

From parenting leave to care leaves
for the lifecourse:
Recent developments in care leave
policies and possible future
developments

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- @ London Institute of Education since 1973
- 20 chapters on past and present work...access free online
- Services and policies for children, young people and families
- Family life, gender and minority communities
- Innovative social research methodologies
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Positioning my work

- ❖ Inter-connected interests: (early childhood) education – democratic culture – social pedagogy - care, employment and gender – leave policies – care and education workforce – history and comparative studies
- ❖ ‘Conditions of the times’ →
 - ‘polycrisis’ demanding ‘transformative change’ and ‘real utopias’
 - role of the academy: *‘challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, expanding the menu of the possible’* (Joseph Tobin)...

‘Possibility space: the role of social sciences in understanding, mapping and shaping the future’

‘A well-intentioned focus on impact has encouraged incremental work on policy – how to tweak [adjust] a little, ideally aligned with the interests of the government of the day but discouraged the serious design of how our society or economy might be a generation out ...

*I believe **we need to grow the spaces and places within the social sciences that expand our shared possibility space, the options for our societies.** This is what I call exploratory social science – generating not finalised blueprints but rather generative ideas and prototypes that can be adapted, expanded and experimented with’ (Geoff Mulgan, Annual Lecture to British Academy of Social Science)*

Today's menu

1. Care leave policies: definitions, evolution and where we are today
2. Some issues with care leave policies today
3. Possible future directions

1. Care leave policies: definitions, evolution and where we are today

What are 'care leaves'?

- ❖ Entitlements for individuals to take **time away from employment to care**, usually (though not always) with some income replacement and the promise of reinstatement after the leave period
- ❖ **Statutory**...but may be supplemented by collective agreements or workplace policies
- ❖ Mostly for **parents with young children**...but can be for other types of care

Evolution of care leave policies

Maternity leave

- ❖ Generally available to **mothers** only
- ❖ **Health and welfare** measure, to protect the health of the mother and newborn child
- ❖ Taken just before, during and immediately after **childbirth**.
- ❖ Often **compulsory to take part** of the leave period
- ❖ First: **Germany** and **Austro-Hungary** in 1870s and 1880s

Evolution of care leave policies

Paternity Leave

- ❖ Available to **fathers** only,
- ❖ To enable the father to **spend time** with his partner, new child and older children
- ❖ Usually to be taken soon **after birth** of a child (at same time as Maternity Leave)
- ❖ First: **Norway** in 1977 (unpaid); **Sweden** in 1979 (paid)

Evolution of care leave policies

Parental Leave

- ❖ Available **equally** to mothers and fathers
- ❖ **Different designs**: non-transferable individual right; **or** individual right that can be transferred to the other parent; **or** family right that parents can divide between themselves as they choose
- ❖ Care measure to give both parents an **equal opportunity to spend time caring** for a young child
- ❖ Taken **after Maternity Leave**
- ❖ First: **Sweden** in 1974

Evolution of care leave policies

- ❖ Maternity+Paternity+Parental leave = ‘Parenting Leaves’
- ❖ Other types:
 - ‘Long-term care leave’: ‘family members who have a long-term functional dependency’, e.g., difficulties in carrying out activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, getting in and out of bed
 - ‘Emergency leave’: ‘a special leave of short duration for urgent family reasons’, e.g., sudden illness or accident
 - ‘Self-care leave’: response to specific and significant events or conditions: e.g., menstrual leave (e.g., Korea, Spain), bereavement leave (e.g., Greece, Iceland) and domestic violence leave (e.g., Australia, Ireland)

Where we are today (n=185 countries)

- ❖ **Maternity leave:** 184 (182 paid), most 14+ weeks
 - ❖ **Paternity leave:** 115 (102 paid), average 9 days
 - ❖ **Parental leave:** 68 (48 paid), average 2 years
 - ❖ **LT care leave:** 55 (34 paid), length & pay vary
 - ❖ **Emergency leave:** 127 (101 paid mostly by employer)
-
- ILO Convention 183 sets minimum standards for ML globally (14 weeks @ 2/3rd earnings)
 - EU requires member states to meet minimum standards for parenting leaves + 'Carer's Leave'

