

BOOK REVIEW - THE LIMITS OF CAREGIVING. ITS AGENDA, RIGHTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PAUTASSI, Laura; ZIBECCHI, Carla (Coord.). **Las fronteras del cuidado: agenda, derechos e infraestructura.** Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2013. 451 p. (Colección Derechos Sociales y Políticas Públicas).

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1. Why this interest in caregiving?

This recently published book informs about Latin American advances in the understanding of a trend known as caregiving crisis and its implications for social welfare, economic development and gender equity. This crisis is provoked on one hand by the increasing demand for care, mainly linked to demographic evolution and a re-definition of needs of caregivers. And on the other, it is induced by the expanding role of women in paid work, therefore reducing its traditional availability to comply with its own family, with the consequent response capability reduction to meet these care needs.

Caregiving refers to indispensable tasks performed to attend physical and emotional needs of children and dependent adults, its implicit social and labor relationships, economic and social costs, and legal and institutional frameworks where they are developed. The title of the book "**The limits of caregiving**" refers to the complexity of the concept of taking care and its multiple research approaches. This collective paper significantly promotes construction of a new field for social science research, including different views to highlight a reality scarcely being outlined up till now.

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2. Structure of the book

Laura Pautassi and Carla Zibecchi - book's coordinators - are academic references in Latin American gender research, and members of the Latin American Team for Justice and Gender. In the Introduction of the book they mention that its objective is contributing to make public policies decisions in this area to be taken based in information being part of an integrated context. They focus efforts in public agenda, since caregiving crisis has a social dimension, affecting both caretakers and caregivers. Sexual division of labor is a crucial concept – from a gender perspective, to show relationship between women's work as main responsible and the difficulties they face to exercise her rights.

Academic and professional career of the authors is recognized in its respective countries, regionally and internationally, by their diverse theoretical, conceptual and disciplinary approaches. Their contributions are organized in three chapters. First one is: "Caregiving: theoretical and economic perspectives, and regional dynamics", highlighting Latin American research. They introduce a theoretical, conceptual and methodological debate on caregiving, how to measure it, and its bonds with economy, public policies and welfare regimes.

The initial text of Flavia Marco Navarro and Maria Nieves Rico shows a general overview on Latin American situation: its conceptualization and measuring through research along the time. They gather evidences that providing care is mainly a family issue; that caregivers are women, and that it is strongly segmented, according to household income levels. One of most relevant questions is the link between social inequality and solution of care needs; fact that drove this issue to be discussed in public agenda. This caused debates in several countries of the region, and in some cases agreements to disclose public policies granting the right to be cared in some segments of the population.

Juliana Martínez Franzoni and KoenVoorend research follows a line of investigation contributing to understand importance of family dimension when studying welfare regimes. Starting from Esping-Anderson conceptualization, it may be empirically demonstrated regional existing heterogeneity regarding family caregiving relationship organization, labor market and social policies. They introduce a theoretical-methodological exercise from the multi-dimensional equity approach of Nancy Fraser and public and private environments where Sylvia Walby's gender relationships proposal occur. This suggests that stronger presence of the State through social policies is linked to lower gender inequality levels, in the case of a domestic reorganization of care based in this, the authors look for new answers regarding the effective functioning of labor market, social policies and families attitude regarding caregiving.

Laura Pautassi's text has a normative approach, she reflects about the need of recognizing people as holders of the right to be care-takers, independently of their position, and particularly without bonds to their work. This allows her stating that the right to take care, be cared and self-cared they all exist. And sexual division of labor must be questioned; we must look for a way

of redistributing the obligation of taking care and recognize the right of those who need to be cared. The State must be responsible of policies and fair practices. Additional contribution must come from human rights indicators used as mechanisms of enforceability and tools to reach higher institutionalism and grant for human rights.

Corina Rodríguez Enríquez introduces four main dimensions, and from them she questions economic conventional discipline: the systemic role of caregiving in economic dynamics, the economic value and social organization of caregiving, women's economic subordination and the importance of public policies to do these changes. Last, a debate about wrong ideas regarding economic consequences of the so called conciliation policies and arguments related with the economic implication of its absence, in a macro level due to underutilization of labor and in the micro because of lower labor productivity. The author stresses potential of conciliation policies to provide a caregiving organization with social co-responsibility, which should have to be sustained in family relationships respecting equity of genders.

