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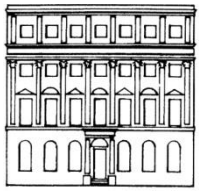

BULLETIN

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Solidarity and Care: A Research Area of the GHIL
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SOLIDARITY AND CARE: A RESEARCH AREA OF THE GHIL

ANDREAS GESTRICH

Since 2009 most of the research projects undertaken by the Fellows of the German Historical Institute London have contributed to one of three thematic fields designated as the Institute's major research areas.[1] This themed issue of the *GHIL Bulletin* is initiating a loose series on the Institute's work by presenting current research in these special thematic fields. The present issue is dedicated to the Institute's activities in the research area entitled Solidarity and Care.

Comparative research on the structures of the welfare state in Britain and Germany has been a focal point of the Institute's wider work on the development of industrial society in the two countries since the 1980s.[2] Current projects in the research area Solidarity and Care build on this tradition, but extend it in terms of chronology, geographical scope,[3] and, above all, the development of new approaches and research perspectives. In line with recent general trends in this field, research at the GHIL now concentrates less on the legal and institutional history of the modern welfare state than on the concepts, languages, and practices of state and non-state actors; the experience of poverty and dependence; and the types of social control associated with social inclusion and support. In this context we focus on the sources produced by local or regional poor relief administrations, private philanthropic activities, and families and neighbourhoods in the context of poor relief, but also on practices such as the care of orphans or adoption. We will make hitherto neglected source material on the linguistic strategies of the poor and dependant, the verbalization of their needs and experiences, and the attitudes of those involved in

[1] See <http://www.ghil.ac.uk/research.html>, accessed 13 Aug. 2013.

[2] Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Wolfgang Mock (eds.), *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany* (London, 1981).

[3] See e.g. 'The European Welfare State in a Global Context', conference organized by Christoph Cornelißen (Frankfurt), Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor 2010/11, and held at the GHIL, 11–13 Apr. 2013. See the conference report in this issue of the *GHIL Bulletin*.

supporting them accessible in electronic, online editions. Our research focuses on modern Britain and Germany (from the eighteenth to the twentieth century), but always within a wider comparative European context.

The Conceptual Framework

Solidarity and care are important terms of conceptual history which have long been neglected. Solidarity, one of the key concepts in sociology since Auguste Comte and especially Émile Durkheim's seminal work, *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893),[4] long remained, as Kurt Bayertz graphically put it, something of an 'erratic rock in the moral landscape of modern society',[5] while Herfried Münkler simply called it 'the stepchild' of moral philosophy.[6] This has clearly changed in recent years. The concept of solidarity has attracted new theoretical and historical interest, partly in the context of the burgeoning literature on civil society (*Zivilgesellschaft*)[7] and studies on the orientation towards the common good (*Gemeinwohl*);[8] and partly in the context of the present economic crisis, growing income disparities, and a general interest in the theoretical and practical aspects of social justice,[9] the future of the modern welfare state, and other areas

[4] Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York, 1997).

[5] Kurt Bayertz (ed.), *Solidarität: Begriff und Problem* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996). For a shorter English version of this volume see id. (ed.), *Solidarity* (Dordrecht, 1999). Quoted from the preface of the German edition, p. 9.

[6] Herfried Münkler, 'Enzyklopädie der Ideen der Zukunft', in Jens Beckert et al. (eds.), *Transnationale Solidarität: Chancen und Grenzen* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004), 15–28, at 15.

[7] From the vast literature on this topic see esp. Dieter Gosewinkel, Dieter Rucht, Wolfgang van den Daele, and Jürgen Kocka (eds.), *Zivilgesellschaft – national und transnational* (Berlin, 2004); John Ehrenberg, *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea* (New York, 1999); Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (eds.), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities* (Cambridge, 2001).

