The Relationship between Affective Equality and Gender Equality

The Association of Childhood Professionals
3rd Annual Conference, ‘Towards Professional Practice: Affective and Gender Equality in Care and Education’
Waterford Institute of Technology October 13th 2012

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Outline of the lecture

- 4 ways of looking at equality – 4 Rs
- Defining Affective equality
  - Why love, care and solidarity are equality matters
  - Who Cares in Ireland – the gender equality issues in caring
  - The Costs of Caring for women
- If affective equality is so important why is it ignored so often?
  - How the concept of citizenship exacerbates affective inequalities for carers, women and those in need of love, care and solidarity
- Conclusions
Four ways of viewing inequality – 4 Rs

- **Redistribution (Economic Equality)**
  - Equality is concerned with re/distributing wealth/income/resources justly

- **Respect and Recognition (Cultural Equality):**
  - Equality is an issue concerned with respecting differences in belief, gender, language, ability, sexuality, age, marital/family status, ethnicity, etc.

- **Representation: (Political Equality)**
  - Equality is concerned with parity of representation in the exercise of power (in formal politics, in organisations including schools, crèches, in families etc)

- **Relationality: (Affective Equality)**
  - Equality is a question of having equal access to love care and solidarity **and** an equal sharing of the burdens and benefits of love and care work
What is Affective Equality about?

- It regards love, care and solidarity (LCS) as equality and human rights issues.

- It recognises:
  - a) the relational character of human beings, that humans live in profound states of interdependence economically, politically, culturally and socially – as well as environmentally.
  - b) human vulnerability – we are all at some time in our life deeply dependent.

- It integrates concepts dependency and interdependency into our understanding of equality, human rights and citizenship.
Affective Inequalities

Affective inequality occurs directly when:

- people are deprived of the love, care and solidarity (LCS) they need to survive and develop as human beings
- the burdens and pleasures of care and love work are unequally distributed e.g. between women/men, north/south
- those doing love, care and solidarity work are not recognised economically, politically and/or socially for that work

Affective inequality is reinforced when:

- e.g. We are not educated regarding the theory and practice of love, care and solidarity work in education
- and when love, care and solidarity work is trivialised by omission from public debates/analysis
Rational Economic Actor (REA) Model of the Citizen - person is valued for performance

Competing Rational Economic Actors

O = Self interested, Calculating, Competing Economic Actors.
X = Competition Between Actors.

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CARE–FULL Model of the Citizen (the affective domains)


- **Primary Care Relations**
  - love labour

- **Secondary Care Relations**
  - general care work

- **Tertiary Care Relations**
  - solidarity work
Because people are fundamentally Relational Beings – highly dependent at times and always interdependent

1. **Survival** – depends on love, care and solidarity (LCS)

2. **Human flourishing** – requires caring

3. Good care produces **Outcomes** and lack of care/poor care produces negative outcomes

4. Care involves **Work** – takes time, expertise, energy – burden/pleasure
Why love and care are equality issues

1. Loss of care is a threat to survival

- In infancy and at times of high vulnerability we will die without care; Lack of care for the environment threatens human survival

  ‘While conditioned in fundamentally significant ways by cultural considerations, dependency for humans is as unavoidable as birth and death are for all living organisms. We may even say that the long maturation process of humans, combined with the decidedly human capacity for moral feeling and attaching, make caring for dependents a mark of humanity.’ (Eva Kittay, Love’s Labour, 1999: 29).
Why love and care are equality issues

2. Human flourishing requires love and care

- High levels of solidarity and care in society generally – enhances people’s ability to flourish (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009 *The Spirit Level*).

- Learning, which is vital, for survival is highly dependent on feeling cared for:
  - *It would be very hard to learn if you feel that nobody cares about you.* ....You are bound to build that wall and make sure that nobody gets in because that was my little nest where nobody could touch me.... To me it is like I was deaf. I couldn’t hear anybody. I blocked people out and didn’t want to have anyone coming near me because I had never had someone caring about me...... I can’t remember hearing me Ma or Da saying loving things to me or showing me love. (Liam, man aged 41 years who had a history of very poor care, left school virtually illiterate)
    - (Feeley, M. 2009, Chapter 10 in Lynch, Baker and Lyons *Affective Equality: love, care and injustice*)
If a child comes from a family where there is lots of love and encouragement the child will reach their potential. But for someone like me who was brought up in a children’s home, it is kind of ... dodgier - because they have ........... so many other people all over the years that have input in their lives........, but who have walked away... (Bob, man aged 41 years who left school with unmet literacy needs) (Feeley, 2009) Chapter 10 Affective Equality)
Why love and care are equality issues

3. Love and care produce outcomes and their neglect produces loss, neglect or abuse

- There is a care continuum – from deep love and care, through minimal love and care up to neglect and abuse