Where we are today

‘parenting leaves’ more widespread than ‘long-term care’, especially maternity and paternity leaves...

priority for one stage of life-course and one care-giving relationship

2. Some issues with care leave policies today

Inequalities: access

- ❖ **By area:** care leave less available in low- and medium-income countries, e.g., 26 weeks paid leave for mothers/fathers= low income 7%/0%; medium income 21%/14%; high income 51%/45%
- ❖ When statutory leave available, usually not accessible to all because of **eligibility conditions**

Inequalities: access

- ❖ Main reason for exclusions are workers in **informal employment** in L/MI countries, especially in Global South:
‘496 million self-employed women live in countries without adequate coverage of Maternity Leave cash benefits, most of these self employed women are in the informal economy’ (ILO)
- ❖ Exclusions also in HI countries...mostly employment conditions...but other conditions in some countries, e.g., exclusion of same-sex parents.

Inequalities: access

*‘Only a few countries have moved towards a model that provides universal benefits and **can thus be considered inclusive to different groups of parents**. Most countries still apply selective criteria and strict eligibility rules, so that, for example, many workers in the informal sector do not qualify...and in many Western and Eastern European countries mothers are not eligible for an income-related leave benefit due to precarious and/or interrupted employment careers’ (Agnes Blome)*

Inequalities: use of care leaves

- ❖ Women use care leaves more than men even when equally available (i.e., ‘parental leave’)

‘on average across countries with available data, men make up only about one in every four users/recipients [of parental leave], with the share in several countries lower than one in ten’ (OECD)

- ❖ Men most likely to take parental leave if (i) individual entitlement; (ii) non-transferable; (iii) well-paid...but these conditions are still not common

Variations in design

- ❖ Much variation in **design** of statutory leave (even within EU), including: length, payment, eligibility, flexibility and terminology + **incentives for fathers to use leave**
 - Well-paid, non-transferable leave (use it or lose it)
 - Bonus leave if some leave shared
- ❖ Much variation in HI countries for generosity, flexibility and gender equality
 - Highest = Nordics and E.Asia (Japan & Korea)
 - Lowest = Anglophone (US behind others)

Example of Nordic/Anglophone difference

Norway

Maternity Leave - none; **Paternity leave** – 2 weeks unpaid; **Parental Leave** – 49 weeks @ 100% pay OR 61 weeks @ 80% with mother and father quota of 15/19 weeks; can be taken FT or PT AND in one continuous period or several; **Emergency care** of sick children - 10-15 days/yr per parent, fully paid by employer.

United Kingdom

Maternity Leave – 52 weeks, most low paid or unpaid, 50 weeks transferable to father; **Paternity leave** – 2 weeks low flat-rate; **Parental Leave** – 18 weeks per parent unpaid, can only be taken 4 weeks per year; time may be taken to deal with an emergency involving a dependent, unpaid and length unspecified.

Politics and purposes

- Underlying these variations (apart from national income) are different influences, e.g., ideas of the welfare state... different cultural values and expectations...different political forces and processes
- These influences affect design and priority given to different possible purposes of care leaves, e.g., maternal and infant health; fertility; gender equality; employment and economy; family policy.

Care leaves and services

- **'Care gap' in most countries**, i.e., a gap between end of well-paid parenting leaves and start of an entitlement to early childhood education and care
- **Care leave and services should be complementary**, not substitutes...long, low paid care leaves without services (for children or adults) undermines gender equality

Care leave policies today

- ❖ Expanding and evolving but:
 - Focused on one stage of life course and one care relationship, i.e. early parenthood
 - Unevenly available between countries
 - Not inclusive within countries
 - May reinforce gendered nature of care
 - Not usually integrated with other policies, especially services

3. Possible future directions

Living in the ‘world of the polycrisis’

‘A problem becomes a crisis when it challenges our ability to cope and thus threatens our identity. In the polycrisis the shocks are disparate, but they interact so that the whole is even more overwhelming than the sum of the parts’ (Adam Tooze)

