

Care, Gender and Global Social Justice: Towards an Moral Framework for Ethical Globalization

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Introduction

Theories of distributive justice have been popular within moral and political philosophy since the publication of Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 (Rawls 1971). When Charles Beitz followed up eight years later with his application of Rawls' ideas to the international context, this catalyzed an almost equally great interest in international justice, this time not only by moral and political philosophers, but also in the field of international relations theory (Beitz 1979). Today, twenty-five years later, I would venture the intuitive claim that questions of global justice and inequality have – especially for academics, civil society groups and international institutions – actually overshadow debates on domestic distributive justice. This is not to say that the latter are no longer necessary or important; rather, it is becoming increasingly difficult to confine justice questions to within state boundaries, given the current unprecedented levels of interdependence among states and the global reach of institutions and policies. Today, in order to address questions of justice we must first explore that that amorphous yet ubiquitous phenomenon: globalization.

While globalization encompasses a wide range of interconnected spheres, including culture and technology, it is the transformation of the global economy which is of greatest relevance to any analysis of global justice. Again, while a highly unequal global economy is not new – dependency theorists were explaining and condemning it in the 1970s – what is new is the degree of global economic integration, as well as the increasing poverty of the majority, and our increasing awareness of it. As Joseph Stiglitz has pointed out, '(i)t used to be that subjects such as structural adjustment loans ... and banana quotas ... were of interest to only a few. Now sixteen-year-old kids from the suburbs have strong opinions on such esoteric treaties as GATT ... and NAFTA ...'

(Stiglitz 2002, pp. 3-4). Clearly, the outrage of these sixteen-year-olds is different from that of Latin American scholars in the 1970s. While the latter engaged in a rather lonely struggle against the monolithic structure of global capitalism in a Cold War context; the former are joined by, among others, Nobel prize-winning economists and women's civil society groups from the global South in battling not simply greater economic integration, but the asymmetrical, undemocratic, and hypocritical policies, institutions and regulations that are directing globalization. What is new about the contemporary critique, then, is that it is less about ideology, and more about accountability, participation and fairness for all.

Clearly, then, the time is ripe for the articulation of not just another 'theory of justice', but a comprehensive framework for ethical globalization. While die-hard anti-globalists may still seek to roll back globalization, or hope to come up with an alternative to global capitalism, many other critics seek to articulate a moral framework which can guide the direction of policy towards a world which is less unequal and less exclusive. One of the most impressive and influential of such attempts is Thomas Pogge's astonishing book, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Pogge 2002). The book is astonishing, and unique, not only for its clear, compelling philosophical analysis, but also for its uncompromising and rarely seen frankness with respect to the human misery that is the result of the contemporary global economic order. Interestingly, moreover, the argument of the book is not 'anti-globalization'; indeed, like so many critiques of globalization today, Pogge's criticism is directed at the particular ways in which globalization has been managed by the powerful, to the detriment of the weak.

I see the appalling trajectory of world poverty and global inequality since the end of the Cold War as a shocking indictment of one particular, especially brutal path of economic globalization which our governments have chosen to impose. ... The cumulative result ... is a grossly unfair global economic order under which the lion's share of the benefits of global economic growth flows to the most affluent states (Pogge 2002, p. 19).

The problem, then, is not an economic one – of 'globalization' or 'free trade' – but a political one – of unequal power relations, and a lack of equal and

democratic participation by all players in the game. This is crucial distinction for any sophisticated critique, but especially so for Pogge, since it assigns responsibility for harm not simply to a nebulous structure or process, but to all those individuals involved in upholding a particular set of institutions and agreements. It is this notion of collective responsibility which informs Pogge's conception of human rights; while the book makes use of a number of moral concepts -- including human flourishing, responsibility, and moral cosmopolitanism -- it is this revised understanding of human rights that is central to its argument. Indeed, this human rights-based ethical framework grounds his policy prescriptions for mitigating the effects of contemporary globalization. Specifically, Pogge argues that human rights are moral claims on the organization of one's society. He notes, however, that since citizens (presumably, in a democracy) are collectively responsible for their society's organization and its resulting human rights record, human rights ultimately make demands upon citizens. Thus, he concludes that persons share responsibility for official disrespect of human rights within any coercive institutional order they are involved in upholding (Pogge 2002, p. 64).

