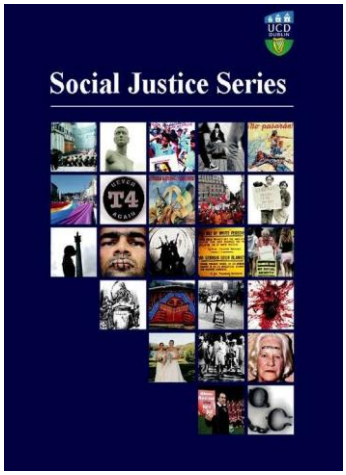


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Affective Equality as a Key Issue of Justice: A Comment on Fraser's 3-Dimensional Framework

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Abstract

The relational realities of nurturing constitute a discrete site of social practice within and through which inequalities are created. The affective worlds of love, care and solidarity are therefore sites of political import that need to be examined in their own right while recognizing their inter-relatedness with economic, political and cultural systems in the generation of injustice. Drawing on extensive sociological research undertaken on care work, paid work and on education in a range of different studies, this paper argues that Fraser's three-dimensional framework for analyzing injustice needs to expanded to include a fourth, relational dimension.The affective relations within which caring is grounded constitute a discrete field of social action within and through which inequalities and exploitations can occur. Social justice issues are not confined to questions of redistribution, recognition or representation therefore; they also involve discrete sites of relational practice that impact on parity of participation, a principle which Fraser identifies as key to determining what is socially just.

Key words

Affective equality, Ireland, Fraser's three dimensional framework, love, care, solidarity, social justice

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Introduction[1]

This paper highlights the importance of affective equality for producing an egalitarian global order. It builds on theoretical research with colleagues in the UCD Equality Studies Centre on the concept of equality (Baker, Lynch, Cantillon and Walsh, 2004, 2009), on both theoretical and empirical research on the subject of affective equality (Lynch, Baker and Lyons, 2009) and on managerialism and its impact on the affective domain (Lynch, Grummell and Devine, 2012). The paper begins by acknowledging the historical realities of political egalitarian thinking and its deep ontological indifference to human relationality, dependency and interdependency. It then examines the contribution of Nancy Fraser's three-dimensional theory of justice to egalitarian thinking, highlighting its many merits but also its limitations in neglecting the sociological realities of the affective domains of social life. It outlines a four-dimensional framework for egalitarian thinking, one that takes account of affective relations and highlights their inter-relationship with redistributive, recognition and representational systems. The paper then explores the implications of relationality and comments on the links between affective relations, ethics and politics. The paper concludes with some comments on why social scientific and political thought needs to change to take account of the affective/normative interface in social life.

1. Egalitarian Theory and Care

Most branches of political egalitarian thinking remain concerned with the more 'public' spheres of life, namely the political relations of the state, the economic relations of the market, and the cultural relations governing social recognition. The preoccupation has been with inequalities of income and wealth, status and power. Rawls's *A Theory of Justice,* which has been the dominant work in Anglophone political theory since its publication in 1971, is a clear example of a text that gives primacy to the public sphere.

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From the time of Hobbes and Locke, to that of Rousseau and Kant, up to and including Rawls, Western political theorists have also glorified the autonomous concept of the citizen. They have upheld a separatist view of the person ignoring the reality of human dependency and interdependency across the life course (Benhabib, 1992). Moreover, they have idealised autonomy and independence as a sign of maturity and growth, placing a premium on a human condition that is never fully realisable (England, 2005). In so far as it ignores relationality, liberal political thinking has glorified a concept of the person that is potentially socially unethical in that it is assumed to be detached and accountable primarily to the separated self.

Like most of the social sciences political theory has also been driven by a Cartesian rationality. There is a denial of the importance of emotions and affective realities in politics; this creates significant omissions in political understanding, not only as to how gender inequalities operate across society, but also in terms of what subjects are deemed suitable for political analysis.

