Negotiating Boundaries of Power in the Global Governance for Care

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Published online: 29 March 2021
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Abstract

The centrality of building care economies as a necessary step towards gender justice requires a reassessment of global economic governance and state-centred multilateralism. Globalized structures of power can no longer be seen solely as matters of political borders of nation-states, which is the traditional remit of foreign policy. Rather than geography, it is negotiations over the boundaries of power that must be interrogated for the possibility of redrawing borders and boundaries as these are expressed in social relations where care functions are performed. Five spheres of engagement are identified and discussed. A short note on limitarianism raises a question about its value in a care economy and how ethics of care links to it.

Keywords Feminism · Multilateralism · Global economic governance · Care economy

I write this article as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on throughout the world. From a grave public health crisis, nations are now confronting the economic recession resulting from the directives for physical isolation governments have implemented in an attempt to reduce the infection rate and ease burdens on healthcare systems. The crisis brought to the fore the structural inequalities that divide societies between rich and poor, between men and women, between blacks or browns and whites. The interlinkages between health, race and economic status became increasingly starker than the days of the 2008 global economic recession that produced the Occupy Wall Street movement against the politically powerful top ‘one percent’ of income earners. Today it is the Movement for Black Lives that has taken on global dimensions similar to the anti-globalization protests during the early part of the twenty-first century. The pandemic comes at a time when many countries in the world are contending with the repression of civil and political rights as authoritarian leaders consolidate their power, often using

methods of ‘othering’, turning marginalized groups into enemies of the state.

Whether it is progressive actors, political activists, or unorganized citizens, the air is crackling with questions of what life will be like going forward. For some, the horizon is short, seeking immediate relief and focusing on humanitarian dimensions of the multiple crisis. For others, a medium-term strategy focused on recovery is already under contemplation as some parts of the world see the end of the first wave of infections. And then there are those who have bigger dreams of a completely new world that confronts squarely and with much conviction all underlying structures that produce and reproduce injustices. In the words of Arundhati Roy,

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

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We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it (Roy 2020).

As the world charts a pathway through the portal, the question of the location of care¹ and care functions is being asked, particularly whether and how these can contribute to the pursuit of social justice. Acts of caring are necessary functions for the achievement of well-being, thus carrying political and economic significance going beyond typical assumptions of care. More importantly, caring functions imply dependence, if not interdependence; thus, they are performed inside a relationship that reflects a particular set of power structures where well-being achievements are measured along the dyadic relationship of caregivers and care receivers in keeping with Philosopher Martha Nussbaum's real society, that is.

Any real society is a care-giving and a care receiving society and we must therefore discover ways of coping with these facts of human neediness and dependency that are compatible with the self-respect of the recipients and do not exploit the care giver (Nussbaum 2003a: 51).

Feminist economists, in arguing for building care economies, apply analytical methods on care functions, viewing care as work and placing care within the context of material challenges of maintaining and sustaining human lives² in pursuit of well-being. Care functions are also analyzed from an institutional frame seeking to understand how societies organize to secure care provisioning, such as through the formation of households, the organization of markets, the constitution of state structures and the voluntary efforts of communities (Razavi 2007: 21). Care ethics is linked with feminist economists' recognition that understanding the motivation behind care work and caregiving informs governance and public policy (Folbre and Wright 2012: 17–19).

¹ In the literature on care ethics, care is defined very broadly to encompass 'a species of activity that includes everything we do to maintain, contain, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment' (Fischer and Tronto 1990: 40). It is not only with respect to other species that we need to consider but a full conception of how caring can contribute to social justice must also account for the political ecology of planet Earth and its place in the cosmos given advances in human exploration of outer space.

² Nancy Folbre and Eric Olin Wright (2012: 1), for example, use a typology of care functions to include interactive care, support care and supervisory care to elucidate the nuances of the burden of responsibility.

Indeed, care receiving needs also to inform governance and policy because care exists in a social relationship.

