

Women's health care work in comparative perspective: Canada, Sweden and Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic as case examples.

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## Women's health care work in comparative perspective: Canada, Sweden and Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic as case examples

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### Abstract

This paper contends that there is no single definition of caring work, that it holds no intrinsic meaning in and of itself. While in every human society there are work tasks that involve caring for others unable to adequately care for themselves, such caring work is almost always assigned in accordance with the overriding gender systems. However, different economic structures and gender ideologies, supported by different types of state formations, tend to organize caring work in a multiplicity of ways. Drawing on data from primary and secondary research on the related health care occupations of midwifery, obstetrical nursing, and general nursing in three societal locations – Canada, Sweden and Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic – the authors suggest that the social organization of women's health caring work is the product of a complex interweaving of

Organization of women's health care work is the product of a complex interweaving of factors. The formation of the state, and the specific social construction of the "public" and "private" spheres of society, play consequential roles in this process.



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## Keywords

health care work; midwifery/obstetrical nursing/general nursing; cross-national comparison; Canada; Sweden; Czech Republic

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