When Care Comes Home: Collectivity, Contingency and Cultural Diversity

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Overview

• Perspective: the triad
• Nexus Home Care Project: 2006-2017
• Relational properties of home as care space
  – Collectivity
  – Contingency
  – Cultural Diversity
• Care: collaborative ↔ contested
• Opportunities and Challenges
Initial Perspectives on Home Care: Multiple Lenses
Focus of Research: 2006 – 2017

• **Intersection of public and private spheres:**
  – Workers negotiate private sphere of clients’ homes/ family life, and public world of health services

• **Intersection of professional / non-professional labour:**
  – Perceptions of roles, relationships with employers, co-workers, clients and caregivers

• **Intersection of paid and unpaid labour:**
  – Emotional vs contractual nature of ‘care’
  – Prevalence of unpaid time to meet client need
  – Family/friend unpaid labour: ‘sharing’ the care
Research Program 2006-2017

- **Pilot study interviews** (2006)
  - Agency interviews (n=11); HSW interviews (n=30)

- **British Columbia interviews** (2007 - 2008)
  - Home Support Workers (n=118)
  - Elderly Home Care Clients (n=82)
  - Family Members (n=56)

- **Data collection: Other provinces** (2008)
  - Ontario: HSWs (n=28); Nova Scotia: HSWs (n=40)

- **Key Informant Follow-Up** (July 2011) (n=7)
  
In-depth semi-structured interviews; Quantitative analyses; Qualitative team-based thematic analyses of transcripts
Revised Dynamic Model

**Emphasis:**
- collaborations
- sharing care
- agency of elders
- ‘joint practices’ of care-givers, clients, families

Sims-Gould, J. & Martin-Matthews, A. (2010). “‘We share the care’: Family caregivers’ experiences of their older relative receiving home support services”, *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 18 (4): 415-423


• Byrne, K., Frazee, K., JSG & AMM. (2011). “‘I’m satisfied... but’: Clients’ and families’ contingent responses about home care”. Home Health Care Services Quarterly. 30 (4):161-177


Meanings of spaces include rules for individuals allowed access to specific areas

Boundaries within domestic spaces: system of meanings about spaces within households

Private spaces within the home

Public rules guiding care worker’s behaviour

• How relational space or home space perceived and acted upon as environment for care, by care recipients and care providers

• How a relational ethics framework advances understanding of relationship-building in home space. (dyadic focus)
Geographical Gerontology: Home space

• **Dec 2016**: Mark Skinner, Gavin Andrews, Malcolm Cutchin (editrs) request for chapter: micro focus

• Grad seminar ‘Aging & Society’: sociological theories of aging (Settersten, Dannefer, Hagestad):

• **CHALLENGE**: “Strong appeal of *reductionist, individual-level* approaches...to contain the explanatory potentials of social forces while continuing to privilege individual-level explanation” (Dannefer, 2013: 794).

• **METHOD**: Integrative: Meta-analysis of Nexus research
Conceptual re-thinking

• How is home care experience of older people impacted by larger structural forces that shape the everyday dynamics within which care is delivered and received, beyond what Hagestad and Dannefer (2001) refer to as the impact of proximate contextual experiences?

• **Relational properties** (Marshall, Matthews and Rosenthal, 1997): characterize power or privilege associated with gender and birth order in families
Social factors impact context of care home

- Value society places on care and caregiving
- Local labour market conditions (wages /employment patterns)
- Regulatory and reimbursement policies
- Global, national, and local workforce resources
- Immigration policies

- Confluence of these factors and individual employer and employee decisions play out in workplaces that are homespaces for clients and their families
• **Relational properties**: Heuristic device to examine factors shaping experiences of home as a site of care (Marshall, Matthews and Rosenthal, 1997)

  • collectivity
  
  • contingency
  
  • cultural diversity
Collectivity

• Marshall, Matthews & Rosenthal (1993: 39): “analytical distinctions among social structure, social system, cultural system, and personal meaning to address inherent obstacles that distance family life lived from [how] described in research reports…. Social system refers to … patterned behavior linking members of a collectivity…”

• Collectivity: Highly variable size and complexity; strangers and ‘familiars’; crowded
• Workers: presence alters relational dynamics; vary: adept/inept; schedule (un)predictable
• Gender dynamics of collectivity
Contingency

Social institutions include arrangements for securing and distributing goods and services. Care “work’ contingent upon:

• Agency rules and regulations (Care Plan).
• Materiality and characteristics of dwelling space
• Structural features of labour force: scope of practice, training, skills, expertise, wage equity and casualization
• Temporality: Daily routines & rhythms/ ‘fitting in’
Cultural Diversity

• Diversity: clients, families, workers rotating through home space
• Social forces: national immigration policies, labour laws, housing affordability: impact
• Complexity from: “not migration per se but transnational lives...” Dannefer (2013:798)
• (Multiple) worker(s), clients and families often distinguished by different cultures, reflect frameworks “of beliefs, expressive symbols, and values [by] which individuals define their world, express their feelings, and make their judgments” (Marshall et al., 1993: 41).
• Eg., employment rules require practices inconsistent with religious and cultural proscriptions
Outcomes observed

- Home care space:
  - collaborative
  - and/or
  - contested
Home Care Space: Collaborative

- Boundaries: shared care
- Celebrate diversity: learning
- Client as “person”
- Workers – Family Members: complementary labour (family members providing informational and instrumental support to workers)
- Nevertheless, policy assumptions of collaboration
Home Care Space: Contested

• Conflicts: within collectivity, in contingencies of home care services, clashes between diverse cultures
• Family (idiosyncratic) vs. bureaucratic knowledge
• Public - private dichotomy (home – work): (workers caught between family disputes and demands)
• Disrupted labour (family members creating emotion work and additional instrumental work for workers)
• Discordant viewpoints arising from issues of race, culture, religion or class
• Racism, prejudice; fearfulness, alone, strangers
Conclusions

• These relational properties - collectivity, contingency, and cultural diversity - enable us to consider how social forces shape the dynamics of home care along continuum from highly collaborative to contested space.

• Construct of relational properties emphasises link to—but also extension beyond—‘micro’ and dyadic elements in home care.
“Household spaces of ageing: when care comes home”, AMM & D. S. Cloutier, 2018

Critical, constructive analysis:

How social factors contextualise household—and home—dynamics of relational space
Nexus Home Care Project

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**Other Manuscript Topics:**
- Perspectives on Safety in Home Care
- Worker Job Satisfaction: Jurisdictional Comparisons
- Workers’ Perceptions of Family Members of Home Care Clients
- Worker Recruitment & Retention

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