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## The economics of charity – Who cares?

Lucy Morris

University of Notre Dame Australia, [lucy.morris@baptistcare.com.au](mailto:lucy.morris@baptistcare.com.au)

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## **ABSTRACT**

The current Australian human services charity profile is as a socially moral, not-for-profit business which generates a surplus; a community organization advocating on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities. This description is becoming harder to reconcile with the reality of relativist values-based care work carried out on a daily basis by tens of thousands of women for meagre wages in poor employment conditions. This paper argues that human services charity work is gendered and combined with its religious, social and ethical underpinnings, oppressive employment conditions and practices are facilitated that are flourishing in the present economic rationalist/neoliberal environment.

**Key Words:** Charity, Gender, Discrimination, Caring, Ethics, Employment

## **THE ECONOMICS OF CHARITY – WHO CARES?**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The ‘economics of charity’ explores the charitable business paradigm from a feminist perspective, discussing the financial viability of the sizeable Australian charitable human services industry contained within the Third Sector which is based on cheap female labour in care work. The profile of this particular group of Australian charities is predominantly as a socially moral, not-for-profit business generating a surplus; community organisations that advocate on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities. It is argued that the neoliberal business, economic rationalist approach has to be applied to charities to ensure the survival of essential community services. Such survival has a heavy price tag. In particular, this description has become harder to reconcile with the reality of relativist values-based care work carried out on a daily basis by the tens of thousands of women who labour for meagre wages in poor employment conditions. If charities want to be different from both business and government in the key identifying organisational characteristics, such as their leadership practices, espoused ethics and values, integrated spiritual behaviours and end the unspoken gender discrimination, the predominant economic, corporate business approach has to be re-evaluated and changed to ensure a different future that eliminates such discrimination. Therefore, this paper argues that human services charities should not be assessed solely from the neo-liberal economic rationalist business paradigm. This paper provides a feminist critique of such considerations which has implications for the ethics of caring expressed by women in charities.

In 2005, the Business Review Weekly (BRW) described the Australian charitable sector as being ‘worth \$70 billion and [...] almost 10% of the economy, employing more than 600,000 people’:

*Charities, clubs and non-government organisations affect everyone. The Government is outsourcing more and more services to the sector [...] religious groups are the hidden giants of the economy (Ferguson 2005:45).*

*Turnover in Australia's non-profit sector in 1995-96 was \$27 billion (Lyons and Hocking 2000); in 1999-2000 it was \$35 billion (Lyons, Salamon & Sokolowski 2007); last financial year is was probably \$50 billion (Lyons 2007:12).*

While the business paradigm appears to be all-pervasive and accepted unquestioningly in the human services charitable sector, a different perspective is explored because the question 'who cares' in connection with charities, evokes strong emotions with the value-laden expectations of their work. This Paper focuses on the providers of 'care'; it offer insights into the broader national discourse about gender discrimination, the social and cultural isolation of women and the gendered economics of charities for those involved in the work. For this discussion, the word 'charity' is restricted to human service organisations that provide community services for public benefit, which are not-for-profit, non-government and advocate on behalf of disadvantaged people and communities. Lyons' (2007) argues this definition is too narrow, located as these charities are within the Third Sector, because it influences the perspective of this broader Sector within which they are situated. For Lyons, the Third Sector includes *all* organisations that pass the 'test of membership, that is, private organisations that are non-profit-distributing and/or democratically governed' (Lyons 2007:10). Nonetheless, this narrower definition provides the parameters for this article.

## **BACKGROUND: THE GENDERED PROFILE OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITY**

The charitable sector's workers comprise 87% women (ACOSS 2005). 'Care work is overwhelmingly undertaken by women' (Meagher and Healey 2005:27) and the reality is that care work in all its various guises and situations for centuries has been primarily women's work. This practice is active in today's societies and still has significant currency (Meagher and Healey 2005:9; Morris 2007:87). However, definitions of care work continue to evolve, as is borne out by recent research for the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Daly and Standing 2001) and the European Union (EU) ('What is care work?' [no date]), both of which have provided several defining characteristics for care work. These characteristics focus on the work itself and its implications and experience, not recognising that it is women who do the work, irrespective of its description. I argue that this is a key element in the definition of care work. These defining characteristics include paid and unpaid work and contain elements, notions and experiences of volunteerism that adhere to care work activities and motivations inherent in the issues of gendered discrimination, spirituality and ethics. The quality of care is integrated into the motivations for care provision, together with relationships consequently created between the carer and those for whom they care. This gendered profile of Australian charities underpins the four elements of my proposition, that the: i) employment opportunities for women in charities, ii) the ethical dimensions of women's care work, iii) the Christian antecedents of female caring and its spiritualisation, and iv) the female character of charities, all point to gendered charity work as a site of gendered disadvantage.

