

Parental Leave and inequalities: the haves and the have-nots

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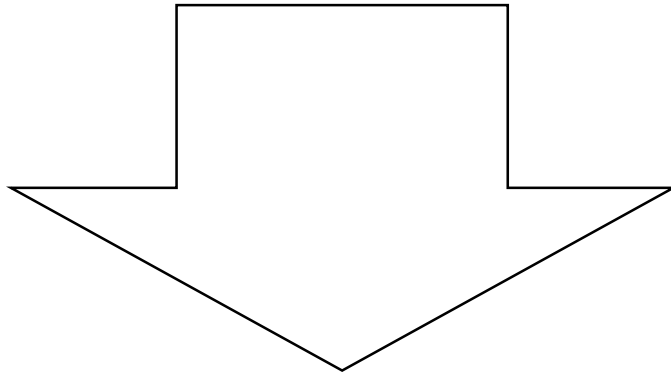
2019 is the 100th year Anniversary of the ILO Maternity **Protection** Convention in 1919

- For the purpose of this Convention, the term **woman** signifies any female person, irrespective of age or nationality, whether married or unmarried, and the term **child** signifies any child whether legitimate or illegitimate.
- In any public or private industrial or commercial undertaking, or in any branch thereof, other than an undertaking in which only members of the same family are employed, a woman
 - (a) **shall not be permitted to work during the six weeks** following her confinement;
 - (b) shall have **the right to leave her work** if she produces a medical certificate stating that her confinement will probably take place within six weeks;
 - (c) shall, while she is absent from her work in pursuance of paragraphs (a) and (b), **be paid benefits sufficient** for the full and healthy maintenance of herself and her child, provided either out of public funds or by means of a system of insurance

Parental leave: trajectory of scholarly analysis

- 20th Century Initial & on-going: gender equality focus
- **father take-up**
- 21st Century Growing awareness of multiple inequalities – **access/ eligibility**
- Tracking eligibility with a gender-sensitive intersectional inequalities perspective

Key challenges



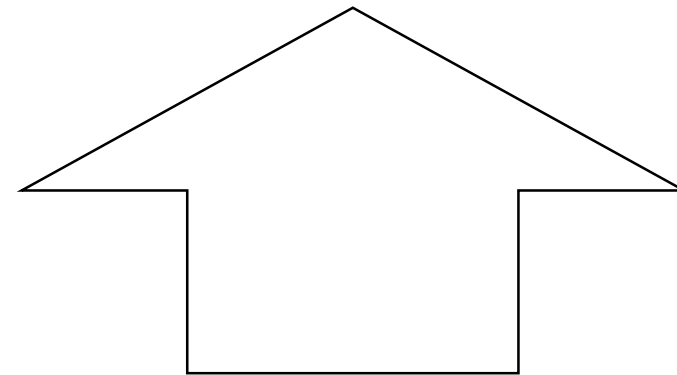
Fatherhood premium:

- becoming a father increases wages



Motherhood penalty:

- women's responsibilities in childbirth and care of children often cause a reduction in mothers' wage



Leave policies are instruments for realising children's rights to both parents' care time & finance