Women's movements around the world have been preparing to realize a world beyond the portal. They bring with them tools of intersectional gender justice, an interlinkages analysis of colonial and imperial power, and radical political ecology that are all needed to foster social relations among humans, between humans and other species, as well as all species and planet Earth (Sen and Durano 2014: 3–29). Feminists seek a global governance structure that allows for the application of these tools in the negotiations over rules for social relations at different levels of governance. Their response to the structural inequalities, and the consequent social injustices, is a social order grounded on care and compassion. Compassion is given emphasis here in line with Nussbaum's (2003b: 23–26; expounded more fully in Nussbaum 2013) exploration of how an expansive sense (going beyond the personal and the private) of compassion can overcome emotions of fear and disgust of others that have come to dominate public discourse, especially under authoritarian leaders. Crucial to overcoming the limitations of a narrow, localized expression of compassion, Nussbaum (2003b: 24) asks for an understanding of the meaning of human weakness and vulnerability, which, in my view, links with dependency in care relationships. Thus, the portal that leads to social justice is infused with care and compassion.

Problematizing Boundaries of Power

In the context of the processes of globalization and the institutions of global governance that facilitate these processes, essential to the realization of a new world is the ability to negotiate the boundaries of power. Locating care and compassion along these dividing lines helps to identify where the political struggles need to be fought. Multilateralism and global governance take standard physical borders of nation-states as a starting point. I argue that we look to other forms of boundaries. I interrogate the possibility of redrawing borders and boundaries as these are expressed in social relations where care functions are undertaken. In other words, a new vision of globalization must problematize the challenges of cross-border caring and seek ways to bring compassion into the moral and ethical dimensions of institutions of governance. Some of the most egregious arenas for the struggle of power amongst those who control and those who are controlled, among those who rule and those who are ruled over require attention:

- The boundaries of power between production and social reproduction to problematize the location of care;
- The boundaries of power around digital platforms, financial architectures and intellectual property rights to

problematize how these new sources of monopoly profits infuse care functions and govern care functions;

- Power over planetary boundaries to problematize care in inter-species relations in what can be called the ‘Anthropocene epoch’;
- The boundaries of power between licit and illicit markets to locate care in incarceration, criminalization and militarization;
- The boundaries of power in war and terror to locate care in authoritarianism, transitional justice and peacebuilding; and
- Power over territorial boundaries as these relate to migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons to locate care in humanitarian and integration policies.

Problematizing boundaries of power informs political projects of democratic societies pursuing social justice. It is the foundation of all negotiations on social contracts in a fierce new world. These boundaries of power overlap with each other, are embedded within each other, may be tangential, or even parallel with each other in ways that require nuanced analysis to find solutions amidst the complexity. Political identities are defined, or influenced, by each person’s location in each of these structures of power as well as combinations of them, particularly whether they are on either side of these boundaries of power. In other words, political identities are derived from these structures of power. For these reasons an interlinkages analysis of the various systems of power proves useful in envisioning a world beyond the portal (Sen and Durano 2014: 17–21).

The test of usefulness of this approach is whether deliberations about these boundaries of power lead to the realization of social justice on the other side of the portal. Deliberations are expected to open the path towards agreement over the substantive aspects of global justice (what constitutes global justice). The path towards agreement itself will require the establishment of rules that define the procedural aspects of global justice (how justice is to be decided and achieved). A deliberative democracy with vibrant, meaningful and activist participation provides an open platform for social choices to be expressed and articulated (Curato et al. 2017: 29). Engaging in a search for solutions without the search process itself reflecting the norms of justice will fall short of any real structural change.³ The approach, therefore,

does not carry any form of political stasis; rather, dynamism is a necessary characteristic of the political order.

The Boundaries of Power Between Production and Social Reproduction to Problematize the Location of Care

Feminist economists have consistently placed attention on social reproduction and its invisible nature within mainstream notions of what constitutes an economy as well as in identifying the purpose of an economy. The concept is crucial to the question of how societies sustain themselves through time. This concept has been updated to include the notion of care so that there is a holistic view that incorporates the emotional content of social reproduction. Care is a relational notion bound by this emotional content that shrouds duty, obligation and responsibility assigned to caregivers and care workers. Care defies assumptions of methodological individualism, a concept that dominates mainstream economic theory in which individuals maximize utility subject to budget constraints. The network of caring relationships describe interdependence among human beings and between human beings and other living things. These interdependent relationships exist within a dynamic ecosystem across space and time placing the short history of humanity within the longer trajectory of the cosmos.