## **1. AUSTRALIAN CHARITABLE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN**

Employment opportunities for women in the charitable care sector are significant, but their pay and working conditions are poor. Women are far more likely to be employed part-time and on a casual basis, 'limiting their capacity to achieve adequate wages and career development opportunities' (Meagher and Healey 2005). Gender discrimination is evident in care worker incomes at all qualifications levels; and in community services, care workers achieve substantially lower hourly rates of income than non-care workers (Meagher 2007). Importantly, 'social policy workers should be concerned if delivering services to vulnerable citizens such as children, the aged and people with disabilities creates another vulnerable social group: the workers employed to care for them' (Meagher 2007:152). In addition, service recipients themselves are in danger of being harmed by the low wages and poor conditions of the workers. The labour intensive nature of care work consists almost entirely of the service interaction between the care workers and service users. Their skills, qualifications and capacity are directly affected by low pay and poor working conditions. These do not provide sufficient incentive to increase the quality of the services through better trained employees, professional growth and education, as this adds unacceptable costs to the labour. The evidence points to a 'care penalty' (Meagher 2007:163) in the labour market which is seen as a consequence of the cultural devaluation and poor industrial protection of care work. This is at odds with the value placed on the ideal of 'care', the sacralisation of the caring motivations. However, this aspect of care work as it intersects with the gendered economy continues to be ignored and is not translated into any value subsequently placed on care work.

The debate about this issue is insistent. There is a perception the payment of living wages will change the quality of the caring relationship, thereby diminishing it, changing people's motivations from the ethics of care to one driven by money. This is criticized strongly by feminist economists, who highlighted this systemic construct that also contains the benefits that arise from not changing the current conditions and thinking (Meagher 2007). It is still a significant belief among care workers, although there is some evidence it is slowly changing in some Australian states, for example, Western Australia (Morris 2007). This concern is a contributing factor in continuing to hold wages at low levels and it supports the proposition that economic citizenship is gendered and particularly so within the welfare state. The implications for charitable work suggests it has been constructed around 'two-track citizenship' with male citizenship defined in relation to paid work in the productive economy and female citizenship in relation to unpaid work in the home, volunteering, care work and the valued actualisation of the roles of wife and mother (Lund 2002). Women's employment is linked far more strongly to unpaid work responsibilities including care in the home. These linkages underlie the gendered patterns in women and men's experiences in the different labour markets (Western et al. 2007:407). There is a strong connection between women working in care industries and the lack of value placed on their work, their position in the workplace and society as a whole (Pateman 2000).

One of the dangers of focusing on this critical aspect of the broader gender economics debate is that the feminist issues and economic and industrial justice for the workers and social justice for the service recipients, distracts those working in the sector. It prevents them from examining the implications of this sacralisation of the characteristics of care work that have, until recent times, contributed to the sense of difference held by human services charity in their work and service

and have therefore been strongly held. Some of this narrative is held in the discourse concerning the ethical and moral dimension of caring, it is one of the dominant myths in the human services discourse, but not the only one.

## **2. THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S CARE WORK**

Secondly, care work is perceived to contain an inherent ethical dimension (Gilligan 1982). As care work is a female gendered activity as demonstrated by the employment statistics (Meagher and Healey 2005; 2006), it is argued that it contains this ethical dimension precisely because of work feminisation. In a female dominated industry, the act of caring visibly displays many of the care work characteristics which are described and are accepted as inherently female. This relationship between the female ethics of care and charities providing care work by women being places of gender discrimination is explored here. Research literature affirms this description of organisational caring which reflects the tone of the female ethical caring experience.

*Ethically, caring, the relation in which we do meet the other morally, will be described as arising out of natural caring [...] the relation of natural caring will be identified as the human condition that we, consciously or unconsciously, perceive as 'good'. It is that condition toward which we long and strive and it is our longing for caring – to be in that special relation – that provides the motivation for us to be moral. We want to be moral in order to remain in the caring relation (Noddings 2003:5).*

This reinforces the notion of care work being situated within the relationship between the carer and the person being cared for and the motivations for this arrangement and experience. There is



a body of literature that explores the ethics of care as both a feminized attribute and a claimed characteristic of being female.