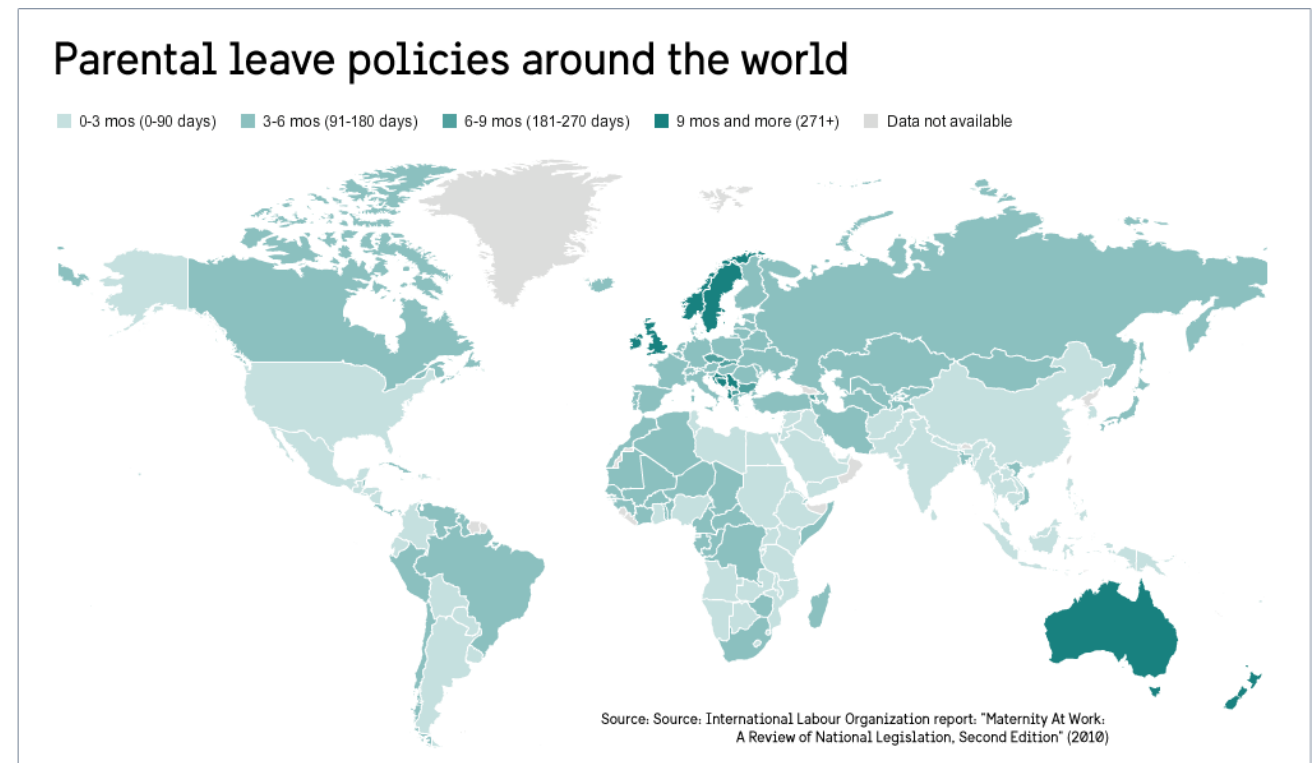
Crunch time: very young children in first year

- high dependency 24/7 care
- feeding through breast or bottle
- emotionally responsive relationships with significant caregivers
- need economic security
- Parental leave as a lever for change

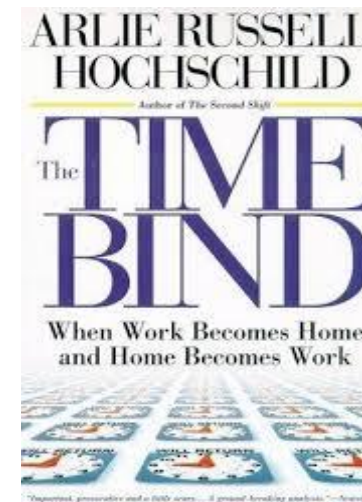
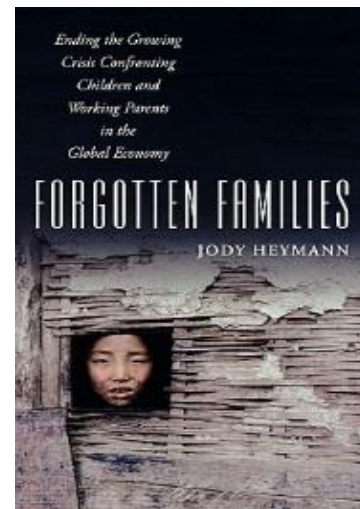
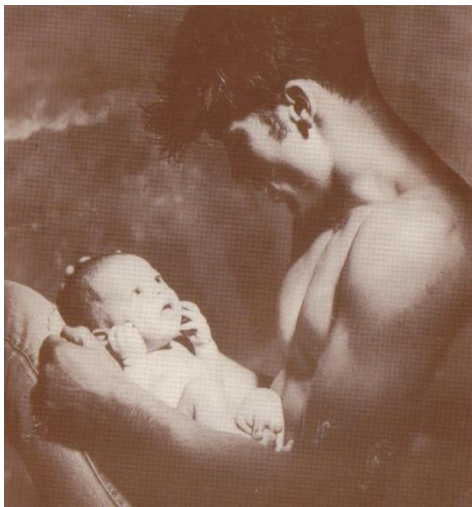


Inequalities in access to parental leave

- ILO (2014) - 185 countries
- Only 53% have paid maternity leave @ 66% earnings for 14 weeks
- Only 42% have any form of paid paternity leave
- Parental leave found in 66 of 169 countries
- Differential access to statutory leave raises the possibility of a new polarization: being born into either a *parental-leave rich or poor household* and, indeed, *country*.” (O’Brien, 2009)
- “Premier” league- haves and have-not countries.