❖ Inter-connected, growing & existential crises, including
‘**crisis of care**’

*‘the pressures from several directions that are currently **squeezing a key set of social capacities**: the capacities available for birthing and raising children, caring for friends and family members, maintaining households and broader communities, and sustaining connections more generally’ (Nancy Fraser)*

Crisis of care

Demands of care (care of others, communities, environment...and self) increasing

+

Caregiving model (assumes endless supply of devalued female caregivers) unsustainable

=

Squeeze on care time

*‘Only a **crisis** – actual or perceived – **produces real change**. When that crisis occurs the actions that are taken depend on **the ideas that are lying around**. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until **the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable**’ (Milton Friedman, 1962)*

- ❖ Faced by the polycrisis, we need
 - to develop alternatives that offer transformative change...new ways of thinking, talking and doing
 - to work on ‘real utopias’

Real utopias

- ❖ **Utopian thinking**: *'the exploration by imagination of new modes of human possibility'* (Boaventura de Sousa Santos)
- ❖ **'Real Utopias'** (Erik Olin Wright):
 - **Desirability**: values, principles, goals...a dream
 - +
 - **Viability**: systematic theoretical models or case studies of examples...a possibility
 - **Achievability**: what conditions needed for implementation...to build a system

ILO's 'transformative package of care policies'

*'To maximize their transformative impact, care policy packages need to be **rights-based and gender-responsive, integrated, universal, and based on solidarity, representation and social dialogue.** They should also embrace a **life-cycle approach and comprise policies and services** ranging from care leave and breastfeeding entitlements to childcare and long-term care services for all workers with family responsibilities'*

IL0's 'transformative package of care policies'

- ❖ *[C]ountry-specific and include a combination of time (leave), benefits (income security), rights and services [for children and adults]*
- ❖ 2035: all countries have 18 weeks paid ML; paid PatL; 18 weeks paid ParL per parent; extend paid leaves to informal economy; 'a continuum of care leave policies and care services'; expanded long-term care services
- ❖ 'The total expansion [of parenting leaves] by 2035 represents 0.3 per cent of 2035 GDP across all regions, ranging from 0.2 per cent in Asia to 0.5 per cent in Africa'

‘From Parental Leave to Care Leaves and Care time for All’ (Doucet and Moss, forthcoming)

Make a ‘bold but modest’ proposal for the future of care leaves with three parts:

1. **Broad and holistic**: from parenting leaves to care leaves across the life course: to care for others, for the self, for communities, for the environment
2. **Inclusive**: from care leaves as conditional employment benefits to care leaves as universal social rights
3. **Universal**: care leaves time as part of an expanded Universal Basic Services

Universal Basic Services (UBS)

*‘[Based on the premise that the first job of government is to meet human needs - to ensure that **every individual has access to the core necessities that make life possible and worth living**...[UBS] focuses on ensuring that everyone has a sufficient virtual income or social wage, made up of 'in kind' benefits derived from a range of collective measures’ (Anna Coote)*

- ❖ **What Services??** Housing, food, education, healthcare, transport, Internet...growing attention to care services, especially childcare and eldercare...??add care leaves

Conclusion

- Care leaves are **growing and dynamic part of the welfare state**...but still mainly viewed as conditional employment benefit
- Re-think and transform them as **universal social right to give and receive care** in the context of a crisis of care...important contribution to equality, solidarity and sustainability...and to **re-valuing care and care time**
- Care leaves ensuring care time as essential part of a **democratic society**...

Conclusion

[I]f a democratic society has any commitments at all, it must have a commitment to making care — both receiving and giving care — equally and widely available to all

Among the most important considerations in rethinking society from a caring perspective, then, is creating time and space for care... Time can be reordered around people's lives in ways that make it possible to live better

There is a way to turn our world around. It requires us to recommit to caring for ourselves and others by accepting and rethinking our caring responsibilities and providing sufficient resources for care (Joan Tronto, 'Caring Democracy').

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