

Ethics of Care in Spain

By José María Muñoz- Terrón & María Teresa Martín- Palomo

1. How do you relate to Ethics of Care?

José María Muñoz-Terrón:

I started working on ethics of care in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when I did research on the subjects within the courses of History of ethics (*Historia de la Ética* by Antonio Bolívar Botía, Facultad de Teología de Cartuja, Granada) and Ethics (*Ética*) by Domingo Blanco Fernández, Facultad de Filosofía, Universidad de Granada). At the time, as I explored the theories on the development of moral judgment by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, my references of ethics of care were basically limited to observing how Jürgen Habermas resounded the criticism that, from a feminist point of view, Carol Gilligan passed on Kohlberg. In turn, I myself have stayed within this restricted point of view for years, understanding and explaining the Kohlberg-Gilligan controversy based on the version offered by Seyla Benhabib as a critical feminist. It was only recently, when I joined teams working on social research projects on care, collaborating with María Teresa Martín-Palomo in particular, that I developed my own view on the works of Carol Gilligan and Joan Tronto with regard to responsive phenomenology. My view has also been strongly influenced by studies by Patricia Paperman and Sandra Laugier (Groupe de Sociologie Politique et Moral, EHESS, Paris), which present original interpretations both on the works of Gilligan and those of Tronto, the former being more sociological and political and the latter more philosophical but both in an on-going interdisciplinary dialogue.

María Teresa Martín-Palomo:

My relationship with ethics of care started in the late nineties, more specifically within the framework of the study group on feminism and social change (Grupo de Trabajo Feminismos y Cambio Social) at the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, where our group of female PhD students from the Gender Studies Programme held fortnightly meetings to reflect on employment, women and daily life. From this framework, a first reflection on care

arose. At the Jornadas Feministas in Córdoba (Spain) in 2000, we gave a short presentation on the domestication of work including a seminal reflection on morality and affects in care. From then on until 2013, we organised a seminar called feminism and social change (Feminismos y Cambio Social) at the Escuela de Relaciones Laborales of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, led by María Jesús Miranda; the group forms part of the Institute for Feminist Research (Instituto de Investigaciones Feministas) at the same university. After that, my interest in studying care took off along with the development of various empirical studies on family environment, at the Institute of Economics and Geography (Instituto de Economía y Geografía) of the Supreme Council for Scientific Research (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) between 2002 and 2005. This means that we started working on the design of a comprehensive survey on family networks in Andalusia, both formulating a theoretical framework and applying empirical qualitative approaches aimed at preparing the questionnaire. This brought me towards the theme of responsibility in care and guided me towards the views on the ethics of care held by the female Anglo-Saxon feminist authors, mainly regarding the care of the elderly. In this sense, reading the works of Raquel Salazar Parreñas was essential for analysing care in a family setting. However, it was only early 2006, during my research fellowship at the Instituto Internacional de Sociología Jurídica in Oñati (Basque Country), that I started elaborating the moral-ethical dimension of care with a strong theoretical reflection. That is when I 'discovered' an article by Patricia Paperman on justice and care that made me decide to add this perspective to my study. I thus included the moral aspect and emotions in my analysis on care and developed the proposed theory on domestication of work, incorporating that very moral and those emotions, in addition to the material dimension, in the concept of work (cf. quote below, an article from *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*, 2008). The seminars on feminism and social change between 2006 and 2009 were key in shaping my theoretical reflections. My research fellowship within the Groupe de Sociologie Politique et Moral, EHESS (Paris), together with Patricia Paperman, was fundamental to be able to go deeper into her views on the interconnection between ethics and

politics of care, taking the works of Gilligan and Tronto as a basis. This line of my work includes several articles written with José María Muñoz Terrón, with whom I have also taken part in various sponsored projects on care from 2009 to today. In 2014, my doctoral thesis on care within the family environment, defended at the Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, where I worked as a professor at the Faculty of Social and Legal Sciences from 2008 to 2016, received the Juan E. Linz Award from the Centre of Political and Constitutional Studies. Since April 2016 I have continued my research focus on care, vulnerability and interdependencies working as a professor at the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology of Granada.