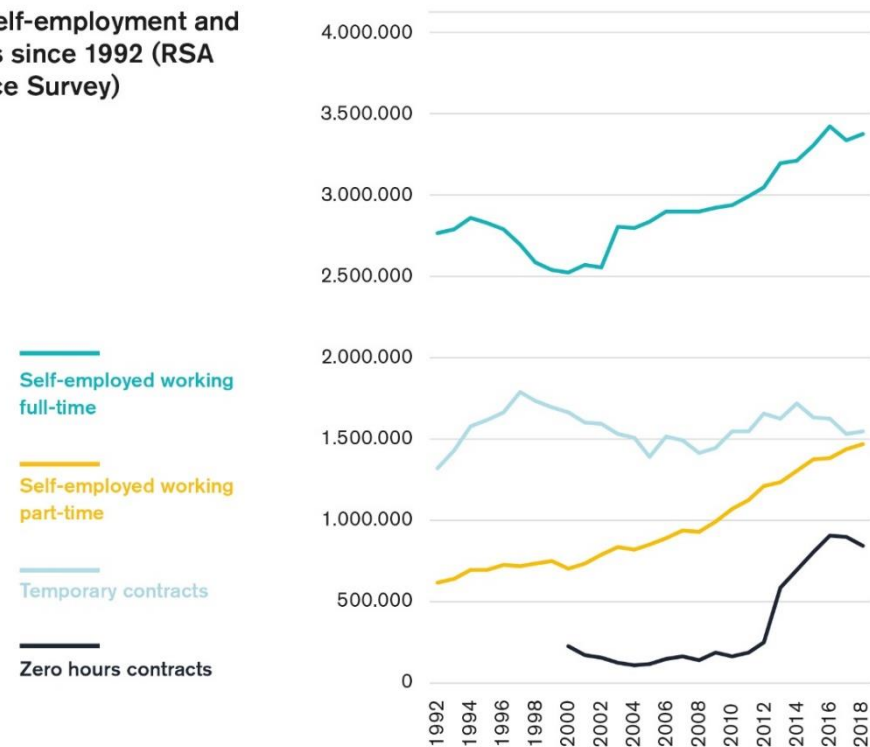
Transformations in working and family life: combining earning & caring hard "stalled gender revolution"



Changing nature of jobs and inequality

Increasing number of atypical jobs (self-employment, zero-hours and temporary contracts) → economic insecurity, UK

Figure 1: Changes in self-employment and non-standard contracts since 1992 (RSA analysis of Labour Force Survey)



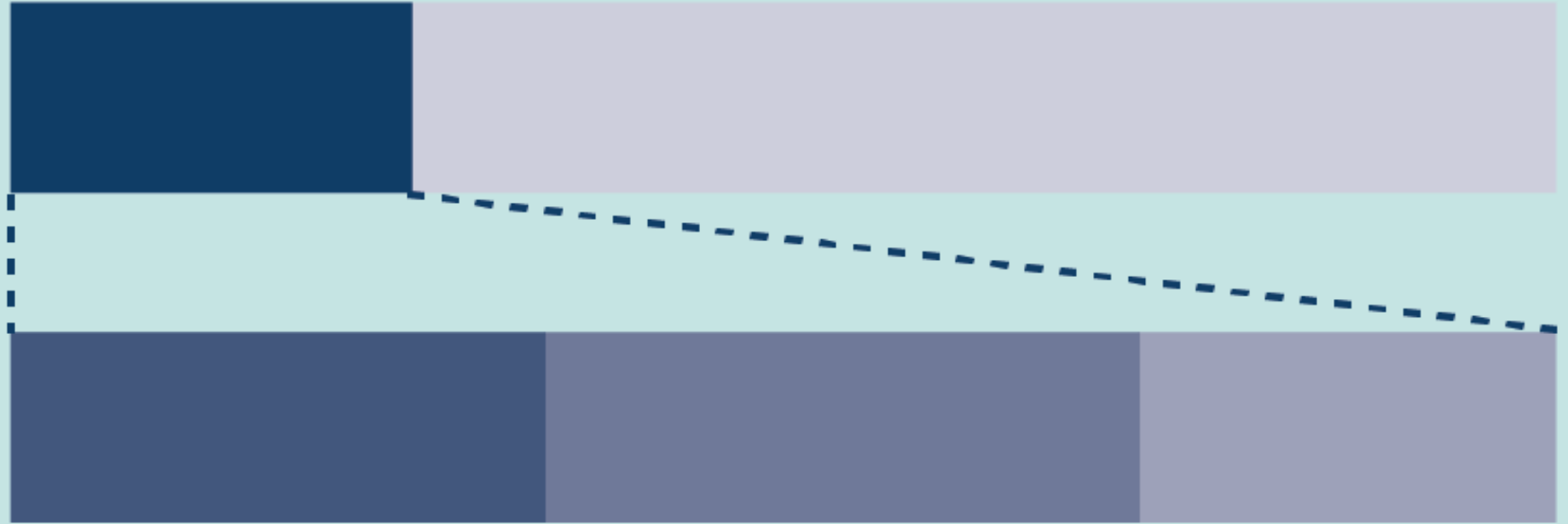
Eligibility for paid maternity & paternity leave in the UK (2017)