In caregiving and care receiving societies, care functions are performed to achieve well-being for the recipient. Care work is a combination of paid and unpaid activities, with a significant portion borne by women and girls as socially ascribed responsibilities that comprise the gendered division of labour. These activities crucially define the feminine gender stereotype and informs societal expectations of women’s work, including the work undertaken in formal labour markets.

With economic growth and national income as primary methods of evaluating progress, policymakers have placed undue attention upon manufacturing and industry, especially in profit-generating activities. Poverty reduction programmes have also focused upon employment and income generation such that public services responsive to care needs do not have a prominent place in the design of these programmes. Even in cases of conditional cash transfers, the focus on child outcomes precludes the well-being outcomes of care providers, both the household members and the government-affiliated service providers. The extent to which these programmes transform the relational power dynamics bears significant questioning.

The production boundary is also problematic when trying to locate care functions in food systems. The agriculture sector has recently been taking the shape of manufacturing and industry in the production realm, with a heavy push

³ This approach differs slightly from Fraser (2013) in that it combines her two dimensions of justice—recognition and representation—into the procedural aspect of justice. Fraser’s third dimension is redistribution that I consider to be closely linked to the substantive aspects of justice. In the problematic presented here, the question of redistribution is answered through a social contract defining the boundaries of power, including the possibility of inversion when called for.

to transform away from home and community gardening and farming, small-scale and artisanal fisheries and forest products gathering towards the scale of industrial farming and agri-business. More often than not, these subsistence activities are not considered growth promoting activities, hence, unproductive. And yet, these subsistence activities are crucial for everyday survival, if not the pursuit of well-being for those who rely upon them.

There is, in addition, analytical work that raise these questions of boundary between production and reproduction within macroeconomics. Macroeconomic theories and tools influence productive capacities but feminist economists have been asking how these policies inform relationships underpinning caring functions and, vice versa, how caring functions can inform policy design (Balakrishnan et al. 2016; Durano and Bidegain-Ponte 2016; Heintz 2019; Seguino 2019).

There are several indications that these boundaries are now matters crucial to policymaking and that there is greater openness to reconsider how we structure economies and eradicate poverty. Among these, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development takes as an indicator for gender equality women's time use in caring activities. The pandemic has also raised this issue given prominent coverage by mainstream newspapers, inspiring many to question the status of 'essential workers' many of whom performed care functions in response to the pandemic. To step through the portal means taking the necessary steps to sustain the negotiations towards greater equality in shouldering responsibilities for care.

The Boundaries of Power Around New Sources of Monopoly Profits as These Relate to Production and Reproduction

I consider these boundaries of power as the unfinished architecture of the twenty-first century, where capitalist structures have yet to fully exploit these new sources of monopoly profits. Financialization has come to characterize the global economy with the 2008 global financial crisis serving as primary evidence of how the financial sector generates more profits than manufacturing and industry, sectors that have been decimated by intensified trade liberalization and reorganized through international production networks and supply chains. Financial power translates into political power itself, with larger corporations able to extract protective measures during periods of crisis. New financial products combined with speculative behaviour have produced economic instability to the detriment of manufacturing and industry. The global crisis of 2008 was a significant event that demonstrated the power of the international financial architecture in controlling the response and deflecting

resources towards themselves at the expense of the disenfranchised (Bidegain Ponte et al. 2015).

Another arena is monopoly control over intellectual property rights, which covers a whole range of intangible assets securing income flows through exclusive use. The HIV/AIDS epidemic and the current COVID-19 pandemic are clear episodes in recent history that have demonstrated the significance of negotiating where these boundaries lie, if there is to be transformation towards social justice. Legal frameworks on intellectual property rights inhibit public benefits and limit positive externalities, especially in knowledge production, cultural fields, and medicines and pharmaceuticals. Contesting the boundaries between public and private benefits is not the only concern. Recognizing women's work in producing knowledge,⁴ especially indigenous knowledge, is an essential step but one that needs to be bolstered by a clearer articulation of how intellectual property rights regimes govern care functions. The entire gamut of regulatory structures affecting caring functions determine quality standards that can spell the relationship between caregiver and care receiver.