2. The Feminist Contribution

While there has been an intense debate about care and its implications for gender justice, this has taken place largely outside the domain of mainstream egalitarian theory, operating mostly among feminist economists and sociologists (Folbre, 1994, 2001, 2009; England, 1999, 2005; Himmelweit, 2002; Hochschild, 1989, 2001, Gornick and Meyers 2003). Feminist legal theorists (Fineman, 2004, Fineman and Dougherty, 2005) have also drawn attention to care as a site of injustice. Within political theory, feminist-inspired work has played the key role in taking issues of care, love and solidarity out of the privatised world of the family to which they had been consigned by liberal and indeed most radical egalitarians (Benhabib 1992; Gilligan, 1982, 1995; Held, 1995; Jónasdóttir, 1994, Kittay, 1999). They have drawn attention to the salience of care and love as goods of public significance (Kittay, 1999), and have identified the importance of caring as a human capability meeting a basic human need (Nussbaum, 1995, 2001). They have also exposed the limitations of conceptualisations of citizenship devoid of a concept of care, and highlighted the importance of caring as work, work that needs to be rewarded and distributed

equally between women and men in particular (Finch and Groves, 1983; Fraser and Gordon, 1997, Glucksmann, 1995; Hobson, 2000; Hochschild, 1989; O'Brien, 2005; Sevenhuijsen, 1998).

Overall, what feminist scholars have helped to do is to shift intellectual thought from its intellectual fixation with the Weberian and Marxist structuralist trilogy of social class, status and power as the primary categories for investigating the generation of inequalities and exploitations. They have drawn attention to the way the care world and affective domains of life are discrete spheres of social action, albeit deeply interwoven with the economic, political and cultural spheres.

3. Fraser's three dimensional framework

In her recent work (2005, 2008, 2010) Nancy Fraser has endorsed a three dimensional theory of social justice based on principles of redistribution, recognition and representation (Nash and Bell, 2007). She has recognised the limitations of her two dimensional framework (1995) because it neglected political relations as a discrete site for generating injustice. In particular, she has highlighted the importance of overcoming the Keynesian-Westphalian framework if we are to recognize and address the scale of global nation-state-related injustices. Grounded in her view that equality and social justice are principally problems of parity of participation (Fraser, 2003) she claims that the key issue for promoting justice is that it permits all members of the global community to interact with one another as peers. For participatory parity to be upheld, she outlines at least three conditions that must be met. These are grounded sociologically in having equality in economic relations, political relations and cultural relations:

> 'First, the distribution of material resources must be such as to ensure participants' independence and 'voice'. This condition precludes economic structures that institutionalize deprivation, exploitation, and gross disparities in wealth, income, labor and leisure time, which prevent some people from participating as full partners in social interaction. Second, the social status order must express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem. This condition precludes institutionalized patterns of cultural value that systematically depreciate some categories of people and the qualities associated with them, thus denying them the status of full partners in social interaction.

> Finally, the political constitution of society must be such as to accord roughly equal political voice to all social actors. This condition rules out electoral decision rules and media structures that systematically deprive some people of their fair chance to influence decisions that affect them. All three conditions are necessary for participatory parity. None alone is sufficient' (Fraser, 2010: 365).

While Fraser's work is a highly sophisticated theoretical framework for mapping problem of equality and social justice, it does not recognise the affective domain of life as a discrete site of social practice. It does not address the ways in which the affective relations of the care world operate both independently of, and intersectionally with, economic, political and cultural relations in promoting injustice.

As Kittay (1999) and other feminists (including Fineman, 2004, Folbre, 1994 and Lister, 1997) have observed however, the issue is not to choose between equality and care but to develop a 'connection-based' conception of equality and justice that recognises that dependency is a typical condition of human life, that dependents need care, and that dependency workers – those who provide this care – need support in doing so. What needs to be recognised is the relational nature of human beings, including their profound interdependency (Gilligan, 1995).

