichsgemeindegesetz (1862) and Reichsheimatgesetz (1863) for the first time imposed upon the municipality the obligation to provide poor relief to people in distress
- organised along the line of subsidiarity
- not directed to provide a substitute for family and kin support



## Take off phase of the Welfare State – developments until end of World War 1 (1880-1918)

- Introduction of accident insurance (1887) and obligatory health insurance (1888) along the compulsory insurance principle with linkage to gainful employment
- state provided protection against the risk of accident and illness for parts of the population regardless whether people could draw on family or kinship resources
- nevertheless family and kin resources still remained centrally important



# First expansion of the welfare state (1918-1933)

- Expansion of welfare benefits at a rapid pace
  - extension of risk coverage to unemployment,
  - inclusion of family members in health insurance,
  - Social housing
- Important steps to relieve family and kin as key provider of social security
- Advance in the crowding-out effect of the family
- Universal relief was still far away



- During WWI more women in labour force
- Traditional gender patterns “returned” after the war
  - no right for paid work for married women
  - normative request to take better care of children (courses for working mothers)
- Poor couples: female health risk due to abortion

# Sociopolitical measures during Austrofascism and National Socialism (1933-1945)




- Austrofascist regime (1933-1938) massively cut benefits.
- Crowding-in of family to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the state from already established benefits



- National Socialists aimed to improve social policy measures to boost productivity
- short term relief for families until the war
- During World War II, social policy measures were markedly curtailed. Family increasingly suffered from the consequences of war.



# Reconstruction and Golden Age of the Welfare State (1945-1983)

- 
- Since the 50s, the expansion of the welfare state is characterising all relevant sectors.
  - With General Social Insurance Act in 1955, all gainfully employed persons as well as many family members without insurance coverage were encompassed into the system of social security.
  - possibility at a structural level to increasingly „crowd out“ the family from the provision of social protection
  - Family continued to undertake a key role when it came to minimum protection and remained chiefly responsible for child and old age care
    - Social insurance measures continued to be tied to gainful employment
    - System of status-tied and status-preserving remained intact as well as the principle of subsidiarity.

- Fascist / National Socialist youth groups passively undermined father's authority image
  - Absent fathers and their (sometimes difficult) return into the family
- Intergenerational relations: The questioning of parents' authority

# Consolidation and makeover of the welfare state (1983-today)

- Welfare state was confronted with the stark dilemma of having to cope growing problems with declining resources
- Cut of benefits for the first time since World War II.
- New trend increasingly cuts into the dominance of risk coverage traditionally provided by the state and questions the status-securing principle of social welfare measures.
- Development aims at individualisation and privatisation of social security with the conscious intention to strengthen the crowding-in of the family.



## Who helps in minor and major emergencies?

- Majce 1998: Example minor emergencies
  - *“looking after the home when I am on vacation”*
  - *“Looking after my child for an afternoon”*
  - *“Up and on run an errand”*
    - » 1. Mother (40%)
    - » 2. Sister (30%)
    - » 3. Female friend (29%)
    - » 4. Daughter (29%)
    - » 5. Son (28%)
    - » 6. Father (26%)