Finally, digital platforms, often built upon data on an individual's characteristics and features, create monopoly profits either through exclusive use of raw or semi-processed data, software with algorithms that process the data, or as channels of data, information and financial flows. Outsized control of select companies have led to anti-trust investigations, for example. But governance is only concerned with the behaviour of these corporations, it also needs to look into the architecture of the physical infrastructure, how infrastructure is controlled through language and codes, and the production of content that flows through the digital infrastructure. Political influence of actors in this field has been noted where digital platforms have engendered questions about civil and political rights, such as free speech and propaganda, privacy and surveillance, security and cybercrimes (Gurumurthy 2016; Tandon and Aayush 2020). Some discussions already occur around how to design care institutions, care structures, and care service provision using digital platforms as well as looking into the possibility of ensuring respect for co-design principles between care provider and care receiver while the digital infrastructure is being engineered (Avram et al. 2019: 187).

There has been limited analysis of the location of care functions in these architectures. Again, the links to ownership and control are easier to identify, such as the use of digital platforms to match household employers with care

⁴ US attorney and legal advisor Terra Gearhart-Serna (2010: 380) looks first at recognition of women's knowledge, especially indigenous knowledge, as well as suggests some principles for application of intellectual property rights standards.

workers or looking at the impact of mortgage loans on ability of single mothers to provide shelter for their families. A deeper engagement over the more complex questions could prove enlightening.

The Boundaries of Power Over the Planet to Locate Care in Inter-Species Relations During the Anthropocene Epoch

The physical distancing that many governments imposed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic indicates the nature of the challenge humanity is facing to achieve the global warming target of 1.5 °C.⁵ Climate change scientist Corinne Le Quéré and colleagues estimate that the consequent reduction of carbon emissions, at about –4.2% to –7.5% annually under current conditions, could actually put Earth on a trajectory to meeting the target (Le Quéré et al. 2020). However, these authors caution that social isolation policies are temporary and there is strong pressure to return to ‘normal’, which covers a period that had seen increases in carbon emissions, at least over the past decade and a half.

A seminal article on feminist analysis of ecosystems in Rocheleau et al. (1996: 9) discusses how feminist political ecology as an analytical framework ‘addresses the convergence of gender, science, and the environment’ in various discursive spaces, such as academia, politics and policy, social movements, and in daily life. In particular, it argues that women’s lived experiences point to ecological systems surrounding the capacity to survive and live, the distribution of rights and responsibilities for ecological systems and the political processes over these two aspects (Rocheleau et al. 1996: 4–19). Interrogating the boundaries of power examines the negotiations over caring for versus exploiting ecological systems. The negotiations bear upon relations with nature and its ability to provide for some of the basic resources needed for survival of women and their families while seeking sustainability of natural resources so that the prolongation of lives becomes viable and societies are regenerated. Feminist political ecology opens up the possibilities of a complete accounting of the contested spaces of power that surround and permeate human life on earth.

⁵ The twenty-first century is when humanity finds itself pushing against planetary boundaries. These boundaries ‘define the safe operating space for humanity with respect to the Earth’s system and are associated with the planet’s biophysical subsystems or processes’ (Rockström et al. 2009: 472). Of the ten earth subsystems identified, three boundaries have already been crossed, i.e., climate change, rate of biodiversity loss, and the nitrogen cycle.

The Boundaries of Power Between Licit and Illicit Markets to Locate Care in Criminalization, Incarceration, and Militarized Violence

The focus of the power struggle in this section is the boundaries of legitimacy⁶ for a range of goods and services, that societies may consider as transgressions of the ‘moral’, as for example narcotic drugs and sex work. In some instances, criminalization is a result of state surveillance for ‘anti-social’ behaviour, such as loitering, littering, and similar offenses, sometimes very broadly defined, thus, easily interpreted in an arbitrary manner. In some instances, due to strict enforcement of restrictions owing to COVID-19, defiance of quarantine has led to imprisonment, as in the case of Myanmar or Argentina.⁷

In other instances, street traders, market vendors and other petty traders that operate in public spaces can become victims of local authorities that define administrative rules governing who and what activities may be undertaken in public spaces. Policing public spaces can lead to criminalization of livelihood activities in such cases. There are cases of informal worker groups negotiating collective bargaining agreements with municipal governments over the use of these public spaces, where these workers assert their rights to livelihood without facing criminalization due to restrictive administrative practices (von Broemsen 2020: 8–14). With women comprising a majority of informal workers in these settings, their caring functions as well as their own caring needs must necessarily be part of these negotiations. Meanwhile, the first step of negotiating space and a bargaining agreement has already been made.