4. The 4th Dimension of Injustice: Affective Inequality and Relationality

Equality and social justice considerations are not confined to issues of (re)distribution, recognition and representation. The Marxist-Weberian trilogy of class, status and power do not establish the parameters of the social justice debate. Matters of love, care and solidarity, (what we have termed affective relations Baker, Lynch et al., 2004) are also deeply implicated in the generation of injustice not only in the obvious ways in the family sphere (Finch and Groves, 1983, Folbre, 1994, Bubeck, 1995) but also in terms of how care is organized globally (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003), how much of the economy, polity and cultural spheres of social life 'free-ride' on unpaid and poorly paid care, love and solidarity work (Fineman, 2004, 2008), and how the least solidaristic

societies are the most inegalitarian in their social and health outcomes (Wilkinson, 2005, Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009).

The salience of the affective system arises as a site for generating injustice arises from the fact that all people have urgent needs for care at various stages in their lives, as a consequence of infancy, illness, impairment or other vulnerabilities (Fineman, 2008). Being cared for is also a fundamental prerequisite for human development (Kittay, 1999: Nussbaum, 2001). And relations of love, care and solidarity help to establish a basic sense of importance, value and belonging, a sense of being appreciated, wanted and cared about. (Lynch, et al., 2009). Being deprived of love and care is experienced as a loss and deprivation (Feeley, 2009). Humans are relational beings and their relationality is intricately bound to their dependencies and interdependencies (Gilligan, 1995; Kittay, 1999).

5. Defining Affective Equality and Inequality

Given the inevitability of vulnerability, and times of dependency and interdependency, the issue of inequality in access to the love, care and solidarity needed to support people at such times is a highly significant matter for egalitarians. Affective equality is focused therefore on two major issues, securing equality in the distribution of the nurturing provided through love, care and solidarity relationships and securing equality in the doing of emotional and other work involved in creating love, care and solidarity relations. Affective inequality occurs *directly* when people are deprived of the love, care and solidarity (LCS) they need to survive and develop as human beings (including the supports they need as carers) and/or when they are abused, violated or neglected affectively. It also occurs when the burdens and pleasures of care and love work are unequally distributed in society, between women and men particularly, but also between classes, ethnic/racial groups and across nation state boundaries. Affective inequality occurs *indirectly* when people are not recognised economically, politically and/or culturally (e.g. through education) for that work and when love, care and solidarity work is trivialised by omission from public discourse.

The concept of affective equality is based on a number of key premises. First, it assumes that humans live in profound states of dependency and interdependency and are therefore relational beings. Second, it assumes that people are deeply vulnerable at several levels, corporeally, emotionally, socially, politically, culturally and economically. Third, it assumes that people are sentient beings, with relational identities and feelings (both positive and negative) and that these feelings and identities play an important role in informing normative rationality; relational feelings influence choices about what is good and bad, moral and immoral. Finally, it assumes the citizen is a carer and care recipient both in the public and the private domain of life so lay normativity is not the prerogative of the private sphere.

There are two primary forms of affective inequality: a) inequalities in the doing of love, care and solidarity work, and b) inequalities in the receipt of love, care and solidarity. These two forms of affective inequality are exacerbated by other dimensions of inequality. Lack of respect and recognition for care-related work exacerbates the inequalities involved in having to take a disproportionate responsibility for the burdensome aspects of love, care and solidarity. A culture in which care work is not recognised and rewarded also disempowers and impoverishes carers of all kinds. Having a low income and limited resources, either independently of being a carer or because of it, also makes care work more burdensome. It limits options for assigning some of the care tasks to others, and may leave carers with little time for rest or even energy to enjoy the pleasurable aspects of love, care and solidarity work. Those who are assigned responsibility for love and care work are often powerless to determine the conditions under which they do this work, especially in the family sphere. Their powerlessness exacerbates the inequalities between themselves and those who are not carers by binding them to the necessity of caring and denying them the opportunity to exercise autonomy in other spheres of life.