Broadly speaking, feminist ethics are claimed by those who believe that there exists a normal feminist approach to ethical problems as an alternative to the male approach. If the view is that history and philosophy have been written by men and the worldview thus presented is of a male world, with gender, sex, race and class specific male systems, structures and explanations, then there is a real need to situate the female perspective within the centre of the feminist thinking to see what differences might exist when comparisons are made across all perspectives:

*Among the many reasons women have identified for developing new approaches to ethics, perhaps the most obvious comes from the experience of being caught up short by the anti-woman bias that pervades so much of the existing theoretical work in ethics. Even the most cursory feminist review of the work of the leading moral theorists reveals that the existing proposals of philosophic ethics do not constitute the objective, impartial theories that they are claimed to be; rather, most theories reflect and support explicitly gender-biased and often blatantly misogynist values (Sherwin 1993:3-10).*

However, it is argued that feminist ethics are not a place solely for women (Sherwin 1993). The subordination of one group by another is morally wrong as well as being politically unjust. There should always be a connection between the ethical theorising and policy formulation and the context is always critical. Those thinking about the issues should always look at the connections between the issue in hand and the patterns of oppression, ‘especially, but not solely, those associated with sexism’ (Sherwin 1993:22). Gilligan and Noddings have argued for their ethic of caring and their theory’s capacity to look into relationship as the abiding reason for their

thinking. Sherwin argued feminist ethics must recognise the moral perspective of women, and insofar as that included the perspective described as an ethics of care, we should expand our moral agenda accordingly.

However, we should be careful, in this consideration not to reinforce those perceived differences within an already existing sexist culture (Wolf 1993). There are four main ways women have been excluded from traditional philosophy (Mullet 1993): by explicit denigration, by simple omission, by system exclusion and by the adversary method. Lawrence Kohlberg (1981), an educational psychologist, studied 84 boys over a 20 year period and then generalised his results claiming they represented six universal stages of moral development, an example of 'simple omission'.

In response, Gilligan (1982) claimed she had found two different languages, one of impartiality and justice, and a second, relational language of care. Her work was based on Kohlberg's research results as it seemed from his results that women did not, on average, achieve the same levels of moral reasoning as men. Gilligan challenged this and claimed that, rather than being morally immature, females reasoned differently. Thus female ethical reasoning was not based on impartial principles of justice, but on care and responsibility within personal relationships (Trevino et al. 2003).

Gilligan's work was seen as controversial by many, an assessment arising from her research methodology and ideological content (Chanter 2006). Wolf believed Gilligan's work was influential in the growth of 'difference feminism', which focused on traditional feminine qualities, nurturing, intuition, emotionality, attachment rather than autonomy, listening rather than speaking, all of which were seen as being of less value than traditional male values of

assertiveness, reason and blind impartiality. Difference feminism provided a way of looking at those qualities and turned them into a separate system that was not inferior to those of men. Importantly, however, Wolf suggested Gilligan and others may be ‘premature in assuming that women’s interests in connections, outweighs their interest in recognition, status and individuation’ (Wolf 1993:267). So it has been argued that Gilligan’s work left people with the impression that an ethic of caring is better than an ethic of justice. However:

*[Gilligan] insisted that she was claiming only a difference, not a superiority. Her aim, she stressed, was to ensure that woman’s moral voice be taken as seriously as man’s ... [it] is an apples-or-oranges question. Like apples and oranges, an ethics of care and an ethics of justice are both good. But to insist that one kind of morality is the best is to manifest a nearly pathological need for a unitary, absolute, and universal moral standard that can erase our very real moral tensions as with a magic wand. If we are to achieve a moral maturity, Gilligan implied, we must be willing to vacillate between an ethics of care and an ethics of justice (Tong 1997:260).*

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, feminist thought has included a reorientation towards an ethics of care, as propounded by Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (2003). One of the principle features of this position is the emphasis on our caring connections with others, as opposed to that presented by the atomistic, ‘essentially solipsistic ideal of the meditative Cartesian thinker’ (Chanter 2006:75). Rather than imagining a world comprising rational people who ‘know’ which connections have to be made and whose duties are outlined as universals, the care ethic takes as its starting point our total integration and the embedded nature already in existence in our relationships with other people. ‘The networks that constitute our relationships

with others inform the way we think not just of others but also of ourselves. Taking seriously our responsibility to others also contributes to the very notion of our identities' (Chanter 2006:75). This analysis has implications for the analysis of care work and its embodiment as female charities.