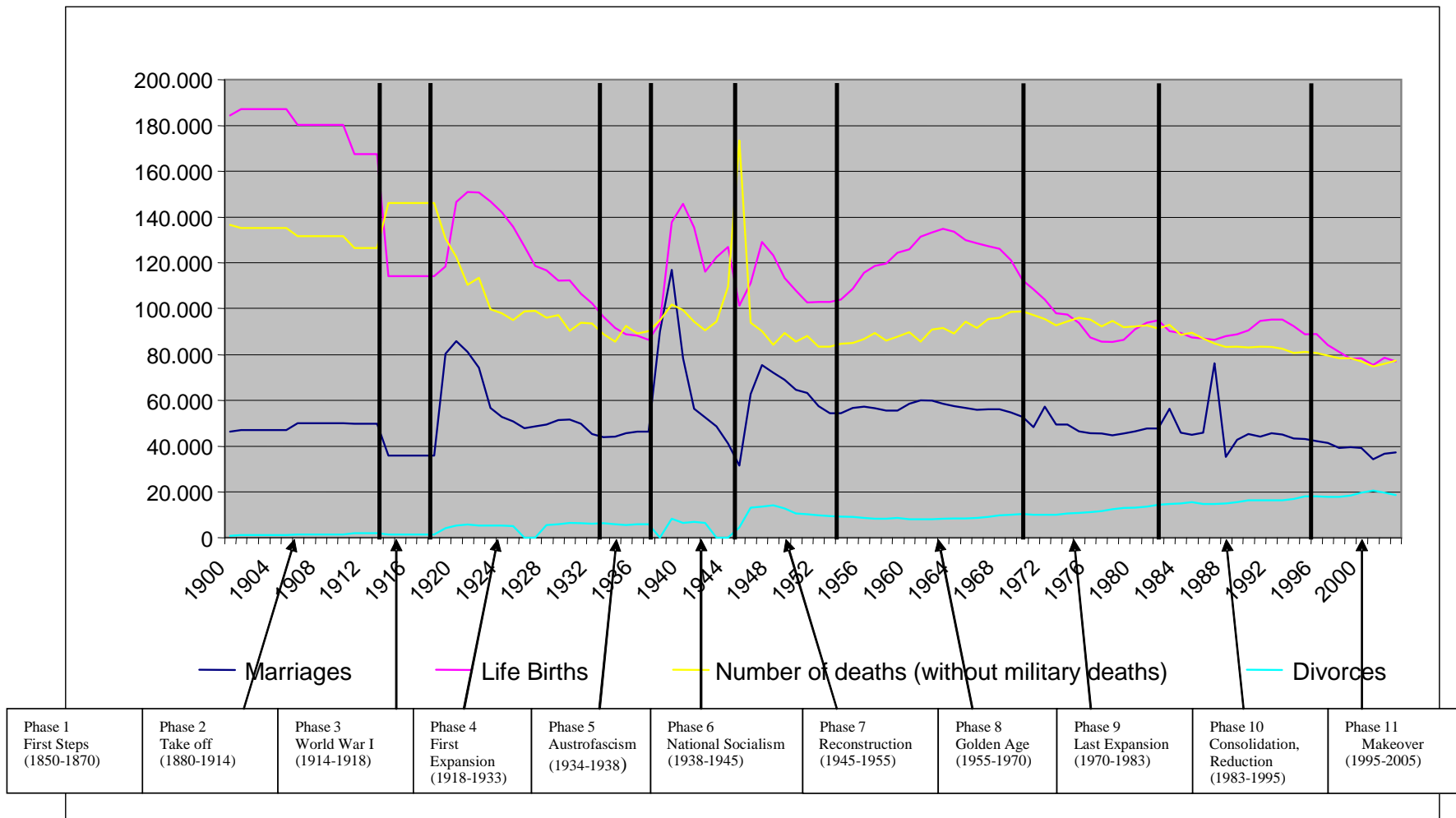
Source: Majce 1998, p.5

- support mainly given by females (also received!)
- the mother as the central figure (except financial issues)
- Help mostly granted from elder to younger generation

## Who cares for elder people?

- PPA-study (Gisser 2001, p. 46):
  - “If one of my parents needed help, I would ask them to live with me” 68% agree
  - “I would like to live my old parents with me” 41% agree
  - aspect of actual need seems decisive
- ISSP 2002
  - “Adult children should care for old parents”  
lowest agreement in Austria (28% reject; in Russia only 5%; Italy 15% )
  - rather high rejection *a priori*
- Microcensus 2002
  - 55% of those receiving help live under one roof with care provider
  - *de facto* rather high support
  - **If in need, the elder generation can count on the younger’s help**

# Structural Background – Development of Social Security Policy



# Conclusions

- For the period until the end of World War II family and kin networks are of central importance to provide primary support in critical situations such as accidents, illness, unemployment, and age.
- Family and kinship structures traditionally had only limited capacities to handle social risks – key guarantors for at least minimum social protection in the first half of 20th century.
- In the second half of the 20th century the key role of providing social security shifted from family to the state.

## Conclusions

- Towards the end of the 20th century support and services within families are usually passed on from the older to the younger generation.
- Inter-generational social cohesion is very strong. The older generation still can rely on their childrens' support, if they need help.

# Conclusions

- Nevertheless, family and kin were not completely detached from providing at least minimum protection according to the principle of subsidiarity of state assistance.
- The general enhancement of economy and welfare in the second half of the 20th century availed family and kinship relations – especially those between close kin, to become more emotional than it had been the case until the 1950s.
- The „end of the family“ is neither an accurate retrospect for the 20th nor a truthful prediction for the 21st century.