2. Would you consider the Ethics of Care an area of interest in your country? What makes you think yes/no? And if yes, in what way?

As far as we know, the ethics of care is not a very prominent field of research in our country at the moment. We should, however, mention some interesting contributions in the form of articles and publications produced over the course of approximately the last three decades. The debate on ethics of care within the Spanish-speaking world has been coming and going, with its own particular reflections and modulations and we cannot say it has become a well-defined area of research or debate. Based on the information we currently have at our disposal, we find it quite difficult to provide an accurate explanation or justification for this. However, we dare to say there is a certain factor that influenced the limited presence of the ethics of care in Spain. This is the fact that, based on a widespread alignment with equality-based feminism, academic feminists initially seemed to be quite reluctant about the proposal of the ethics of care, specifically regarding the work of Carol Gilligan, which was too quickly categorized as susceptible to 'essentialistic' interpretations and even as conservative. On the other hand, it is from this very realm of equality-based feminism that more recently, since about a decade, the work of Gilligan and the ethics of care have been approached with more open-mindedness. Meanwhile, in a public sphere dominated by an economic perspective, the topic of care has come much more to the fore since the approval of the Spanish Law

on the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Care for Dependent People (better known by its short name: Dependency Law) in 2006.

3. Could you give a general impression about (the status of) the Ethics of Care in your country?

After an initial, more academic reception of the debate on the ethics of care, framed within the debate between equality-based and difference-based feminism, in Spain you can now see an interest more marked by the virtue of care as a primarily ontological, anthropological, moral, social and political category that can be used to reflect on the great questions of contemporary thought, such as the challenges of health technologies and the ecological crisis and the need to establish environmental ethics and bioethics that surpass old patriarchal or androcentric dichotomies.

4. Would you find different schools or movements in Spain in the area of the Ethics of Care?

Rather than distinguishing between various schools, trends or tendencies, perhaps we should classify the contributions to the ethics of care in Spain according to different disciplines from which they proceed. It can therefore be said that Spanish approaches to the ethics of care have mainly come from: a) moral and political philosophy, b) health sciences, nursing in particular, the latter as a professional practice quite directly linked to care activities; and from c) social and anthropological studies on care.

5. If so, how would you describe them? What are the main similarities and main differences? Could you give names of care ethicists representing these schools/movements?

As we have come to the conclusion that it is more appropriate to speak of contributions to ethics of care in Spain from different disciplines than of trends or 'schools', it might not be wise to make a comparison based on similarities and differences between them. Although it could be useful to try and find certain general similarities within the specificities of each field of study.

- a. Not claiming to be exhaustive, there are significant contributions from the field of social, moral and political philosophy we should mention:
- i. An important milestone, the publication in 1992 of a special issue (number 6) by the prestigious magazine *Isegoría* on "Feminismo y ética" (Feminism and Ethics) (edited by Celia Amorós), containing translated texts from Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, Linda Gordon and Françoise Collin, and original contributions in Spanish from Luisa Posada Kubissa, Amelia Valcárcel, Alicia H. Puleo, Cristina Molina Petit, María Xosé Agra, Rosa Cobo and many others. Various articles, commentaries and reviews on this volume give us an idea of the debate on the ethics of care in the Spanish-speaking world, which at that time was already quite developed in the English-speaking world.
 - ii. Ever since María Teresa López de la Vieja, in 2004, published *La mitad del mundo. Ética y crítica feminista*, ("Half the world. Feminist ethics and criticism") which reflects the current state of the field of the ethics of care, her contributions have become increasingly focused on the connection between the perspective of care and bioethical concerns in a broader sense, both in relation to human health issues and regarding the natural environment.
 - iii. The most recent works of Irene Comins Mingol, whose *Filosofía del cuidar* (Philosophy of caring, 2009) initiated the daring and suggestive incorporation of the contributions of the ethics of care into the field of education for peace, which would be in line with the research done within the UNESCO chair of Philosophy for peace, directed by Vicent Martínez Guzmán. In her most recent publications, she keeps delving deeper into this point of view, connecting it to ecological ethical concerns, from an ecofeminist perspective, and to the interest in building a cosmopolitan citizenship.

