

First announcement and call for papers

Exhausted Women – Exhausted Welfare

Religion and minorities in the transformations of gender and welfare

23-24 November 2017

The Humanities Theatre, English Park campus area, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden



The Nordic conference is arranged in collaboration between
The International Society for the Research and Study of Diaconia and Christian Social Practice (ReDi)
Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre (CRS), Uppsala University
The Impact of Religion Research Programme, Uppsala University
VID specialized University, Oslo
The Church of Sweden Research Unit, Uppsala

Media in Sweden report frequently on the problem of exhaustion leading to long-term sick leave, particularly amongst women employed in the welfare sector. The news is also filled with reports on the effects of strains put on the healthcare system, but also on the system of social security, and schools. Shrinking budgets and increasing demands, combined with problems in the recruitment of skilled labor, result in obvious deficits in a safety net that Swedes have long taken for granted. These gaps in turn tend to increase fear of migration. Immigrants, on the other hand, provide much of the cheap labor needed in the welfare sector.

The challenges presently confronting the Swedish welfare system have to do with social changes closely related to both gender, religion and minorities. Similar challenges are seen all over Europe, albeit taking different shapes depending on different historic circumstances.

The conference will focus on the role of religion and faith based organizations in relation to these challenges in the Nordic countries. The challenges will be set in a wider context of the transformation of the whole European post-war model of welfare organization. This model has been highly dependent on the idea of stable heterosexual families, with male breadwinners earning the money to support their wives and children, but even dependent on wives, grandmothers, mothers-in-law, sisters and daughters taking the main responsibility for care for children and dependent adults. While this model

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is increasingly giving way to a more individualized system of bread-winning and social security, women's care-giving still constitutes a key factor in the organization of welfare in Europe.

It is to the complex relationship between gender and the role of religion in ongoing social changes affecting the provision of welfare that we will turn our attention in this conference. The role of religion in relation to the ongoing challenges is ambiguous. Religious communities have in different ways contributed to the development of social care, health care and education all over Europe. They provide resources connected to traditions of human dignity and neighborly love. They are also, often times, carriers of traditional values with regard to family and gender.

Do religious communities mirror society at large, in relation to the present challenges? Do they have a prophetic role to fill or do they rather defend outdated models of living together? How do faith-based organisations and communities relate to the ongoing commercialisation and individualisation of welfare solutions? How do churches and other religious bodies handle problems of exhaustion in their own contexts?

Abstracts for paper presentations on these and similar topics may be sent by e-mail to [Ninna Edgardh](mailto:ninna.edgardh@crs.uu.se) ninna.edgardh@crs.uu.se by September 1 at the latest.

The abstracts of a maximum of 200 words shall include a presentation of the theme as well as a short presentation of the presenter, including scholarly and/or organizational position.

Reports from practice will be welcomed in a special session.

Contributions from master- and PhD-students are encouraged.

Notification on acceptance of papers will be given continuously during the period.

More information on program, registration etc. will be provided shortly at www.crs.uu.se.

Preliminary program

Thursday November 23

11.00 Registration opens

12.00 Lunch (optional)

13.15 Welcome greetings

13.30 Key note 1

14.15 Key note 2

15.00 Coffee

15.30 Paper session

17.15-18.15 Book launch *Religion and Welfare in Europe: Gendered and Minority Perspectives*.

19.00 Dinner

Friday November 24

9.00 Keynote 3

9.45 Keynote 4

10.30 Coffee

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11-12.30 Paper session

12.30 Closing session

13.00 Lunch (optional)