Love relations refer to relations of high interdependency where there is greatest attachment, intimacy and responsibility over time. They arise from inherited or contractual dependencies or interdependencies and are primary care relations. Secondary care relations are lower order interdependency

relations. While they involve care responsibilities and attachments, they do not carry the same depth of moral obligation in terms of meeting dependency needs, especially long-term dependency needs. There is a degree of choice and contingency about secondary care relations that does not apply to primary relations. Solidarity relations do not involve intimacy. They are the political form or social form of love relations. Sometimes solidarity relations are chosen, such as when individuals or groups work collectively for the well being of others whose welfare is only partially or not immediately related to their own, or solidarity can be imposed through laws or moral prescriptions that are collectively binding. While most people can readily identify the value of love and care at the personal level, there is less understanding of solidarity. Solidarity is the more political or public face of affective relations. It finds expression in the values a society upholds in support of others who are not autonomous. It is both a set of values and a set of public practices. It connotes the work that is involved in creating and maintaining local communities, neighbourhoods on the one hand, and the advocacy work in civil society for social justice and human rights at local, national and global levels at the other. It finds its expression in people's willingness to support vulnerable others within their own country or to support to peoples in other countries who are denied basic rights and livelihoods to live a life of dignity. The levels of solidarity in a given society are reflected in everything from the vibrancy of its community activities to the taxes people are willing to pay so as to fund and support vulnerable members of their own and other societies. It is where the moral, the affective and the political systems overlap in public life (for a fuller discussion see Lynch, 2007).

Inequality in the doing of love, care and solidarity work is but one side of affective inequality. Because humans are relational beings, entirely dependent on others at certain times in life, and interdependent throughout existence, being denied access to love, care and solidarity is a serious human deprivation and an inequality in itself. While it can be argued that no one can ever experience too much love, care and solidarity, it is true nonetheless that people need certain basic forms of love, care and solidarity to survive and to flourish. Those who are denied love and attention in their intimate lives, or who do not have access to secondary forms of caring, be it from friends, neighbours, kin, colleagues or important service providers

(such as teachers and health workers), or who live in societies that have little solidarity in terms of the distribution of wealth and other privileges, are denied access to crucial social goods. Inequalities between individuals, groups and societies can be mapped in terms of the degrees to which love, care and solidarity are available respectively to each.

6. Mapping Affective Inequalities on to the Issues of Redistribution, Recognition and Representation: an Equality Framework

The affective world does not operate autonomously. Figure 1 below maps out the relationship between the affective system and economic, political, cultural systems, and between each of these and the dimensions of equality/inequality to which they are related.

The economic, political, cultural and affective social systems are deeply interwoven. While affective relations play a key role in framing how people are loved and cared for, so do economic, cultural and power relations. Parents are significant agents in the reproduction of the class and cultural systems, and the relations between children and parents is one of power and control (and the potential abuse of same) as well as one of potential love and care. The economic relationship between an employer and employee is also a relation of political power, as is the cultural relationship between teachers and students and those between media producers and audiences. It is not possible to address problems of inequality or social justice in one social system therefore without addressing those in related social systems. Inequalities are intersectional because people have multi-dimensional, structurally framed identities that are constantly in flux.

Figure 1
Four key systems where in/equality is generated mapped with 4 key dimensions of equality and related processes

Systems where inequality is generated	Dimensions of In/Equality				Processes
	Resources	Respect and Recognition	Power	Love, Care and Solidarity	
Economic System	XX	X	X	X	Equalising the processes of acquiring resources, respect and recognition, power and love, care and solidarity (e.g. equality in working and learning)
Political System	X	X	XX	X	
Cultural System	X	XX	X	X	
Affective System	X	X	X	XX	

Adapted from Baker, J. Lynch, K., Cantillon, S., and Walsh, J. (2004, 2nd ed. 2009) *Equality: From Theory to Action.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Not only is injustice derived from the ways relations operate within systems, it is also derived from the way processes operate within systems, including the ways in which the burdens and pleasures of different forms of work and education are distributed. In *Equality: From Theory to Action,* we refer to this as working and learning as equals:

> In contemporary societies, both the burdens and benefits of work are unequally distributed, and those who shoulder the greatest burdens often receive the least benefit. The burden of menial work is generally accompanied by the lowest possible wages and working conditions. The burdens of caring in individual households are typically unpaid, unrecognized and carried out with little support (Daly 2001; Kittay 1999; Baker, Lynch, Cantillon and Walsh, 2009: 39).

