

Gender, religion and social work in the formation of European welfare provision, 19th and 20th centuries

A proposal of a Special Issue to be edited by Pirjo Markkola and Dominika Gruzziel

In the 19th century, fundamental changes in welfare provision took place in Europe. The relations between the state and the churches were often renegotiated and the role of the state and other non-religious providers of welfare strengthened. However, church-based charities remained and expanded as well. For example, the German education of deaconesses was introduced in the early 19th century as a Protestant response to the better quality of nursing and social care provided by the Catholic institutions. Several minority churches offered their own networks of social care and an increasing number of charities and philanthropic associations were founded all over Europe. The secular provision of welfare was often shaped by the cultural context of the majority churches. In recent years, comparative scholarship on religion and the state has explored the role of Christian denominations in the formation of European welfare states, and political outcomes deriving from differences between Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran traditions have been outlined.¹ Still, when it comes to the history of social work (care), the religious landscape of Europe needs to be nuanced.

In terms of gender history, charities and care are often associated with women. There is a strong scholarship on women and religious charities, social work and nursing showing the ways in which women throughout Europe and beyond were engaged in various forms of social work. Some scholars argue that the feminization of charities can be dated to the 19th century whereas some others stress the early public social welfare as a domain taken over by male civil servants.² However, less is known about the male arenas of religious social work or the female involvement in the early formation of public social care in various parts of Europe.

We find it important to explore the gendering formation of social work (care) both in different religious contexts as well as secular contexts influenced by religious traditions in Europe. European religious history is not only Catholic or Protestant but also Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim, among others, and the Protestants, in particular, have been divided into several churches and fractions. Some of them have been majority churches with strong ties to the state or a tensed or even hostile relationship with the state; some others have been minority churches with sometimes problematic relations to the state. In terms of social care, all denominations have represented differing and changing voices. Moreover, the ways in which understandings of gender relations have taken shape vary over time and between denominations.

¹ e.g. *Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare States*, ed. by Kees van Kersbergen & Philip Manow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Sigrun Kahl, "The religious roots of modern poverty policy: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Protestant traditions compared," *European Journal of Sociology*, 66 (2005), 91–126; *Religion and Welfare in 21st Century Europe*, Vol. 1 & 2, ed. Anders Bäckström & al (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010–2011); *Journal of Church and State* 56:1 (2014) Special issue: Lutheranism and the Nordic Welfare State, ed. by Ingela K. Naumann & Pirjo Markkola.

² e.g. Catherine M. Prelinger, *Charity, Challenge, and Change. Religious dimensions of the mid-nineteenth-century women's movement in Germany* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); *Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain, 1800–1940*, ed. by Sue Morgan & Jacqueline de Vries (London & New York: Routledge, 2010); Christine Adams, *Poverty, Charity, and Motherhood: Maternal Societies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010); *Deaconesses in Nursing Care. International Transfer of a Female Model of Life and Work in the 19th and 20th Century*, ed. by Susanne Kreutzer & Karen Nolte (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016).

We invite members of the Cost Action as well as other scholars to a brainstorming session on a special issue on gender, religion and social work (care) in 19th and 20th century Europe. We aim at addressing the following questions, among others: How was gendered social care constructed, experienced and understood in different religious settings? What kind of male and female arenas of social work were promoted or discouraged in religious contexts? Did religious understandings assign lay men and women differing positions in social work? How were lay people seen vis-à-vis the clergy? How were relations between religious actors and the state authorities constructed? Were there examples of competition, cooperation or compromises between various actors? What kind of spaces of experience and horizons of expectations were formed in the field of social welfare? How did religiously motivated gendered actors conceptualize their activism? We also welcome investigations of historically and contextually changing concepts of care, social work, social welfare or social care as one of the issues to be analyzed.

If you wish to participate in the planning of the special issue at the Cost Action online meeting in December 14 to 16, please send a short description of your ideas (ca 300 words) to Pirjo Markkola (pirjo.markkola@tuni.fi) and Dominika Gruziel (dominika.gruziel@eui.eu) by December 2. Please, feel free to contact us for more information.