Potential parents – individuals who are employed (employees and self-employed) and aged 20-49 years, the peak fertility and employment period total N= 26,634 in employment: 13,165 women, 13,469 men.

- **Time in job** Continuous employment for an employer for 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth Employed < 6 months
- **Economic activity test** Gross weekly earnings need to be at least equal to the lower earnings limit for National Insurance Paid < threshold
- **Type of employment:** Self-employed ineligible
- Simulation: Employed < 6 month, paid < threshold ie £113 gross weekly)

O'Brien, M., Connolly, S., Aldrich, M., Cook, R., & Speight, S. (2017) *Inequalities in Access to Paid Maternity & Paternity leave & Flexible Working*. Modern Fatherhood Report. Available at <http://www.modernfatherhood.org/publications/inequalities-in-parental-leave-full-report>, UK Labour Force Survey Jan-March 2017

26% of women are not eligible for paid maternity leave



9% because
they are
self-employed

10% because
they have not worked
for their employer
long enough

7% because
they are not
paid enough

24% of men are not eligible for paid paternity leave



16% because they are self-employed







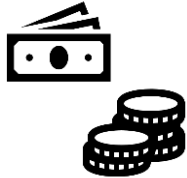


8% because they have not worked for their employer long enough

Eligibility to Parental Leave in the EU-28 Project commissioned by EIGE

- Tracking eligibility to parental leave is rare. A micro-level data approach enables quantification of the extent to which a target population is able to benefit from the policy. Assists policy translation.
- **The specific objectives of the project were to:**
 - Develop a methodology for estimating how many (potential) mothers and fathers are eligible to parental leave in the Member States of the EU.
 - Break down the non-eligibility to parental leave by the main reasons, to identify constraints across each Member State.
- **Data used:** EU-SILC & EU-LFS 2016
- **Authors:** Margaret O'Brien (UCL), Sara Connolly (UEA), Matthew Aldrich (UEA) Kelly Ward (UCL) and Merve Uzunalioglu (UCL) 2019
- **Advisers:** Ann-Zofie Duvander, Alison Koslowski, Peter Moss



Dimensions of eligibility for men and women's access to parental leave: Adopting a *multi-dimensional* and *intersectional* approach with a primary sensitivity to gender

Employment/labour market	Family/ Household	Citizenship
 <p>Activity status (self-employed, unemployed, inactive)</p>	 <p>Same-sex couples</p>	 <p>Nationals</p>
 <p>Duration of contract (Time with current employer)</p>	 <p>Single parents</p>	 <p>Third-country nationals</p>
 <p>Pay threshold conditions prior to leave</p>	 <p>Adoptive parents</p>	 <p>Migrants</p>

Labour market: eligibility

In all EU-28 Member states individuals with an **employee status** are eligible

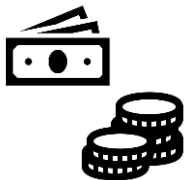
- but conditionality in 17 (e.g. length of service or social insurance requirement)

In 21 EU-28 Member states individuals with a **self-employed status** are eligible

- but conditionality in 11 (e.g. social insurance or sector requirement)

In 7 EU-28 Member states individuals who are **unemployed/inactive** are eligible

- but conditionality in all cases (e.g. social insurance)



Family/ gender orientation: eligibility

In 17 EU-28 Member states, same-sex parents are eligible for parental leave & in 11 countries parental leave is the preserve of married or heterosexual couples.

Complex interface between same sex *marriage* rights and *parent* rights. Despite legal recognition of same-sex marriages (e.g. PT, SI) these parents are not eligible for parental leave.