Thus a view of female ethics and morality has been proposed to consider care work and charities. It argues that a decision was 'right or wrong according to how faithfully it was rooted in caring, that is, in a genuine response to the perceived needs of others' (Noddings 2003:53). This view of female ethics is critical for women as care workers as they assess their relationship to the concept and acts of care work, their experience and perceptions of it as a motivator and its capacity to enrich and grow relationships, while downplaying their economic entitlements. It has proved very useful for charities holding onto their character and differences and ensuring their economic survival. This position is different to the male hierarchy of ethics which excluded the female perspective and refused women access to the different stories and experiences of ethical behaviour as legitimate and normal. These opposing world views have ignored the experiences of women providing care work. In addition, I believe the argument that the female ethic of care work and women's experiences as carers and/or recipients is a phenomenon that owes some of its consciousness to the Christian context, solidly established over the last two millennia. It is also due to the influence this has had on gendered female work including its classist, racist overtones.

### **3. CHRISTIAN ANTECEDENTS OF FEMALE CARING AND ITS SPIRITUALISATION**

The third part of the argument acknowledges the Christian church's centrality in its construction of the work ethic as it is known today in Australia, and its contribution to shaping the female role of care work and continuing the justification for its current gendered constructs. Our concept of work as a determinant of personal value, identity and as an indicator of good character and morals, was alien in the past (Beder 2000:9). It was after the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Reformation period that work and employment acquired its moral dimension and became a central defining characteristic of human existence. As people worked hard to serve God and prove their worthiness to their neighbours, this belief in the inherent nature of the moral righteousness of work created a diligent and reliable workforce which enabled the rich to grow richer. Even today, there is a strong belief in the connection between the 'virtue of work and wealth' which endorses the matching perception that the poor have only themselves to blame for their poverty (Beder 2000; Orwell 2001; Zizek 2008). Poverty came to be seen as a sign of godlessness and moral weakness, while idleness was evidence of personal inadequacy and laziness. The acquisition of wealth became a worthy goal particularly with the helpful interpretations of certain Christian teachings. Virtue accrued to those who helped the poor. The poor were taught that being poor was an inescapable experience set by one's station in life into which one was born; rewards would be given in heaven if you worked hard on earth. In the end, the propositions supported the belief that individuals were born to a predetermined position in life. It was futile to try and change these circumstances. Poor people were better off if they engaged in preparing for the next life and left the preoccupation with wealth to those who already had it. This was ordained by God and should not be challenged. The Christian church endorsed this worldview.

In 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia, during the establishment and consolidation of social welfare practices, the influence of religion and the churches' role in charitable human services were significant (Melville and McDonald 2006:74). Early charitable work contained strong moralistic, religious narrative and language, focused on reforming the individual, saving their soul, by ensuring they worked. It highlighted further opportunities for discrimination, differences developed between the deserving and undeserving poor, blaming them as the 'other' for their situation. It is argued that the role of religion in charitable work was 'normalised to the point where it was taken for granted' (Melville and McDonald 2006:74). This was supported by the findings of the 1995 Industry Commission which noted the top six social welfare providers and nine of the top fifteen providers were church organisations. Combine this with the numbers and gender of those employed in care work (Meagher and Healey 2005) and the connection between the church's role in promoting the place of women in this work and the work itself is undeniable.

From the feminist's historical perspective, there has been a predominant belief that it was too hard for women to challenge the political and business systems to achieve the necessary policy changes to restructure life circumstances for the poor, neglected and abused in society. It was also hard for women to deliver supporting services within an increasingly competitive environment. Women have long provided charitable care works as a respectable activity in and out of the home as it did not disturb the cultural norm, the accepted image of women as wives, mothers and nurturers. It enabled them to fulfil the image and expectations of female virtuousness in the process of care work. In Australia, it has been a white elitist, classist solution and as such, inherently racist, generated from their unearned privilege. Both middle class and