Thus economic injustice is not just about what income or resources one receives, it is also about the processes that operate in determining how one receives them, whether or not one is always confined to undertaking difficult and/or boring, dirty or tiring work. This unequal division of labour, including paid and unpaid care labour, is what Sayer has termed a contributive injustice:

> What we are allowed to contribute, particularly in terms of work, is at least as important as what we get, because the kind of work that we do has such a fundamental effect on the kinds of people we become, and on the quality of our lives (2009:102).

Not only does inequality occur across all systems, and through different processes, the ways in which it occurs varies across systems for different groups. While social class inequalities are generated in the economic domain, they are not confined to there. They are regenerated in the cultural system through the ways in which cultural tastes are class stratified, as the accents, dress, tastes, literature and music etc., of working class people are culturally defined as inferior to those of the middle and upper classes (Bourdieu, 1984, Skeggs, 2004, Sayer, 2005a). Working class people experience a moral judgment of themselves as socially lesser; this judgment has an affective outcome as people experience the shame and embarrassment of being judged of lower moral worth (Sayer, 2005b). Equally, while children could be defined as the prototypically powerless group in society, the injustices they experience are not confined to that system as poverty studies show that children are disproportionately poorer than adults (Central Statistics Office, 2007).

7. The Relational Realities of Caring, Loving and Solidarity: their implications for Justice

Love, care and solidarity are productive forces not only emotionally but also materially (Hardt and Negri, 2009). Studies of countries operating public polices involving the equalisation of wealth and income show that people are healthier and have higher levels of well-being in more equal and solidarity-led societies (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009, Dorling, 2010). Equally, we know from psychology, that experiencing love and care at the personal level is vital for

producing emotionally and mentally healthy persons, and that the latter, in turn, influences physical health and well being enabling people to work and function more effectively in all areas of life. Given the primacy of love, care and solidarity for human well being, it is important to comment on them further here (see Lynch, 2007 for an in-depth analysis).

There are three major life-worlds or circles of relational care work (Figure 2). First, there is the world of primary, intimate relations where there is strong attachment, interdependence, depth of engagement and intensity; the prototypical relationship in this circle is that between parents and children. Even if little love labour is invested by the parties to this intimate world, or if there is abuse or neglect, these relationships retain a high level of emotional significance. Secondary care relations involve outer circles of relatives, friends, neighbours and work colleagues where there are lower order affective engagements in terms of time, responsibility, commitment and emotional engagement. Tertiary care relations involve largely unknown others for whom people have care responsibilities through statutory obligations at national or international levels, or for whom people care politically or economically through volunteering or activism. Within each of these circles of care, people live in varying states of dependency and interdependency. And each care reality is intersectionally connected to the other, moving along a fluid continuum from care-full-ness to care-less-ness.