Adoptive parents eligible but rights can be effected by gender orientation laws



Have-nots, parental leave poor

- More likely to be economically inactive, in their job for less than 12 months & non-standard employment such as self-employment.
- Lowest in Ireland, Cyprus, Malta and the UK particularly
- Can signify insecure, unstable, and uncertain even precarious work-life trajectories typically associated with poor regulatory protection.



The haves

Highest rates of eligibility for men and women were found in three countries (Finland, Croatia, Sweden) with 100 % eligibility **on the selected dimensions.**

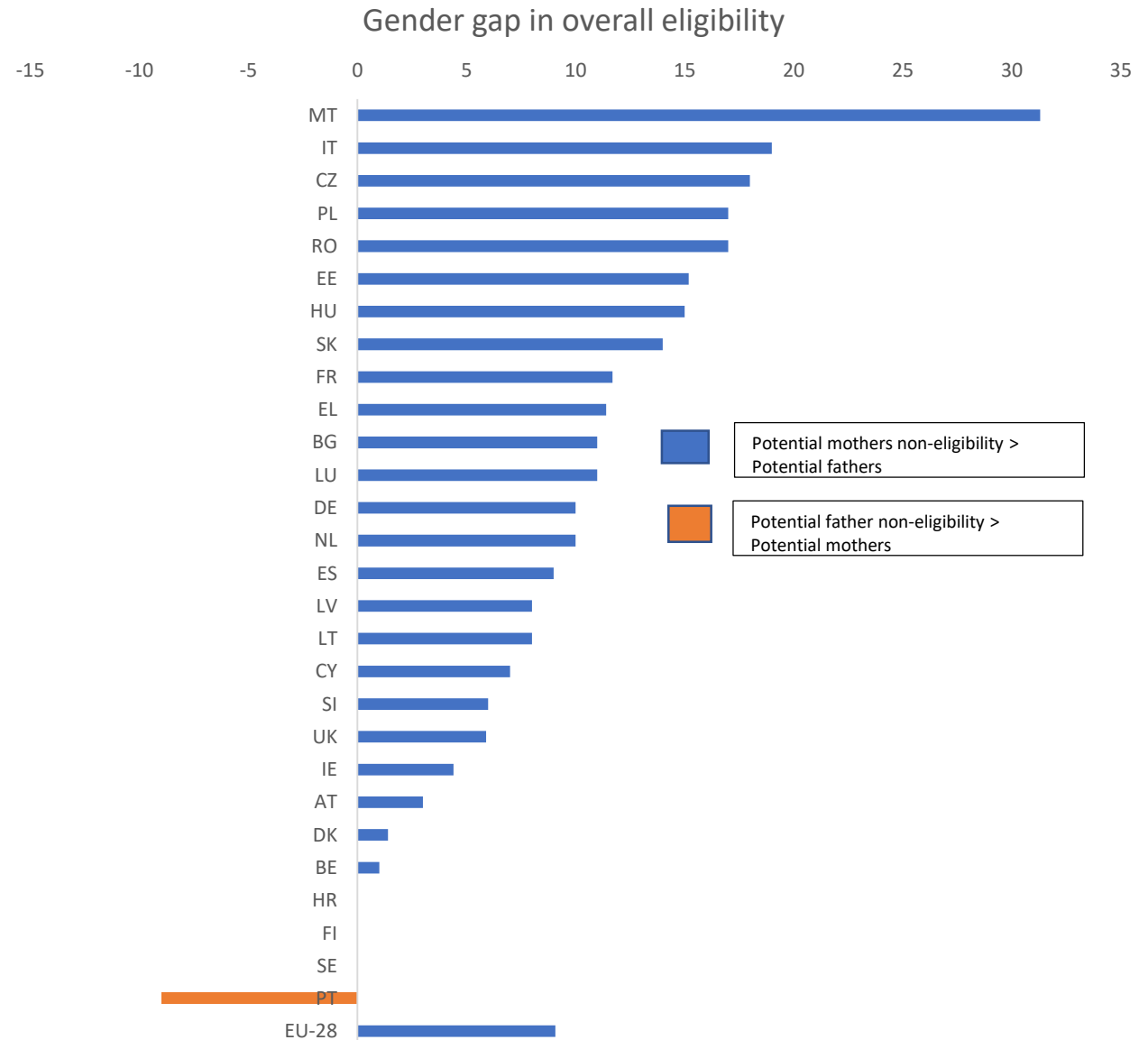
- i.e. eligible to access parental leave whether employed, self-employed, unemployed or inactive, irrespective of the length of time in their current work, or the type of occupation, whether in a heterosexual or same-sex partnership, single-parent household or whether their child was biological or adoptive.
- In all three countries parental leave is paid and remuneration is at a comparatively high level - all/most >66 % earnings “well-paid”
- Leave benefits funded from general taxation and employment insurance
- A dual earner/ dual caregiver model is dominant in all three countries with higher than EU-28 average