- Mental health and well being is highly dependent on good love/care

- A very high proportion of those who enter prison have substance abuse and/or mental health issues that relate to lack of care

- **Irish prisoners:**
  - 74% of life sentence and 79% of fixed sentence prisoners have a substance use disorder.
  - Nearly 25% of both life sentence and fixed sentence prisoners currently have a mental illness of some classification. *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine* (2006)
Why love and care are equality issues
4. Love and care involve work – emotional and physical

- **Effort /energy** – getting up at night/cooking/cleaning/listening/
- **Time** – to listen, to reassure, to be, to help
- **Competences** - there are better and worse ways to care
- **Attentiveness** - constant vigilance, ‘carrying a care map around in your head’
- **Emotional engagement** – emotional presence
- ** Responsibility** – tasks have to be arranged etc.
- **Stress** – fear of failure

*Care and Love involve burdens and benefits and the distribution of these is a key equality issue – especially between women and men*
Who cares in Ireland?

- Women are 2.5 times as likely as men to take the primary responsibility for the care of dependent children
- Almost all of those who care for both adult dependents and children at the same time are women

Over the course of a week, women in Ireland undertake:
- 86% of child supervision
- 69% of playing with, and reading to children
- 82% of care to adults
- 80% of cooking
- 86% of cleaning
- 70% of shopping

- Many children are carers but we lack data on this

There is strong evidence that *Women’s exploitation as carers is the principal form of exploitation that applies specifically to them as women*

- Most informal carers are unpaid and those who are paid are generally badly paid;
- Unpaid family carers (most of whom are women) suffer a direct material loss due to caring

Those who do not do hands-on caring are free to advance their material and social status and enjoy more leisure
Women are assigned a ‘mothering ‘primary care role … even if they are not biological mothers

- Single women – aunts, daughters, sisters…
- Poorer women…
- Migrant women…
- Surrogate mothers – Market Mothers…
Rich and powerful (decision-makers) can claim immunity from care responsibilities – they are ‘Care Commanders’

Women are the most likely to be Care’s Foot soldiers – men are generally only expected to become primary carers when there are no women available to care

False cultural assumptions that men are naturally ‘uncaring’ and that caring comes ‘naturally’ to women

- Women are assigned a care (mothering) identity whether or not they have children
  - The capacity to care/love/show solidarity is based on one’s own emotional and nurturing capital, health, well being etc. – it is gender neutral
In 2008, 66% of women and 91% of men aged 20–44 were employed
- Between age 20 and 44 men’s employment rate varied between 88% (with children) and 93% (no children)
- Women’s employment rate varied from 87.4% for women with no children to 56.9% for women whose youngest child was aged between 0 and 3 years of age

(Source: Table 1.7, CSO 2009, *Women and Men in Ireland*)

**Income Costs**

- The *average income* for Irish women is 67.4% that of Irish men; *Average income of women aged 55–65 is only 53% of men’s income*

**HEALTH COSTS**

- 3 out of 10 home carers report health costs due to caring: ill health, stress, isolation, lack of sleep, emotional strain, limited leisure etc.
Chart 1: Mean Annual Earnings in 2007 by Occupation and Gender
(Source: CSO National Employment Survey Table 42 p51)
Chart 2 Mean annual earnings in 2007 by educational attainment and gender
(Source: CSO National Employment Survey Table 43 p52)

Male Basic Annual Earnings  Male Bonus  Female Basic Annual Earnings  Female Bonus
Primary or lower secondary  €34,990  €1,188  €35,410  €900
Higher secondary  €39,253  €1,799  €25,477  €900
Post leaving certificate  €42,533  €1,526  €24,488  €783
Third level non degree  €42,533  €1,526  €30,820  €6,039
Third level degree or higher  €53,982  €6,039  €41,585  €2,153
All broad occupational groups  €20,724  €1,284  €25,477  €1,284

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Chart 3: Mean annual earnings in 2007 by age group and gender
(Source: CSO National Employment Survey Table 44 p52)
If Love, Care and Solidarity are human rights and equality issues why is there so little discussion about them?