In debating the boundaries of power between licit and illicit activities, as well as goods and services, sociologists Joanne Minaker and Bryan Hogeveen (2015: 3) clearly see the issue being dominated by socially constructed narratives that associate deviancy with ‘poor, young, unmarried,

⁶ In Chang (2001), markets reflect the rules that govern the exchange of goods and services, namely: (1) regulate who can participate; (2) determine the legitimate commodities for exchange; (3) define the rights and obligations of market participants; and, (4) regulate the exchange process itself. All these institutions interact with social norms and structures governing behaviour of social groups stratified by gender, race, ethnicity, caste, among others. Productive activities dominate markets and legitimacy is often bound by attachment to markets in ways that delegitimize non-market activities, such as caring functions and those needed for social reproduction of labour and societies.

⁷ American Friends Service Committee reports on governments using vaguely worded policies on quarantine and physical isolation attached to criminal punishments, as in Myanmar and Hungary. The Buenos Aires Times reports more than 140,000 apprehended for quarantine violations in Argentina.

non-white mothers...in need of regulation and/or punishment rather than deserving of support and care':

We conceptualize "criminalizing mothering" as the complex process of scrutiny, surveillance, and social sanction characterized by perceiving some mothering as criminal, and through legal and extra-legal practices (formal and informal regulation), treating some women as deviant, dependent, and/or dangerous mothers, which undermines mothers' authority and authenticity (Minaker and Hogeveen 2015: 2–3).

These socially constructed narratives align with social hierarchies around class, race, sexuality, ability, ethnicity and age so that those who do not reflect the characteristics of dominant and powerful groups cannot possibly be 'good mothers'. Interrogating 'motherhood' through the criminal justice system removes responsibilities for caring from state institutions and structures and places these obligations upon individual women, many of whom do not have access to public services, social support or the economic status to fulfill some arbitrary standard of the good mother. The situation is compounded by drugs, sex work, or migration status, all of which add another layer of stigma and 'othering' behaviour from holders of power, not least the criminal justice system and its enforcers. Parallels may be seen in the criminalization of abortion, where struggle and contestation have intensified alongside the rise of authoritarian regimes. Women's bodies themselves are battlefields for power grabs or self-determination.

The issue is not confined to pregnant women and mothers, since women find themselves in the midst of various drug wars as farmers of drug crops (opium poppy, coca, and cannabis) or as workers along international supply chains manufacturing illicit drugs as they face few options in their impoverished communities. Policy and programme responses need to open up debate over the boundaries of power in these communities, especially to ask about the role of care in the transition towards licit activities. The question itself forces actors in these settings to reconsider the violence that comes with their strategies of control and suppression. In one of the first publications sharing the results of a convening of rural women farmers in drug crop production, the women shared the many roles that they played in their homes and their communities, including caring for their children and livestock as well as farming their own food (David et al. 2019: 3). There is clearly an opening here for clarifying these intersections.

The organized nature of commodity exchange requires debate over the rules of the market governing participation as buyers or sellers or as consumers or producers of these 'criminal'—or 'immoral'—goods and services. These market rules determine whose behaviour gets criminalized and, hence, who gets rehabilitated or incarcerated, among other

potentially retributive consequences, such as confiscation of property and payment of fines. These questions touch on the relationship between retributive justice and distributive justice. Understanding how markets are ordered along lines of licit and illicit activities have implications on the primacy of justice arrangements that apply in contexts where there is a two-way relationship between criminal harm and conditions of poverty and deprivation.

The Territorial Boundaries of Power in War and Terror to Locate Care Functions in Authoritarianism, Transitional Justice and Peacebuilding

One aspect of this problematic is the impact of power struggles upon people who seek to move away from the physical centres of the struggle, especially as violence increases with intensity. I refer mostly to migrants and refugees, but this question can also apply to internally displaced persons, especially when these are indigenous peoples. The question of locating care in these boundaries applies to humanitarian and integration policies. Of special concern is the resulting 'non-personhood' or 'non-citizenship' of those who are forced to flee from violent and catastrophic events. In these cases, political legitimacy produced by bounded territories through state structures is unable to confer equal rights to people crossing borders, or even to indigenous peoples. The current rule-making structures are highly prohibitive and seek to control rather than welcome.