Gender gap in eligibility to parental leave in the EU-28, 2016:

potential mothers are more disadvantaged than potential fathers

- 29% of women and 20% of men aged 20-29 years, do not have access to parental leave >> 9 percentage points gender gap in overall eligibility to parental leave.
- Economic inactivity is main reason, followed by length of service



Gender gap in eligibility to parental leave - economically active only

potential fathers slightly more disadvantaged than potential mothers

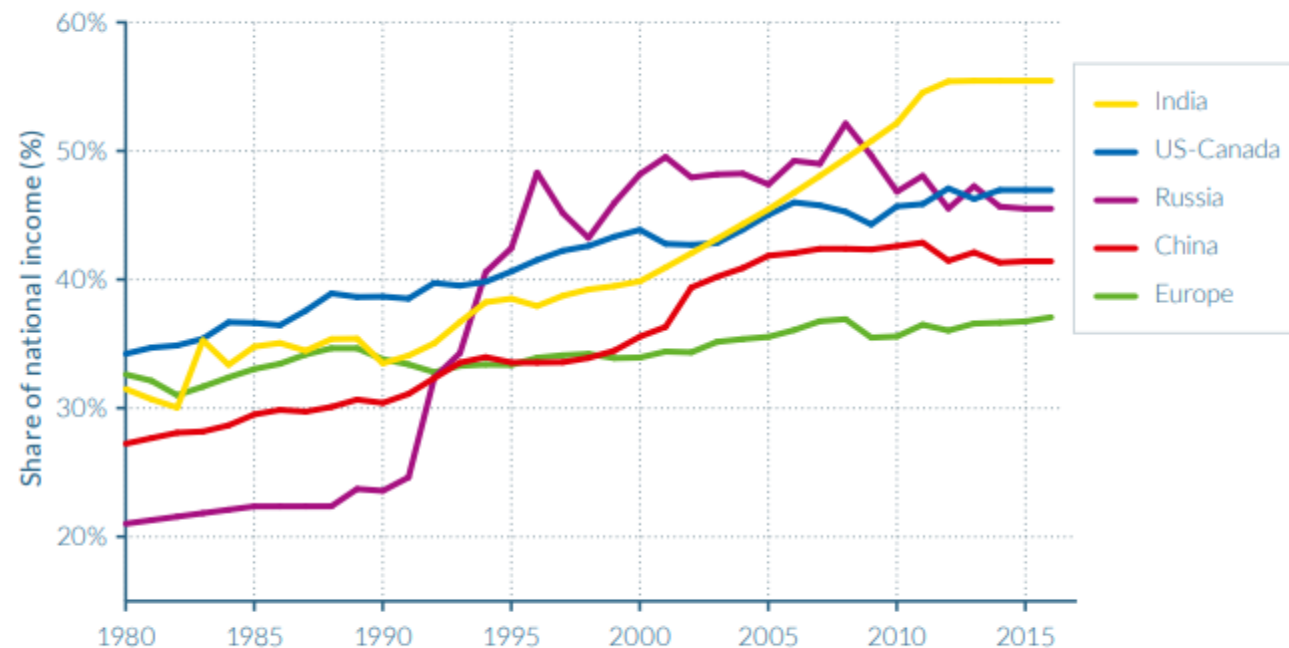
- 9% of employed women and 10% of employed men are non-eligible; gender gap in non-eligibility -1.4 points
- Length of service is main reason, followed by self-employment status



Inequality is on the rise everywhere in the world

Institutions and policies shape the level of inequality

Top 10% income shares across the world, 1980–2016: Rising inequality almost everywhere, but at different speeds



Source: WID.world (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for data series and notes.

In 2016, 47% of national income was received by the top 10% in US-Canada, compared to 34% in 1980.

Thank-you

- Margaret O'Brien
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- International Network on Leave Policies & Research
<https://www.leavenetwork.org>
- Modern Fatherhood: Fathers, work and families in the 21st Century
<https://www.modernfatherhood.org>