- iv. In this very same line of exploring and restoring the very relevant connections between ecofeminist ideas and ethics of care, we must now mention Alicia H. Puleo with her *Ecofeminismo para otro mundo posible* (Ecofeminism for another possible world, 2011), in which she claims that there is a *critical ecofeminism*, of which she explicitly admits that it “drinks from the fountains of the ethics of care of Carol Gilligan”, although it also tries to move away from a 'naturalized' difference between sexes-genders.
- v. As far as critical confrontation with the ethics of care in Spain is concerned, we should mention the work of people who in some way are related to the Movement of Independent Life (*Movimiento de Vida Independiente*) in Spain (including Javier Romañach, Soledad Arnau Ripollés, Mario Toboso Martín, Francisco Guzmán, Melania Moscoso). Academically speaking this movement belongs to Disability Studies. It was precisely this group who proposed the alternative concept of Functional Diversity. The commitment to promoting Independent Life based on these points of view, combined with the choice for self-management of personal assistance made by those who need it, is expressed in some cases by a preponderantly distant and pejorative view on the notion of care and, by extension, on the ethics of care.
- b. From the field of *nursing*, we should mention two directions of reflection on caring which are in some way connected to ethics of care.
 - i. On the one hand there is the more anthropologic-philosophical line, with contributions like the ones from Francesco Torralba Roselló, from a Christian-theological perspective, without any connection to feminist ethical theories.
 - ii. The other one is more specific to the so-called 'applied' moral philosophy, such as the one typically represented by the *Ética Profesional de la Enfermería. Filosofía de la*

enfermería como ética del cuidado (Professional Ethics of Nursing. Philosophy of nursing as ethics of care), by Lydia Feito Grande (2000), who actually does enter into a dialogue with contributions from Carol Gilligan and other feminists.

- iii. Also worth mentioning in this field is the relatively recent publication (from 2008 onwards, supervised by the *Fundación Index*) of a new digital Latin American magazine, issued every six months in both Spanish and Portuguese, which specializes in the *Ethics of Care* (that is its title), from a theoretical and practical point of view on the nursing field. The subheading actually says that this is a *Magazine intended for studying and reflecting on ethics of care*.
- c. When it comes to the presence of the ethics of care in the field of social and anthropological care research in Spain, we can point out how within sociology, economics and anthropology a few initial works on care slowly started appearing from the early 1990s onwards, always bearing a gender perspective:
 - i. In the field of anthropology, the works of Dolors Comas D'Agemir (Universidad Rovira i Virgili), Susana Narotzky (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona) and those of Mari Luz Esteban (Universidad del País Vasco) stand out as pioneering in this area; later on, Carmen Gregorio Gil (Universidad de Granada) and Belén Agrela Romero (Universidad de Jaén) would analyse care in relation with migration processes. In these contributions, based on the analysis of the body or on the ethnicity of gender in care, the social-moral of ethical aspects only play a very secondary role, if any. More recent is the work of Chiara Cerri (Supreme Council for Scientific Research, Centre of Human and Social Sciences) on ageing and care, which addresses the issue of vulnerability in care incorporating the perspective of ethics of care (following the works of Patricia Paperman in France or those of Joan Tronto).
 - ii. Pioneering within the field of economics are the works of Cristina Carrasco (Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona) and,

later on, those of Amaia Perez Orozco (an independent linked to the Colectivo de la Eskalera Karakola), both from critical feminist point of view on economics. Within the field of recent economic history, Lina Gálvez (Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Seville). These authors approach the ethics of care with the same suspicion as mentioned before with regard to its alleged implicit essentialism.