The issue of care within humanitarian support during or in response to a crisis, natural or man-made needs attention. It is unlikely that caring functions cease during these times but we need to have a better understanding of where caring functions are located when designing humanitarian support. Most approaches will focus on health care, particularly on triage under the most urgent situations. Since care functions are performed in a spectrum of crisis situations pre- and post-triage, planning and design of humanitarian response will need to cover a wider range of life cycle events, for example, maternal health, childcare, elder care, and care for persons with disabilities that do not cease in crisis.

Transitional justice is an obvious arena for negotiation over the boundaries of power. This crucial step in conflict resolution covers prosecution for serious crimes, truth-seeking, reparations, and legal reforms. Transitional justice processes recognize trauma and psycho-social support as a core activity in the response, but these efforts could be expanded to cover other aspects of transitional justice. Care functions are also important in the reconstruction process, which often occur in parallel to the transitional justice process. In addition, given that the mainstream development agenda often dominates this aspect of peacebuilding, a return to

boundaries between production and social reproduction, to planetary boundaries, among other aspects of the economy is warranted. While many approaches acknowledge the importance of women's rights (UN 2010: 5) as well as with UN Security Council Resolution No. 1325, these approaches do not discuss nor acknowledge that caring functions are essential to living and re-establishing a life without violence.

A Note and a Question: On the Location of Care in Limitarianism as Moral and Political Duty

In our view, the historical sources suggest that we should also pursue this approach that combines this analysis of institutions and policies on the one hand with an analysis of virtuous actions on the other (Kramm and Robeyns 2020: 14).

Having spent much of the discussion on policies and institutions, the question of ethics of care now needs some comment. This note speaks to redistributive justice, specifically looking at the limits to wealth, which is as necessary a question as accepting that there are planetary boundaries. The concept of 'limitarianism' is proposed by human development theorist Ingrid Robeyns as an alternative to the unlimited freedoms associated with liberalism: 'Limitarianism is the view that no one should enjoy more than an upper limit of goods or resources' (Robeyns 2017: 24–28), arguing that there is both a moral duty and a political duty not to have excessive wealth. A moral duty is a matter of individual behaviour while a political duty will bring with it the coercive powers of the state to implement policies that will enforce the restrictions to wealth (Kramm and Robeyns 2020: fn 1).

The question then for those viewing caring functions as essential to the workings of a global economy is whether and how limitarianism can inform the design of care institutions, including the organizations and infrastructures that might constitute the governance of care. If limitarianism is a moral duty, can the ethics of care inform this duty? Care as an ethical notion reflective of needs awareness, responsibility, responsiveness, and competence (Tronto 1993: 126–136) may have something to contribute to limitarianism as a moral duty, if only to inform the wealth cut-off since care functions affects the formation of human capabilities.⁸

⁸ Robeyns reflects that setting the cutoff for material wealth be undertaken against the capabilities needed to live a 'fully flourishing life'. Since limitarianism is focused on material resources, then focus is placed upon the quantity needed to support a set of functionings directly relating to the pecuniary aspects of living standards (Robeyns 2017: 24–28, 30–32).

If limitarianism is a political duty attached to state obligations, then there could be consequences for foreign policy, particularly those relating to funding streams such as official development assistance (ODA) and equity in multilateral financial institutions and how these fund programmes that build and strengthen care economies.⁹

This article's focus on care functions reflects my hope that compassion might have a role in the pursuit of social justice. Might compassion be a motivational emotion that creates an opening for deliberations and negotiations over limitarianism as a political duty? At the same time, with attention focused on caring functions and care relations, values are also shifted towards attaining well-being outcomes since care has better chances of supporting these aims than profits and surplus extraction can pretend to manage.