[8] See in particular Herfried Münkler, Harald Bluhm, and Karsten Fischer (eds.), *Forschungsberichte der interdisziplinären Arbeitsgruppe 'Gemeinwohl und Gemeinsinn' der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 2001–2).

[9] At the GHIL Felix Römer has started a research project entitled 'Semantics of Social Justice in Britain and Germany since 1945', which is attached to a

of modern ethical discourse.[10] Similarly, since Carol Gilligan's *Ethics of Care*, the concept of care (*Fürsorge*) has shifted from being a theoretically unspecific term into the centre, first, of feminist discourse on ethics, and then of social theory in general. It has now gained wide significance in modern ethical theory and social policy.[11] The concept of care 'implies that there is moral significance in the fundamental elements of relationships and dependencies in human life'.[12] On this basis, the concept on the one hand tries to explain gender differences in moral development (Gilligan), and on the other to function as a critical moral theory transcending the realm of private relationships in family and community, and aiming to change the way we conceive of obligations for private and public mutual support in wider national and international contexts.[13]

The number of studies which deal with the concepts of solidarity and care from these various theoretical perspectives is now substantial.[14] For the Institute's projects they provide an interesting framework for a wider analysis of the development of the modern welfare state, and of the mental changes within it. Care (*Fürsorge*) is a term whose usage can be traced back to antiquity (Latin: *cura*; Greek:

different research area. See <http://www.ghil.ac.uk/research/political_history/the_semantics_of_social_justice.html>, accessed 9 Sept. 2013.

[10] See e.g. Steffen Mau and Benjamin Veghte (eds.), *Social Justice, Legitimacy and the Welfare State* (Aldershot, 2007); Eckhard Romanus, *Soziale Gerechtigkeit, Verantwortung und Würde: Der egalitäre Liberalismus nach John Rawls und Ronald Dworkin* (Freiburg, 2008). Some of the most interesting research on solidarity has been produced in the context of modern bioethics. For an overview and extensive bibliography see Barbara Prainsack and Alena Buyx, *Solidarity: Reflexions on an Emerging Concept in Bioethics* (Swindon, 2011).

[11] Carol Gilligan, 'Moral Orientation and Moral Development', in Virginia Held (ed.), *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics* (London, 2005), 31–47; Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford, 2006).

[12] Maureen Sander-Staudt, 'Care Ethics', in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2011), at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/care-eth/>, accessed 5 Aug. 2013.

[13] Daniel Engster, *The Heart of Justice* (Oxford, 2007).

[14] In addition to the works already cited see also Ulf Tranow, *Solidarität: Soziologische Perspektiven und Konzepte* (Saarbrücken, 2012); Geza Reisz, *Solidarität in Deutschland und Frankreich: Eine politische Deutungsanalyse* (Opladen, 2006). Solidarity also plays a major role in the sociology of Anthony Giddens and in

epimeleia). It has been linked with poor relief (*Armenfürsorge*) and, in particular, taking responsibility for and looking after children in need, right through to modern times, although primarily with a different, more paternalistic twist than its modern feminist counterpart. Solidarity, however, is a term which only originated in the nineteenth century. The French Revolution transformed the Christian notion of brotherhood into the secular concept of *fraternité*, which, in turn, provided the basis for the rise of the concept of socialist class solidarity and the sociological understanding of solidarity as a force for social cohesion.[15] Thus, as concepts with their own historical development, solidarity and care form useful tools for analysing the changing legitimation of aid, their links with the evolving concept of human dignity, and the religious or secular drives behind charitable or philanthropic activity in general. It is also important to see, however, that these changes affected not only those who helped, but also the expectations of the poor, and how those in need of help justified and defended their claims for public or private assistance.