Crucially, on Pogge's institutional understanding of human rights, governments and individuals have a responsibility to work for an institutional order and public culture that ensure that all members of society have secure access to the objects of their human rights. (Pogge 2002, p. 65). In this paper, I will examine Pogge's argument, and assess it as a framework from which to guide moral deliberation and policy-formulation on globalization. I will argue that this moral framework is flawed and limited for a number of reasons. First, it is not at all clear what value is added to the argument by formulating it using the language of human rights. Indeed, by using rights language, Pogge upholds the liberal-individualist tradition of theories of justice, rather than building on his promising idea of 'collective responsibility'. Second, Pogge's theory also upholds the traditional model of morality as an 'individually action-guiding system within or for a person' (Walker 1998, p. 7). Individuals (especially powerful ones directly involved with global institutions) are regarded as 'super-agents' who, together,

can exercise their individual moral wills to take decisions and enact moral, and ultimately political, change. This model, I argue, obfuscates the socially-embodied and interdependent nature of morality. Finally, I argue that what is missing from Pogge's argument is any conception of what such an institutional order and public culture would look like. Simply to say that it would be 'fairer' or 'more democratic', or to say that it would be one in which human rights were fulfilled, is insufficient. More specifically, I would suggest that Pogge's framework lacks any account of social connection and the nature of human needs – specifically, their need for care; this, in turn, then leads to an incomplete and obscure normative basis from which to begin to consider concrete policy reform, as well as a complete lack of attention to particular groups – including and especially women – who are most gravely affected by the current global economic order.

After an analysis and critique of Pogge's argument in part one, part two of the paper will explore feminist alternatives to rights-based moral arguments. After a brief look at the capabilities approach of Martha Nussbaum, I will offer positive argument in favour of a moral framework for 'ethical globalization' based on a feminist political ethic of care. This approach is broadly informed by the ethics of care as developed by moral psychologist Carol Gilligan, and specifically by the 'politicization' of this approach by writers such as Joan Tronto, Selma Sevenhuijsen, Virginia Held, Kimberley Hutchings and Olena Hankivsky.¹ This feminist political ethic of care is distinguished by its conviction that care – as both a moral orientation and a set of practices – is relevant and important for the public sphere, rather than simply for the sphere of private or intimate relations. It argues that the inclusion of a care ethic can lead to greater social justice in social policy because it 'opens up new ways of seeing human beings, their social problems, and their needs, and it enables us to analyze critically how government responds to these' (Hankivsky 2004, p. 2).

The focus of the argument in this paper is on care as both a moral orientation and a kind of work – work which is undervalued and under resourced globally, and which contributes to gender, racial and North-South inequality.

Certainly, that national and global social policy should value care and include provision for care in social and economic policies is important for all people – young and old, rich and poor, men and women, and for the creation and maintenance of a just, responsible and humane world order. That said, because women are, globally, primarily responsible for both paid and unpaid care work, an analysis of the place of care and the material conditions which influence this is especially important for highlighting and addressing gendered inequalities in power and access to resources in a neo-liberal globalized economy.

Pogge's World Poverty and Human Rights

Thomas Pogge's 2002 book is actually a collection of essays written between 1990 and 2001. Despite this eleven-year period, there is a surprising degree of continuity between the chapters; the result is unified book with a relatively coherent argument running through it. While my focus here is on Pogge's understanding of human rights, it is necessary to examine a number of his other ideas on morality and global justice in order effectively to critique his overall approach. In particular, I will analyze his ideas on the global economic order and poverty and on human flourishing, cosmopolitanism and human rights.

While Pogge does not go into any explicit or detailed account of the nature of economic globalization, he does link his argument to what he calls the 'new global economic order', instituted with the World Trade Organization (WTO). As noted above in the Introduction, Pogge's critique is not an ideological one; rather, he sees the world in much the same way as would a traditional realist.² Unlike most realists, however, Pogge puts forward a strong normative critique of the self-interested, statist world order. On several occasions he refers to 'our governments' who have sought to maximize our material gains from the agreement by insisting on protectionist exemptions for 'us' and onerous commitments for developing countries (Pogge 2002, p. 19). Thus, Pogge has no real argument with globalization per se; indeed, he claims that 'there is no reason to oppose any and all possible designs of an integrated global market economy under unified rules of universal scope'. But the manner in which they are currently organized,

with developed countries having a ‘crushing advantage in bargaining power and expertise’, and considering exclusively the best interests of the people and corporations of their own country, is clearly and grossly unfair (Pogge 2002, p. 19). Indeed, Pogge goes further than this, suggesting that direct responsibility lies with ‘us’; deaths caused by global economic arrangements designed and imposed by our governments, he argues, are different from, for example, deaths caused by the massacres in Rwanda in early 1994. Although we (developed, Western countries) were late in intervening, the deaths were actually brought about by clearly identifiable villains, and we did not benefit from these deaths in any way. The governments, however, which negotiate economic regimes and treaties are elected by us, responsive to our interests and preferences, acting in our name and in ways that benefit us. ‘The buck’, he asserts, ‘stops with us’ (Pogge 2002, p. 21).