Conclusion

Global governance will need to reconsider its old notions of boundaries as a basis of power, that is, Westphalian nation-states born out of violent conflicts and revolutions. The first step asks us to problematize boundaries where power is negotiated. The rules of governance during the twentieth century needed to contain armed conflict; they defined the international financial architecture and attempted to regulate planetary boundaries. As peoples and nations struggled to claim political independence and autonomy, the twentieth century was also an era of human rights and development—which at times were seen as opposing concepts—with one thriving on the normative plane, and the other struggling to succeed within the operational world subjected to unstable compromises born of *realpolitik*. At the same time, state-centred multilateralism has given way to global economic governance accommodating multi-stakeholder spaces that openly place non-state actors, such as multinational corporations and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within closer negotiating distance of each other. Global economic governance refers more frequently to the sets of rules guiding the behaviour of transnational actors,

⁹ Both Robinson (1999) and Held (2006) have argued that a care ethic may be useful for informing analysis of international relations, and by extension global governance. Robinson is concerned with the 'culture of neglect' resulting from the primacy of liberal values of autonomy, independence and self-determination, which are often attached to individualism. Held (2006), in similar vein, sees 'cultural constructs of masculinity' in nation-states and looks to cooperative behaviour from care ethics as a basis for overcoming hierarchy and domination associated with masculinist constructs of a nation-state. I would take care not to assume cooperation as intrinsic to care, rather that the caring function can contain and reflect a variety of motivations and intentions that are not automatically 'cooperative' (Sen 1990).

some of which may comprise or create the organizations that legitimize and enforce their preferred set of rules, as for example does the World Economic Forum. In a challenge to common notions of globalization, Djelic and Quack (2003), using institutionalist frameworks, argue that globalization is a process of transborder institutional change towards a contested trajectory, thereby pushing a diverse set of actors and stakeholders to build organizations and networks that define the frameworks upon which their transnational interactions are governed. Such a view places heavy emphasis on these ‘stakeholders’ to open up political spaces in the global arena so that they can themselves negotiate over the rules of global governance. The authors point out that these organizations and networks are vehicles that carry the globalization agenda; in other words, globalization is ‘institution building in the transnational arena’. Viewed in this way, global economic governance and globalization are closely intertwined, if not interchangeable, in that both involve institutions (the rules) and processes of institutionalization (rule-making). The outcome of the process is what is typically observed as globalization, that is, the free flow of goods and services, controlled migration, assignment of intellectual property rights, e-commerce, among others. The implication of this institutionalist perspective of globalization necessarily means that globalization is a matter of governance.

Political theorist Keith Breen, assessing Hannah Arendt’s understanding of the law in terms of relationships, writes:

Hence Arendt’s turn to alternative and earlier conceptualisations of law, to the Greek notion of *nomos* and the Roman idea of *lex*. As she sees them, the Greek idea of law as setting boundaries and the Roman view of law as establishing relationships differ significantly from law as command and obedience. In returning to them, Arendt therefore hopes, as she does with her account of the *bios politikos*, the ‘political life’, generally, to sidestep the appeal to absolutes and embrace of violence that have been axiomatic for so much of Western thought and practice (Breen 2015: 16).

I have sought in this article to outline the spheres of contestation that any global governance of care must address fully. In each of these spheres of contestation, the renegotiation of boundaries not only determines what constitutes justice but must also devise the organizational architecture that will operationalize the rules of justice and keep the platforms for dialogue and negotiation open and dynamic. To acknowledge complexity signifies the embeddedness of these spheres within each other. By focusing on contestation at the boundaries of power, I turn to Hannah Arendt and her own attempts at separating domination and violence from law and governance. At this point though I am pushed by pragmatism to accept the vulnerabilities, the

pains and hurts, and the unhealed parts of human life that inspire and provoke further pain through violence. Hence, I resort to seeking a place for compassion in political lives that value social justice.

What has not been done here is to identify the stakeholders in the negotiations nor has a definitive argument been made to move clearly away from state-centred multilateralism. There is an acknowledgement that the current global governance system has led to the undermining of sovereign states that have yet to consolidate their political autonomy as independent nations after a history of colonialism and continued imperialist transgressions. Indeed, Fraser (2013: 189–191) saw the Westphalian territorial state as a waning political structure throughout this period of globalization. Meanwhile, counter-hegemonic discourse and actions are also globalized alongside and in opposition to neoliberal globalization. These issues remain pertinent in the face of nationalist movements with authoritarian and xenophobic tendencies.

Let me end, here, by returning to compassion as the enemy of fear and disgust. When compassion is understood within the relational nature of care functions, liberalism’s focus on the individual and individualism is subjected to an interrogation forcing us to reconsider liberal politics. It is this combination of compassion and care that I hope can propel humanity through the portal carrying with us the belief and the hope that, indeed, another world is possible.

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