wealthy women work with those without power or economic value, reflecting their own shadow, being without power in the wider, paid economy. This work was promoted by the Christian church's belief that women should be home-based where their natural caring instincts could flourish in safety and in biological fulfilment of their destiny. Women would look after children, the elderly, the disabled and the sick, appropriate for their role in life, as they could not cope in the real world of men. It was easier and safer to establish female charities that were not truly businesses, than take on the fight for more power to restructure world and local systems. It is a mirror image of the predominant androcentric, patriarchal religious and political power systems with its accompanying economic system. Women have instead, grown their own moral and ethical power within this unvalued system. It has resonated with the strongly held belief by women that caring, charitable works were somehow 'superior' to the male dominated commercial and political worlds. This was encouraged by the Church which promoted the Gospel teachings of caring for the poor and meek whose rewards would be in heaven and which aligned well with the neo-liberal, capitalistic worldviews. So care work provided the environment for the female version of power that grew out of their sense of victimization. This was due to the political, religious and gendered discrimination with its connections between feminized victim-power (Wolf 1993; Morris 2007) and the caring role (Noddings 2003). These combined together so women could identify and stand in solidarity with victims of poverty, abuse and neglect. They became the focus for white, middle-class, female charity, supported and encouraged by the androcentric, patriarchal constructs of the Church's teachings and practices in Western culture and society, concerning worthiness and benevolence.

It is interesting that the notion of 'service' held by Church's teachings has acquired an inner, transformational quality as an outer expression of a love of humanity. It is linked into the broader sacralisation of the care work and it encourages commitment to service as an ideal, to the actual experience and a belief in the righteousness and moral virtue accrued by those caring.

*The antidote to self-interest is to commit and to find cause, to commit to something outside of ourselves. To be a part of creating something we care about so we can endure the sacrifice, risk, and adventure that commitment entails. This is the deeper meaning of service' (Block 1993:10).*

As another consideration, Bell and Taylor (2004) pointed to Maslow's contribution to the discussion on spirituality in the workplace which has important implications for care work. They acknowledged workplace spirituality was rarely noted, but it offered an additional layer of meaning to the consideration of how care work is provided and why it has become embodied in this framework. It is worth enquiring whether this spiritual aspect has been generated because of and by the women who do the work, or whether this is a construct of an androcentric world, to give care work its meaning within our religious and cultural expectations.

*Maslow's concept of transcendence through self-actualization is an inherently spiritual notion ... 'Salvation' constituted a by-product of this process that could be attained primarily through self-actualisation. Maslow describes self-actualisation as achievable through the 'resacralisation of experience'. Through this the individual is able to reconnect with the sacred, the eternal and the symbolic and give up reliance on modern defence mechanisms which lead to a mistrust of virtue and values (Bell and Taylor 2004:445-446).*



It is relatively simple for charities to establish their specialty of caring work within strong ethical frameworks, imbued with a highly sensitive moral character and spiritual basis. This ensures it is unassailable to criticism and judgment, either about the work conditions and expectations within the modern industrial and community environment, or within feminist, classist or racist critiques. This links directly to previously mentioned characteristics, where the motivations of care work, the sense of volunteerism, the experience itself and relationship between the carer and the ‘caree’ are identified as critical components of care work.

#### **4. THE FEMALE CHARACTER OF CHARITIES**

Finally, in considering the ‘The Economics of Charity’, it is proposed that one way to look at the charity phenomenon, with its caring purposes, care experience and the relationships that emerge and flourish within the care work, together with its economics, is through a new capacity to define the charitable identity and organisation as ‘female’ (Morris 2007). Charitable care work is wrapped around with a fat veneer of patriarchy and androcentricity comprehensively expressed in Australian politics, commerce, religion, culture and community. It is possible to use this female organisation perspective to explore existing conflicts over the economics of charity in contrast to the realities of a feminised, care organisation. So the question is asked finally: how do charities survive financially in a competitive marketplace, where androcentric governments and business set the rules? One possible answer is offered: charities survive by paying low wages to female employees (due to political and economic decisions by society, made possible through funding contracts) and continue to use large numbers of volunteers. Charities justify and rationalise this economic injustice by raising into our consciousness, the sacralised motivation that impels people to volunteer, gifting their time and skills towards the broader community

good. Individuals have a commitment to the wider concepts of the common good, common wealth and public benefit. It is encompassed in the Christian rule of 'loving my neighbour as myself'. Individuals acquire grace and salvation through doing good works (Beder 2000) or seek redemption for their voracious capitalistic appetite by metamorphosing into philanthropists (Zizek 2008). While some of those working in charities doing care work are not Christians, the philosophical underpinnings speak to this meta-narrative. It demonstrates a recognition of the inherent undervaluing of care work, carers, care recipients and charities which has remained unchanged for centuries. Charities have resisted unrelenting pressure from globalised corporations which complain about the sector's size and lack of level playing fields because many large charities behave as commercial businesses which have found the charitable culture and care work as a profitable business opportunity.