Figure 2
Concentric Circles of Care Relations

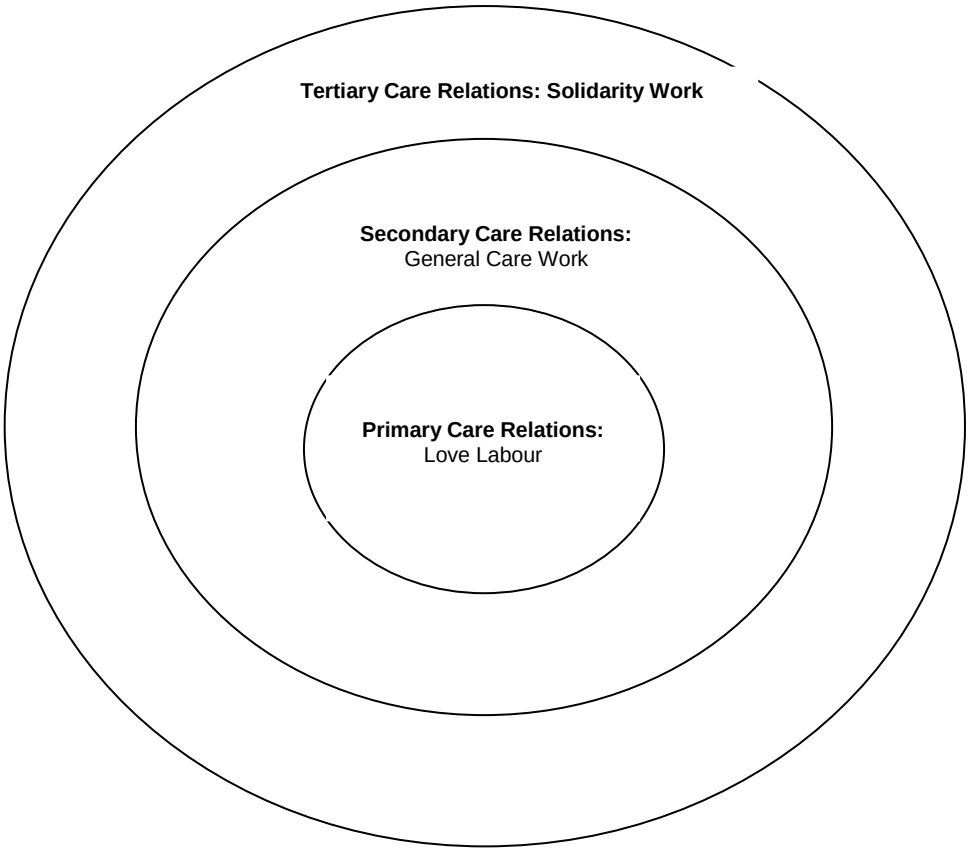


Figure 2 was originally published in Lynch (2007) *Sociological Review*, 54(3), 550-570.

The world of care is not an isolated and autonomous sphere however. It is deeply interwoven with economic, political and cultural relations, and inequalities in the latter can undermine the capacities and resources to do love, care and solidarity work (Baker et al., 2004). It is no accident of history, for example, that those who are in prison are not only disproportionately from very poor households, but are also very likely to have suffered severe care deprivations and to have lacked equality of access to education and other social goods (Feeley, 2009; O'Mahony, 1997, Wacquant, 2009). Structural injustices exacerbate affective deprivations.

In primary care relations, labours of abuse and neglect can replace love labouring, not only denying someone the benefits of love labour but damaging the person through abuse and/or neglect (Feeley, 2009). Equally in the secondary care relations fields, other-centred care labouring may or may not

take place. Highly competitive work environments do not generate cultures of care and concern among colleagues (Ball, 2003). Neighbourhoods mired by poverty or violence are not likely to produce the kind of trust that underpins neighbourly care or so-called 'social capital' (Leonard, 2004). In the global or national sphere of social action, opportunities to express solidarity through forms of fair trade, debt cancellation or the curbing of sex trafficking are greatly undermined when governments and multi-lateral agencies conspire against them in their own interests. There is therefore nothing inevitable in the love, care and solidarity (LCS) world; the relational sphere provides contexts where they can be either fostered or destroyed, not least because economic, political and cultural injustices interpellate with affective relations and frame their character.

8. The Ethical, the Affective and Politics

Human beings are ethical, committed and emotional, as well as economic, political and cultural; the sets of values that govern people's actions in everyday life and the emotions that accompany them are central to how people live and define themselves (Sayer, 2005b: 5-12). People struggle in their choices between what is good and the not-so-good; their lives are governed by rules of lay normativity in much of their social action (ibid: 35-50). Because human beings live in affective relational realities, they also have emotional ties and bonds that can reinforce their motivation to act as moral agents, to act 'other wise' rather than 'self wise' (Tronto, 1991, 1993). To say this is not to deny the fact that people can and do disregard feelings for others in all relations; they can and do behave indifferently, neglectfully and abusively. One of the defining struggles in the lay normative world is the struggle over how to balance concerns and commitment to others with self-interests tapping into and managing corresponding emotions.