All the projects in this research area at the Institute are interested in these aspects of conceptual history, but they are at the heart of a large project, 'Pauper Letters and Petitions for Poor Relief in Germany and Great Britain, 1770–1914', jointly funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and directed by Andreas Gestrich and Steven A. King (Leicester). This project centres on the production of a large database and online edition of letters and petitions written by, or on behalf of, the poor, and will also contain the relevant administrative correspondence. This will provide insights into how such changes in the perception of what constitutes the cement of the social fabric affected the languages and rhetoric of entitlement and help used by paupers and the institutions and individuals they turned to. This interest in changing concepts also informs other projects and some of our major conferences in this field, such as 'The Dilemmas of International Humanitarian Aid in

all social theory referring to his work. See e.g. Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right*: *The Future of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, 1994).

[15] Karl Heinz Metz, 'Solidarität und Geschichte: Institutionen und sozialer Begriff der Solidarität in Westeuropa im 19. Jahrhundert', in Bayertz (ed.), *Solidarität*, 172–201.

the Twentieth Century',[16] that on the protests and the visual representations of the unemployed,[17] and on the concept of the dignity of the poor.[18]

Institutions and Practices of Solidarity and Care

The projects in this research area are all interested, but not necessarily primarily, in the history of concepts. Rather, they focus on language usage in certain social and institutional contexts, and on the practices described in the source material. Their emphasis is on the significance of natural and social relationships for the care of especially vulnerable people, such as orphaned children, the sick, or the elderly.[19] The top-

[16] 'The Dilemmas of International Humanitarian Aid in the Twentieth Century', conference organized by Johannes Paulmann (Mannheim/Mainz), Gerda Henkel Visiting Professor 2009/10, and held at the GHIL, 12–14 May 2011. Full details can be found under Events and Conferences on the GHIL's website <www.ghil.ac.uk>. The proceedings of this conference are presently being prepared for publication with OUP.

[17] 'From the Blanketeers to the Present: Understanding Protests of the Unemployed', conference organized by Matthias Reiss and held at the GHIL, 16–17 Feb. 2007; 'Visual Representations of the Unemployed', conference jointly organized by Matthias Reiss (University of Exeter) and Andreas Gestrich (GHIL), and held at the University of Exeter, 12–13 Dec. 2008. Full details of both conferences can be found under Events and Conferences on the GHIL's website <www.ghil.ac.uk>. See also Matthias Reiss (ed.), *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford 2007); and Matthias Reiss and Matt Perry (eds.), *Unemployment and Protest: New Perspectives on Two Centuries of Contention* (Oxford, 2011).

[18] 'The Dignity of the Poor: Concepts, Practices, Representations', conference organized by Andreas Gestrich (GHIL) in cooperation with the DFG Collaborative Research Centre 600 at the University of Trier: 'Strangers and Poor People: Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day' and held at the GHIL, 7–9 Dec. 2006. Full details can be found under Events and Conferences on the GHIL's website <www.ghil.ac.uk>. The proceedings of this conference are being prepared for publication with OUP.

[19] Andreas Gestrich, Elizabeth Hurren, and Steven A. King (eds.), *Poverty and Sickness in Modern Europe* (London, 2012); Andreas Gestrich, 'Altersarmut', in Herbert Uerlings, Nina Trauth, and Lukas Clemens (eds.), *Armut: Perspektiven in Kunst und Gesellschaft,* exhibition catalogue (Trier, 2011), 34–5;

ics addressed in this context range from adoption as a form of social inclusion and care to the importance of family networks among the poor. In particular, the history of adoption (comprising the adopted child as well as the adopting family) is a field that has so far been gravely neglected by social historians,[20] and in which the complex ambivalences of care between altruism and self-interest can be studied. Family networks among the poor tended to be portrayed as fragile, or almost non-existent.[21] However, research based on letters and petitions of the poor, in particular, shows that the contrary was the case. These sources also allow us to reconstruct the multi-layered network of relatives, neighbours, and friends of the poor and their social and economic significance at times of hardship and distress.[22] The projects, however, also look at other institutions of care and solidarity, such as neighbourhoods, parishes and churches, trade unions and organizations of the unemployed, and the various ways in which they provided relief and decided who to support and who to turn away.