It is not surprising, then, that Pogge advocates the formulation of a transnational theory of justice. As he rightly points out, social justice cannot be limited to the boundaries of the nation-state; for Pogge, however, this suggests the need for not only a transnational, but a *universal* theory of justice:

in the contemporary world, human lives are profoundly affected by non-domestic social institutions; thus, we must aspire to a *single, universal* criterion of justice which all persons and peoples can accept as the basis for moral judgements about the global order ... (Pogge 2002, p. 33).

Pogge argues that a complex and internationally acceptable core criterion of basic justice will best be formulated in the language of human rights. Specifically, human rights should be understood primarily as claims on coercive social institutions; they may thus also be understood as moral claims against anyone involved in the imposition of such institutions (Pogge, 2002, p. 46). If institutions are structured so that the universal core criterion of basic justice – individual human rights – is unfulfilled, then those involved in upholding those institutions have a responsibility either to discontinue their involvement, or else compensate for it by working for reform of institutions or for the protection of the victims (Pogge 2002, pp. 49-50). While Pogge briefly mentions ‘secure access to minimally adequate shares of basic freedoms and participation, of food, drink, clothing, shelter, education and health care, he neither justifies his choice of these things in particular as human rights, nor goes into further detail about the precise nature of these

particular needs of goods. In fact, he claims that the question of which rights we single out as human rights is rendered less important, since his institutional understanding of human rights emphasizes negative duties across the board (Pogge 2002, p. 70).

Moreover, it is of course important for his universal account of basic justice that the actual content of what constitutes human flourishing has a low measure of specificity.

Pogge's account of justice is an explicitly cosmopolitan one, characterized by moral and ontological individualism, moral universality, equality, and generality (Pogge 2002, p. 169). Because a globalizing world is one in which all human beings are now participants (sic) in a single, global institutional order, unfulfilled human rights are, at least potentially, everyone's responsibility (Pogge 2002, p. 171). Later on, Pogge narrows this a little, claiming that at least the 'more privileged and influential citizens of the more powerful and approximately democratic countries' bear a collective responsibility for their governments' role in designing and imposing this (unjust) global order (Pogge 2002, p. 173). The duty of these citizens, then is to work towards the achievement of institutional reforms that will help to eradicate injustice. In particular, Pogge advocates a vertical dispersal of sovereignty, wherein persons are citizens of, and govern themselves through, a number of political units of various sizes, without any one political unit being dominant and thus occupying the role of the state. These units would include neighbourhoods, towns, counties, provinces, states, regions and the 'world at large'. Such reform, Pogge argues, would help to achieve greater security, democracy, environmental conservation, and economic justice, as well as reducing the ability of governments to physically oppress and censor their citizens (Pogge 2002, p. 173).

Pogge distinguishes his institutional human rights-based account of global justice from other contributions to the field, arguing that a conception of human rights is far more suitable than all the theoretical constructs currently discussed by academics.³ I would argue, however, that Pogge's account of human flourishing, autonomy and justice has much in common with many other, broadly liberal contributions to the debate on justice from within analytical philosophy. Specifically, his account is procedural, individualistic, universalistic – it focuses on the procedures for arriving at a theory of justice which privileges individuals as autonomous, and seeks to extend this principle to all individuals in the world. Its use of human rights language – albeit in a revised concept

of ‘institutional’ rights – still ties his theory to dominant, Western liberal approaches to global ethics. Indeed, one might ask why Pogge is so adamant that his theory must be conceptualized using his idea of institutional human rights, when it seems as if the moral idea of responsibility – specifically, shared responsibility – is more germane.