So irrespective of the different client categories, the inclusion or exclusion of particular groups, economically, charity clients have become consumers with a hierarchical value placed on the most lucrative, those who generate the most funding, the most 'needy' of all the needy. Charities are economically pressured to seek clients who bring in money but do not require intensive support. Equally, governments seek to drive down the price of uneconomic clients, giving rise to opportunities for unethical practices within the community marketplace. Economic value is placed on large client numbers and contracts, turning the wealthiest charities into de facto corporations. Charitable corporate governance discussions are focussed on strategic planning, financial projections, bottom-line decisions, returns on investments and tax breaks. Large charities employ corporate-minded CEOs and staff whose salaries soak up surpluses that used to sustain non-profitable client services. These costs are accepted because the CEOs promise to

update, professionalise and make the charity more accountable, as it is portrayed as needing economic and governance makeovers. These assumptions seem unquestioned. We should be asking whether corporatisation has made a value difference to services from client or staff perspectives; and whether the governance makeover is designed instead to suit the new client i.e., the government funding body or business, rather than the charity's community client who should be at the centre of the decision-making processes.

It is argued the gap between corporate and charity sectors has, in some instances, become so narrow it is hard to see any differences. The tension for the post-modern charity in this narrative lies unequivocally in the packaging and branding of the client consumer, who is now 'the other' (Klein 2001). The 'other' is scapegoated and dehumanized, language adjustments have enabled the 'other' to be objectified and does not require charities to challenge their own beliefs. Survival strategies for charitable businesses include outsourcing services, mirroring the corporate sector's separation of service from money and people and raising the 'fear' stakes (Gardner 2008). The mid 1990's government policy shift moved charities into the funding purchaser/provider model with contracts and has reduced the transformational capacity of female ethical organizational caring. Instead it has become evidence of our capacity to transfer our own shadow back onto the 'other', through our charitable model of economic care, so the focus of our care has now become the funding body.

Politically, large NGOs work hard to become power brokers (DeMars 2005) as this is seen as essential for organizational survival. With political power comes money and both commodities are sought. Advocacy is short-term, focused on the 'here and now', primarily to ensure one's own survival. The 'other' is out of sight, of less value in the needs hierarchy and less *my*

*personal* responsibility. Agencies have to act carefully in case they jeopardise funding. More time is spent in risk management in the name of sound governance principles, ensuring tight management control. Compromised leaders struggle for principles that might bring positive major economic consequences for their charity and there does not seem to be a third way (Morris 2007). Women's voices in these deliberations as archetypes of the charitable care work and recipients are muted and lost.

## **SUMMARY**

This suggested answer to the question 'The Economics of Charity – Who Cares?' is one of many possible narratives. The discrepancies outlined here in the values and ethics in charities and care work provided by women contribute to the continued problematisation of charities as sites of gender disadvantage. Leadership decisions are made based on the priority of organisational financial survival and government contracts; while the gendered discrimination by charities of their employees and clients with its religious endorsements cannot continue to be ignored. This narrative suggests the economics of charity have hollowed out the care; it exists, but the experiences are transitory and discriminatory, the ethics of care is illusory. The charities veneer is wearing thin and female voices describing a female, value-based ethical caring are falling silent, buried under the discriminatory experiences, displaying a lack of congruence between the larger narrative of sacralisation of care versus economic survival. The dominant story is of a corporatised, economically driven sector, where leaders are promoted on their ability to run businesses that happen to be charities.

The drive for organisational survival and the need to provide employment conditions to match business and government speak to the drive for equality under the feminist and economic justice

imperatives. I now ask ‘what will be the charity’s future once its profile of delivering care work is explored from this gendered perspective of injustice?’ Although we are busy fighting for female economic justice and equity for charities, there is most critically, insufficient debate about the lack of transformational leadership to define the charitable sector’s differences without continuing to entrench gender discrimination based on employment practices, the care work itself, the values and spirituality as determined by the women who carry out the care work and who are its service recipients, currently and in the future.

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