María Ángeles Durán and Susana García Díez stress the need of developing new statistic tools for central social welfare activity. Durán's academic speech regarding need of new statistic tools to measure time spent in unpaid family work was fundamental for driving Latin American time use research. She has an additional concern regarding methodologies allowing predict caregiving demands, and proposes finding tools to measure it in the medium and long run, due to its social, economic and political transcendence. Based in models done with Spain's demographic data, authors suggest need of adding new elements to demographic projections allowing create different scenarios, embodying other actors to the analysis, such as market, State and communities.

Marcela Cerrutti, Alicia Maguid and Georgina Binstock's paper deals with increasing concern due to migration of women working in caregiving in central countries, to attend needs of local families. They analyze migration from Latin America to Spain, the results of this process, its impact in their own families, emigrant's gender and caregiving. Families remaining divided and its chances of re-unification, distance maternity and creation of global health care chains. The authors state that housekeeping women workers or caregivers are the ones facing more difficulties to be with their children, due to socio-economical factors.

The second part: "Caregiving policies and caregivers experiences" introduces contributing factors to undervalue paid caregiver's work. Cecilia Grosman suggests which may be the rights of elderly within the scope of universal human rights, and stresses importance of establishing rules recognizing an ethics of cooperation in elderly caregiving, with same responsibilities for men and women. She thinks that this would allow changing principle of equality and family solidarity ideas.

Natalia Gherardi and Josefina Durán's text focuses housekeepers working as caregivers at medium and high income homes, allowing these women

to easily combine study, work and family responsibilities. They describe different historical discriminatory law stages regarding domestic work in Argentina, its informality and narrow initiatives to improve the situation and transform it into a formal job with due register. They give special emphasis to the analysis of a recent law regulating this job, and compare it with other paid jobs; nevertheless it keeps having a special regime. They question its effective implementation and problems arising from lack of social recognition of reproductive work.

The text of Natacha Borgeaud-Garciandía shows heterogeneity of caregiving world of work, introducing a research of other women workers segment: elderly caregivers. Based in interviews, they analyze different dimensions of this work, its relationship with the person they take care and its relatives, body contacts, feelings caused by increasing deterioration of the patient and its imminent death. The author points out lack of coherence between promotion of professionalization through formation policies and persistence of low wages and deficient working conditions.

Another caregiving working environment is the community child labor, subject studied by Carla Zebecchi. It is a work where part of the women doing it come through insertion in conditional transfer programs [N.T. They are a combination of financial contribution with family counterparts and demands, such as checking school attendance and children and adolescent's health verification] This to create a commitment with task and desire of professionalizing caregiving practices. However this brings tensions due to requirements sometimes conflicting, like love for the person who receives care, or social support commitment with the organization and her colleagues, and personal economic needs.

Third part, "Infrastructure and caregiving service: a Latin American experience" begins with a text of Cecilia Rossel and Diego Hernández. They study caregiving bond with time and space. This analysis shows need of complementing research on unequal caregiving time distribution through an enquiry on sequence of activities in space. According to authors, relocations vary in function of gender and socio-economic levels. They consider public transport policies as essential to reduce journey time, allowing best attention to caregive dependent persons.

Karina Batthyány introduces case of a public caregiving policy, the National Caregiving System of Uruguay. She analyzes conceptual base of the proposal in a gender and rights approach, and special features of the design process, in which took part different actors. The author states that proposal and its implementation faced a lot of tension due to predominance of families' social representations and difficulties of connection among several sectorial public institutions with competences in different areas (education, health, social security). Defining public-private relationships and, particularly, regulation of services and jobs to grant the quality of services, are part of leftovers.

Finally, the analysis of SilkeStaab deals with children's caregiving policy during 2006-2011 period and maternity leave reform in Chile in 2011, where

debates held showed same characteristics than those of beginning of the twentieth century, when maternity protection laws were discussed. They mention different actors' discussions on their concern for birthrate, health, the evolution of a newborn and breastfeeding. In both cases are strengthened mother's right to take care of the newborn and the newborn to receive caregiving, but there is no definition of independent rights or parents' duties. The Chilean case is an advance that should drive to an integral approach based in gender rights and equity.

3. Assessment

This compilation is a significant contribution to strengthen dialogue among sociological, economic, legal and anthropological approaches allowing connection with such observation areas as families and sexual division of labor, legal framework, global division of caregiving, where it must be provided in welfare regimes, and public policies regulating it. This is the reason why it is a valuable tool for researchers of this issue, but also for politicians having an interest in social problems. Certainly due to this knowledge generated, vacuum will be found and new issues will arise. Future research will provide answers, and will support current debates regarding fundamental caregiving policies, within the scope of social protection systems restructuration.