iii. Pioneering within the field of sociology are the works of María Ángeles Durán (Supreme Council for Scientific Research, Institute of Economics, Geography and Demography), firstly on domestic work and the double shift (70s), and after that on health, illness and time use, (from the 90s onwards); in her works, she takes up a reflection on responsibility in caring and on how difficult it is to track this using statistical tools. In line with studies on the use of time are the works of Cristina García Sainz, Jesús Rogero García (both at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), Matxalen Legarreta (Universidad del País Vasco), although only Legarreta focuses on the theoretical analysis of the moralization of time in her study on time dedicated to the domestic environment (please refer to the monographic edition on “Domesticación del Trabajo” (The domestication of work) of the magazine *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*). At the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, they are setting up a study group dedicated to daily life and employment, called QUIT, with Teresa Torns, Pilar Carrasquer, Carolina Recio Cáceres, Sara Moreno Colom, Laia Castelló. They will work from an analysis perspective based on sociology of work, and there is hardly any room for the topic of responsibility or moral of care.

At the University of La Coruña, the most notable works on elderly care and the role that emotions play in elderly care, are those of Raquel Martínez Buján or Antía Pérez Caramés. At the Universidad Complutense of Madrid, the studies within the field of sociology of work carried out by Carlos

Prieto, (as an editor of the magazine *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*, has promoted the incorporation of a thread on care, embracing the feminist and interdisciplinary contributions), Amparo Serrano and Alba Artiaga, with the latter two focusing on the analysis of implicit political rationality from the Dependency Law. At the Universidad Carlos III of Madrid, we must mention the works of Constanza Tobío on the reconciliation of family and working life and on politics of care; those of María Silveria Agulló Tomás on elderly care; and those of Magdalena Díaz Gorfinkel on global care chains, focused on attention to minors. At the Universidad de Valencia, Capitolina Díaz analyses the gap between different types of care along a similar line as the salary gap, although she hardly elaborates on the ethical issues. When we go to Andalusia, we should discuss Sofía Pérez de Guzmán and Delia Langa, who have written about care as work, on one hand, and Inmaculada Zambrano Álvarez (Universidad Pablo de Olavide), Evangelina Olid González (Universidad de Sevilla) and María Teresa Martín Palomo (Universidad de Granada) on the other. We should point out that they do specifically focus on the analysis of crossing moral aspects, including emotional or affective aspects and material aspects of care.

- iv. Here we should give special attention to the reflective work carried out within various social groups, for instance at the Eskalera KaraKola in Madrid, or at the group Precarias a la Deriva (Precarious women workers adrift, 2004) led by Amaia Pérez Orozco and Cristina Vega Solís, and around paid domestic work, with groups like Territorio Doméstico in Madrid, or the Oficina para el Desarrollo Social (Office for Social Development) in Seville, which have been created in the first decade of the 21st century to fight for the rights of female domestic workers, women migrants in particular. In a more academical context, we must mention the track record of the Seminario Feminismos y Cambio Social

(Seminary on Feminism and Social Change) at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, under the auspices of María Jesús Miranda, from 1998 to 2013, which, starting from reflections on everyday life, resulted in a risky theoretical proposal of 'domesticating' the very concept of work so that this can include moral and affective aspects and consequently understanding care as an activity seen as work in its fullest sense. This experience has yielded the publication of the aforementioned monographic edition of *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales* (2008: Vol. 26, no. 2), which has "Domesticación del Trabajo" as its very title and elaborates on this proposal from M.T. Martín Palomo.

6. Which are the major publications in the area of Ethics of Care in your country and what is their main statement?

I have basically already answered this question when answering the previous question, when I mentioned the titles of various works from the authors I named as representatives of different lines of work related to ethics of care in Spain. In any case, I should clarify once more that the selection set out above doesn't claim to be exhaustive or definitive in any way.

7. Anything else you would like to mention?

The term '*cuidado*' in Spanish, which we deem fit to fully express the wide field of meanings covered by the concept of *care* in the Anglo-Saxon literature on ethics of care, is destined to become a category of analysis and understanding of the first order in anthropological, moral, social and political debates in the Spanish language as well. The possibility that the notion of care (*cuidado*) will become something more than a concept that is more or less fashionable in Spain as well, and that it will create a specific field of Care Studies (or not) or a demarcation with clearer boundaries than what would and should be considered properly 'ethics of care', by opposing other orientations or models of care, will depend on various circumstances, which at this time are hard to foresee.