- Those who do most of the love and care work in society have little impact on the public sphere...they do not define what matters academically or politically

- Those who suffer serious care and love losses in life generally lack the means of expressing their loss in public

- National and international publics are highly masculinised both in terms of who controls formal politics and what subjects are addressed —
  - Domain assumptions influence political and paradigmatic assumptions i.e. how you live your life influences what matters to you
Caring is undermined as it is perceived as a feminine subject; it is defined as un–masculine

- Men are educated to see dependence as weakness and Masculinity is defined in terms of dominance (R.W. Connell, 1995 *Masculinities* and *The Men and the Boys* 2002) –


- Women are educated to see relational life as central.. intimate relations as crucial to identity (defined as such by Article 42.1 in the Irish constitution)
  - Law/policies often reinforce women’s reliance on a relationally-defined identity – e.g. maternity leave is the only paid care leave for parents
  - The gendering of care is that men’s emotional socialisation undermines the importance of love and intimacy in their lives and impacts negatively on their ability to articulate the vulnerable emotional self
The Status of Carers and of Women: the impact of Conceptions of Citizenship

- Liberal, *Social democratic* view prevails within Ireland and the EU
  - Citizen is defined as either an *economic* being, a *socio-cultural* being, and/or as a *political* being
  - The adult citizen is defined as an *autonomous* person – economically self sufficient

- Citizenship is equated with paid work in the public sphere
- Employers & other public bodies ‘free ride’ on the work of carers who are often lowly paid (unpaid) – without carers society could not function

- *(Unpaid) caring is not citizenship-defining work* - employed persons traditionally have the best social protections
  - and the State is increasingly pressuring people to enter employment regardless of the caring costs (cuts to One Parent family allowances)
- Change in language of welfare from ‘Unemployment Assistance’ to ‘Job Seekers’
Concept of Citizenship influences how we think about care and about equality

- In most political and policy thinking, citizenship-defining work is equated with the public sphere
  - the citizen is seen as an economic person
  - The citizen is seen as a cultural person
  - Citizen is seen as a political person
- All of these definitions tend to ignore the Love and Care Worlds and the reality of dependency and interdependency in the human condition –
  - The tend to ignore the affective domains of life.
Ireland’s move to a Neo-liberal CARE-LESS State

- The market has become the primary producer of cultural logic and cultural value in Irish society –
  - The governing values are competition & self advancement/aggrandisement

- Political and Policy endorsement of the CARE-LESS model of the citizen
  - The wealthiest 10% had an 8% increase in disposable income in 2010 compared with 2009 while the bottom 10% had a drop of over 26% in disposable income within those 2 years (Survey of Income and Living Conditions, SILC - 2011) (See next slide)
Source: Growing Income Inequality Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) (2010: 11). The top 10% had an 8% increase in disposable income in 2010 compared with 2009 while the bottom 10% had a drop of over 26% in disposable income—wealthiest 10 per cent are on the far right and the poorest 10% are on the far left.
Outcomes of Neoliberal policies: Attacks on Institutions promoting Equality in Ireland..

- Gender Equality Unit – Department of Education – Closed early 2000s
- Higher Education Equality Unit – UCC – Closed and merged into HEA (early 2000s)
- National Committee on Education Disadvantage disbanded mid-2000s
- Combat Poverty Agency – closed 2008
- Equality Authority – 2009 – 43% cut and now being merged with IHRC
- IHRC – Irish Human Rights Commission – Budget cuts since 2009 and merged with EA
- Women’s Health Council – closed 2009
- Crisis Pregnancy Agency – closed and merged with HSE
- Equality for Women Measure – budget partly transferred out of this area and now under Dept. For Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) – Closed 2009
Outcomes of Neoliberal policies: Attacks on Institutions promoting Equality in Ireland

- Gender Equality desk at the Department (Ministry) of Justice, Equality and Law Reform – Desk Closed 2009

- National Women’s Council of Ireland -158 member organisations- budget cuts of 15% in 2008-2011, and 38% in 2012

- Traveller Education cutbacks 2011 and 2012 – all 42 Visiting teaches for Travellers removed*

- Rape Crisis Network Ireland – core Health Authority Funding removed 2011

- SAFE Ireland network of Women’s’ Refuges - core Health Authority Funding removed 2011

- People With Disabilities in Ireland's (PWDI) - funding removed 2012

- National Carers’ Strategy – abandoned 2009
Affective inequality occurs a) when people are deprived of the love, care and solidarity they need to survive, develop and enjoy life and b) when the burdens and benefits of love, care and solidarity work are unequally divided.

Inequalities in the doing of care and love work is central to understanding gender inequality as women are morally impelled to be primary carers in the way men are not.

The Rational Economic Actor model of the citizen in neo-liberalism undermines care and love work - we need to challenge this model.

We need to challenge the Carelessness of the Neoliberal State as it undermines women and their work, and the activity of caring itself through its lack of support for carers and those in need of care.

We need to redefine the role of care in the constitution.
Affective Equality between women and men demands that the way caring is assigned to women in the Irish Constitution needs to change

- Article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution states:
  - **Subsection 1:** In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. **Subsection 2:** The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties* in the home. *Emphasis is mine

- Men are defined out of care and Women defined as morally bound to be carers, a kind of compulsory motherhood
  - Consequences e.g. Central Statistics Office (CSO) defines carers as carers of adults but ignores child care as it is assumed to be a ‘natural function’ for women