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Sich Sorgen – Care

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Abstracts

Susanne Kreutzer, *Compassionate Caring. On the Social Practice of Christian Parish Nursing After 1945*

In West Germany, parish nursing proved to be an area in which the traditional concept of Christian 'charity service' remained alive for a comparably long time. The parish nurses were responsible for the sick, old and needy people. The scope of activities ranged from nursing, cooking, cleaning, and caring for the elderly, to doing the children's service.

The article explores the social practice of Christian parish nursing considering a West German deaconess motherhouse, the *Henriettenstiftung*, as an example. It focuses on three aspects of care work: caring for other people, caring for oneself and receiving care. In doing so the essay shows that the modern notion of self-sacrifice is not appropriate to describe the self-understanding and living situation of Christian parish nurses. First, the contribution characterises the two different types of parish work in rural areas and in the cities. Subsequently, it takes a closer look at the work of the deaconesses and describes their various tasks. Using the term care as an example, a key situation in nursing will be analysed. Finally, the essay shows how the transformation of the West German society in the 1960s affected the field of parish work.

The considerations are, on the one hand, based on interviews with parish nurses. On the other hand, the personnel files of the parish deaconesses as well as the records of the parishes are taken into account. Through these sources everyday life and self-perception of the sisters can be followed very closely.

Arnlaug Leira, *Childcare in Scandinavia: Parental Responsibility and Social Right*

In this paper, I examine the re-conceptualisation and re-design of care of very young children that took place in Scandinavia from the 1970s into the early 2000s. During this period, increasingly, the childcare policy discourse shifted to include not just parental responsibilities, but also the care-related social rights of parents and children. A series of childcare policy reforms has meant a re-negotiation and re-drawing of the boundaries between the public and the private – between the state and parents. Childcare has been redefined to include a basis on which parents are entitled to make claims on the welfare state.

In Scandinavia, the transformation of parental responsibility for childcare has taken place in parallel with the promotion of gender equality in policy reforms updating the traditional gender contract. In conclusion, I pose the questions: To what extent does responsibility for childcare entail rights for mothers and fathers to make claims on the welfare state? To what extent has the gender compromise of the traditional male breadwinner/female carer family been replaced by new gender arrangements? To what extent has the reformulation of childcare policies succeeded in transcending the gender division of earning and caring? Drawing upon studies from Denmark, Finland and Sweden, the core material for my presentation is based on the Norwegian experience.

Relinde Meiwes, The Contribution of Catholic Women's Religious Congregations in Nursing Change in the 19th Century

During the late 19th century Catholic women's religious congregations boosted. The considerable increase was mainly linked with two different developments that came together successfully: While on the one hand there was an increasing demand for nursing, on the other hand there were many Catholic women who decided to follow a female career path independent from traditional family life. In the article I will focus on the example of Prussia and I will argue that the catholic sisters considerably contributed to the many changes which came about in the nursing profession during that period. As I will show in more detail the congregations succeeded in organizing the task of nursing in new ways, while, moreover they were also able to provide enough staff for the continuously growing request. I will finally maintain that the model developed by the Catholic congregations turned into becoming a referential model. As such it should be taken up into 20th century nursing, at least for what the German case is concerned.

Eva Senghaas-Knobloch and Christel Kumbruck, On the Ethos of Caring – Dilemmas of the Modern Service Society

In Germany recently care has been put on the political agenda together with complaints about the erosion of solidarity, problems of generativity and the ageing of the population. Paid professional care services are of ever increasing importance but they are embedded in trends of economization of health services and organizational devices which have derived from industrial processes and are far distant from practices grounded in a specific ethos of care.

The article analyzes the dilemmas which result from these trends by outlining the general development from an industrial society to a service society and the transition of informal activities, which formerly had been done by unpaid women within households or religious communities, to formal employment. The basic question focuses on the viability of a specific ethos of care under the new economic circumstances. Characteristics of an ethos of care for a long time had been taken as natural female attribute without any need for recognition and economic gratification. The argument that there are fundamental differences between a rationality of efficiency and a rationality of care, is underscored by findings of an empirical study being undertaken in deaconry care and health organizations.

Barbara N. Wiesinger, Violence and the Construction of Gender: The Example of Yugoslav Women Partisans, 1941–1945

Between 1941 and 1945, thousands of Yugoslav women decided to take up arms and participate on the side of the Communist-led *National Liberation Movement* in the liberation and civil war. In a society which traditionally associated weapons and violence with a masculine gender identity, this constituted a transgression of the boundaries of their gender role. Even within the resistance movement, which in principle acknowledged women's equality with men, women's participation in the war in general, and in armed combat especially, provoked struggles over their 'right to fight'. In order to gain its broader acceptance, the *National Liberation Movement* sought to justify women's armed resistance by pointing to their noble motives and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the common good. Additionally, propaganda denied that women's participation in war actually amounted to a breach of traditional gender conceptions, either by (a) re-defining women partisans as men or by (b) integrating violence into the traditional conception of women's role in society.