Andreas Gestrich and Daniela Heinisch, '"They sit for days and have only their sorrow to eat": Old Age Poverty in German Pauper Narratives', in Beate Althammer, Lutz Raphael, and Tamara Stazic-Wendt (eds.), *Rescuing the Vulnerable: Poverty, Welfare and Social Ties in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe* (forthcoming).

[20] Benedikt Stuchtey, 'Adoption', in Friedrich Jaeger (ed.), *Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart, 2012), xv. 675–8; id. 'Stiefeltern', ibid. (Stuttgart, 2010), xii. 999–1001.

[21] Peter Laslett, 'Family, Kinship, and Collectivity as Systems of Support in Pre-Industrial Europe: A Consideration of the "Nuclear Hardship" Hypothesis', *Continuity and Change*, 3 (1988), 153–75.

[22] Steven A. King, 'Friendship, Kinship and Belonging in the Letters of Urban Paupers 1800–1840', *Historical Social Research*, 33 (2008), 249–77; id. 'Forme et fonction de la parenté chez les populations pauvres d'Angleterre, 1800–1840', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 65/5 (2010), 1147–74. The importance of family ties in pauper families is also shown by Jens Gründler, *Armut und Wahnsinn: 'Arme Irre' und ihre Familien im Spannungsfeld von Psychiatrie und Armenfürsorge in Glasgow 1875–1921* (Munich, 2013); see also Sheila Cooper, 'Kinship and Welfare in Early Modern England: Sometimes Charity Begins at Home', in Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely (eds.), *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: The Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain, c.1550–1950* (Aldershot, 2007), 55–70.

The differentiation which public institutions made between the deserving and the undeserving poor is of primary importance to the DFG–AHRC project 'Pauper Letters and Petitions for Poor Relief in Germany and Great Britain, 1770–1914', as these are classic documents for analysing how the poor described their lives and hardship, and for looking at the strategies they used to prove their deservingness and justify the legitimacy of their claim on public funds. By using such strategies, the poor were demonstrating their compliance with the official requirements for obtaining relief, and frequently also referring to languages and concepts outside the 'offical mind'. These related not only to the Christian values and duties of those who were in a position to help, but also, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to the new secular values of philanthropy and solidarity. Thus these letters and petitions show that paupers must be treated as part of the history of changing concepts of solidarity and care. The letters they wrote provide historians with exciting sources for a conceptual history from below.

The following presentation of current projects at the GHIL will concentrate on the project 'Pauper Letters and Petitions for Poor Relief in Germany and Great Britain, 1770–1914', which started in April 2011 and comprises both an online edition of pauper letters and petitions, and two Ph.D. projects. Andreas Gestrich and Steven King will present the aims, objectives, and initial findings of the project. Daniela Heinisch at the GHIL is working on a Ph.D. thesis which concentrates on pauper petitions in Frankfurt, and Ben Harvey at Leicester University is working on pauper letters and petitions for poor relief in the Welsh borderlands. This overview presents Daniela Heinisch's thesis. Benedikt Stuchtey then writes about his work on the history of adoption. This project will result in a major monograph on the topic. It opens up many new insights into the development of our concepts of childhood and family. However, the topic also presents us with a unique focus for studying the multiple and ambivalent social and ideological, national and international contexts of care for and solidarity with children who are orphaned or unwanted.[23]

Finally, we are grateful to Anke Sczesny (Augsburg) for contributing a review article, 'Poverty Research from Below: Letters and

[23] Benedikt Stuchtey has recently left the GHIL to take up a Chair of Modern History at the University of Marburg. This project will, therefore, be continued outside the framework of this GHIL research area.

Petitions by the Poor', to this *Bulletin*. As her review article deals with work relevant to this research area and publications closely related to our own project, it will be included in this section as an additional paper charting the wider landscape of international research in the field of poverty, welfare, solidarity, and care.