CPPE Care Workshop Series 2  
Alternatives: Organising and consuming care  
February 3, 2016 (12:00-3:30 pm)

Speakers: Deirdre Shaw, Bue Rübner Hansen, Andreas Chatzidakis

Venue: Ken Edwards Building 324  
School of Management Building  
University of Leicester

This is the second in a series of workshops on the theme of Care. It is convened by the Centre for Philosophy and Political Economy (CPPE) at the University of Leicester’s School of Management.

12-1: Deirdre Shaw

1-2: Bue Rübner Hansen

2-3: Andreas Chatzidakis

3-3:30: General discussion

Lunch included

Seminar descriptions:

Towards a Theory of Care for Consumption

Deirdre Shaw, University of Glasgow

This talk will seek to develop a theory of care in consumption. Current care theory tends to be conceived along philosophical, psychological and labour dimensions, with much of the literature focusing on caring labour and, therefore, invoking a productionist orientation. By contrast the focus of this research on consumption suggests a reorientation in conceptualising care and in doing so draws from Joan Tronto’s (2013) phases of care in arguing that care-giving is not necessarily only an activity involving one’s labour. What and how we consume manifests care and caring and, thus, it is important to explore purchasing and consumption within the context of a theory of care to more fully apprehend the nuances of care.

Building Power in the Crisis of Social Reproduction

Bue Rübner Hansen

In the present conjuncture taking power is the same as administering the crisis—unless it is done on the basis of a genuine form of social power. This presentation suggests that both the
problems of managing the crisis and that of building social power revolve around the problem of social reproduction, requiring us to explore the complex terrain between the governance of resilience and the politics of class formation.

Bue Rübner Hansen is a post-doctoral researcher currently based in Barcelona. He is an editorial member of Viewpoint Magazine, and fellow-traveller of Barcelona en Comú, currently working on questions around class, migration and dispositifs of solidarity.

Care and Anti-Consumption in Crisis

Andreas Chatzidakis, Royal Holloway

Against the primarily Enlightenment-based, and (at least for some) 'masculine' and individualising tendencies of the burgeoning consumer ethics literature, an ethic of care is proving to be a very welcome addition. However there is still little understanding of how care ethics can help advance more politically progressive models of consumer morality, ones that go beyond idealised depictions of everyday acts of benevolence (e.g. by caring for one's family and/or by setting specific environmental standards to one's shopping basket). I am going to screen a film about Skoros, an anti-consumerist collective in Athens that was established just before the beginning of the crisis. The film shows how members of the collective tried to do things differently and how, during the crisis, anti-consumption as originally understood no longer applied; it had to be re-evaluated and re-defined. I will also argue that the film provides insight into how a more radical, collectivist and multi-faceted notion of care in consumption might develop.

More on the Event

To what extent may an ethics of care provide an alternative analytic resource for studying organisational and consumer ethics? Traditionally both consumption and organisation studies have approached the study of ethical practice according to formal philosophical frameworks i.e. deontology, duty, virtue and justice. An ethics of care, as proposed and developed by feminist scholars (i.e. Joan Tronto, Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan) compels us to consider ethics from the position of care-in-practice. This means, for Tronto for example, specifying and identifying empirical expressions of the grammar of care i.e. acts of caring for and caring about. Such emphasis, on activity and lived experience, resonates with recent contributions to consumption and organization literature on ethics that advocates eschewing ethics as abstract principles and universal codes in favour of studying embodied, intersubjective and performative gestures (i.e. Shaw et al, 2013, Hancock, 2008).

By placing care centrally to concerns for organizational and consumption ethics we propose to examine how people doing care work - conceived as paid and unpaid work - attempt to create alternatives. At the level of everyday life, this invites us to consider how alternative practices of consumption and organization are explicit or implicit attempts to care for, or care about subjects i.e. the environment, the marginalised, the hungry; to what extent then does caring in practice become a basis for novel and sustainable forms of collectivity? At a more structural level, we ask in which ways is care practiced with some degree of autonomy from the demands of the State.
and capital during the contemporary crisis of social reproduction? Solidarity economies in Greece and Spain are interesting examples. What contradictions does this involve, what compromised? How will these experiments relate to changes in government? Are such experiments relegated to near disaster zones? The networks of Occupy Wall Street, for example, were able to quickly respond to the survivors of Hurricane Sandy. What minor and major strategies exist to cope with the neo-liberal care regime. How do these relate to older strategies from the 1970s and 1980s? Are the new bio-hacking circles the inheritors of Act Up activists? How do refugees engage in activism and care for their fellow refugees? The workshop will create a space for discussing questions such as these.