Given the complex character of human relationality however, social actions are not simply interest-led in the economic, power and status sense. While interests do play a role in framing choices and actions, people are evaluative; they make moral judgments about what matters to them in terms of their relationships, money, work and/or leisure. While people are egotistical,

they are not simply egotists. Even in a neo-liberal capitalist society "people are 'often moved by a quite different set of motives, arising directly out of consideration for the claims of others. They act from a sense of justice, from friendship, loyalty, compassion, gratitude, generosity, sympathy, family affection and the like (Midgley, 1991: p.5)' though these latter motives are not necessarily dominant in practice" (Sayer, 2011: 172). Because people have relational nurturing (nurtured) identities as carers and cared-for persons, their decisions are influenced by their love, care and solidarity priorities and values, albeit in complex and inconsistent ways (Lynch, et al., 2009). Recognition of their vulnerability as human beings undoubtedly drives self-interest in the traditional economic sense, but it also drives people as moral and relational agents. In recognising their own vulnerability, people can come to see the vulnerability of others.

Relations of love, care and solidarity matter not only for what they can produce personally (or what their absence of abuse can do negatively to persons, communities or societies) but for what they might generate politically in terms of heralding different ways of relating beyond separatedness, competition and aggrandisement.

9. Postscript: The Normative, Positivism and the Affective in the Social Sciences

A major tension in contemporary sociological theory is that between the normative and the analytical, between fact and value within positivist-led social science. While maintaining the separation between fact and value is vital to avoid representing *a priori* assumptions and values as empirically valid 'facts', the dichotomy also presents us with unique problems in social scientific analysis. Facts are not devoid of value; when we say that women are oppressed or children are dying from poor nutrition in sub-Saharan Africa, we are not just making empirical statements; the facts stated imply that the phenomenon is undesirable, that it should end as values are implicated in facts. Failing to recognize the interface between fact and value not only conceals the role of the normative as a subject for research investigation as Sayer has noted (2011: 23-

58), it also eschews research interest in the affects associated with normative judgments and relatedly with affective relations in social life that drive normative intent. Yet, human beings are not emotionally and morally detached entities. Social actors are not only interest-led, power-led or status-led. They can and do make moral choices. These choices are often driven by their relationality (Lynch, Baker and Lyons, 2009).

Humans are not objects devoid of vulnerability; they have a susceptibility to loss and injury emotionally, physically and mentally (Fineman, 2008). Their vulnerability grounds their relationality no matter how complex and conflict-laden these relations may be. A political space for new modes of political engagement, redefining the public from the inside out rests in affective relationality. There is scope to direct political desire towards an admission of vulnerability and othercentredness. While economic and other self interests will inevitably play a role in desire, there is scope to define desires relationally not least by naming and recognising the collective (and ultimately individual) benefit of solidarity.

To recognise the salience of affective relationality for human choices and actions is not to suggest that relationality is disinterested or driven by simple altruism. Relational beings are simultaneously living in an autonomous space; they are both self-interested and relational simultaneously. People are individuals-in-relation, not separate and soluble persons (England, 2005). And being self-interested in the classical economic sense may indeed be what enables people to be other-centred in other spheres of life; autonomy is not the enemy of relationality. Neither is relationality the enemy of autonomy; people who are engaged with the interests of others are more sensitive to their needs and desires and this knowledge of others gives one power to service the other and to be rewarded in turn by reciprocal appreciation and action.

Affective relations are of profound political importance, not only because they exist sociologically as a site of social practice, but also because of the interface between these and redistributive, recognition and representational realities in generating discrete forms of inequality.

The affective worlds of love, care and solidarity matter also for what they might generate politically in terms of heralding different ways of relating beyond separateness, competition and aggrandisement. Grounding politics in the ethics of love, care and solidarity, rather than the ethics of competition and self interest, has the potential to help generate a more egalitarian-driven global order. It would enable the principle of other-centredness to contain the principle of rational economic interest while also challenging the politics of fear, both of which are central to capitalism. It would, over time, create a political culture that would enable people to act 'other-wise' rather than 'self-wise'. This would drive economic and social policy in a way that is ethical in the sense that it is focused on the care-of-the-other in the context of caring of the self. Given the global financial crisis and failed politics of global capitalism, the need for a new ethics governing politics has never been so urgent.

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