Perhaps most important, however, are the things that are left out of Pogge’s argument. For an argument that is so grounded in political ‘reality’, there is very little discussion of power – save the recurrent mention of the ‘crushing advantage’ that wealthy and powerful states have over poor and weak ones. But in order to understand and address the nature of contemporary inequality, we must understand not only the content of WTO agreements, but also the way in which power, identity and responsibility are tightly woven into patterns of relationship, social practices and institutions, their material conditions and environments and distributions of credibility and authority (Walker 1998, p. 171). This, I would argue, involves using a feminist methodology which can effectively explore both the causes and nature of gender subordination and inequality which are increasingly evident in a globalizing world.⁴ Moreover, it requires the application of a moral framework which can address the needs of women, and can more fully take into account aspects of all people’s lives which have been subordinated in male-centered moral and political theories.

In the following section I will explore two feminist approaches to social justice: first, the capabilities approach of Martha Nussbaum, and second, the feminist ethics of care. While the former is explicitly a normative theory aimed directly at questions of justice and inequality on a global scale, the latter is only beginning to move from the level of theory to the realm of policy. So far, it has rarely been applied to questions of international development and global justice. I will argue, however, that a feminist political ethic of care has the potential to address important questions of exclusion and inequality on a global scale by focusing on relations of power, including and especially gender relations. By contrast, while the capabilities approach moves some way beyond a rights-approach, its purpose is to supplement rather than supplant rights theory. Although it fills in some obvious blanks in rights-based normative theory, the capabilities approach cannot adequately address the reality of women’s lives in an era of globalization.

The Capabilities Approach

As Martha Nussbaum has argued, the human rights approach has frequently been criticized by feminists for being male-centred, and for not including some abilities and opportunities that are fundamental to women in their struggle for sex equality (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 37). Nussbaum's response to this weakness is her carefully honed and now widely influential capabilities approach. While the capabilities approach is most closely associated with the work of development economist Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum is now arguably equally renowned and influential for her own formulation of the approach, especially as it relates to women in developing countries.

Nussbaum's approach is particularly relevant for this paper insofar as it provides a gender-based critique of the normative theory of rights in the context of globalization. In particular, Nussbaum argues that capabilities are closely linked to rights, but that the language of capabilities gives important 'precision and supplementation' to the language of rights. In particular, she argues that only when certain capabilities are present can we think of rights as being secured. As she says,

In short, thinking in terms of capability gives us a benchmark as we think about what it is really to secure a right to someone. It makes clear that this involves affirmative material and institutional support, not simply a failure to impede (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 38).

This approach is attractive for a number of reasons. First, it focuses on what people are 'actually able to do and to be', rather than on a right as a legal entitlement. By concentrating on what persons actually have and can do here and now, it is not linked with the distinction between the public and private spheres, as is rights-language. As such, Nussbaum argues, it is better able to address inequalities that women suffer in the 'private' sphere of the family (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 39). Moreover, Nussbaum notes that the capabilities approach effectively bypasses the 'cultural relativism' debate over human rights; '(w)hen

we speak simply of what people are actually able to do and to be, we do not even give the appearance of privileging a Western idea' (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 39).

Thus, Nussbaum's claim that a capabilities approach is better suited to address the needs and interests of women than a rights approach is based largely on the way in which the former helps to bypass a number of troublesome debates. Her capabilities approach is the articulation of what people require in order to secure rights, and as such focuses more on positive action than on negative rights. Importantly, Nussbaum insists that the language of rights remains important in public discourse: first, rights imports the idea of an urgent claim based upon justice; second, rights language emphasizes choice and autonomy. The former is important, she argues, for women who lack political rights. It is not made clear why the latter is important; rather, it appears to be assumed that this is a good thing.

I would argue, however, that Nussbaum's approach does virtually nothing to upset the moral and social ontology of rights, or to highlight different or previously overlooked moral values, or to point us in the direction of different policy alternatives. While Nussbaum should be applauded for reminding us of the need to develop normative approaches to poverty and development which highlight the position of women, her own perspective remains immersed in conventional categories and relies, especially in its list of capabilities, on a thoroughgoing universalism which pays only lip-services to *difference*. Throughout the analysis, Nussbaum stresses the importance of combining capabilities analysis with the language of rights, rather than reconceptualizing the notion of rights itself. Thus, like Pogge's work, it is, in the end, not fully capable of integrating the crucial normative dynamics of relational power, collective responsibility and mutual dependence into its analysis. This, I would argue, is simply vital if the needs and interests of women are truly to be understood, and met.

A Feminist Political Ethic of Care

In contrast to Nussbaum's capabilities approach, a feminist political ethic of care would seek to address the gender imbalances and women's poverty in a globalizing world from a perspective which contrasts vividly with rights-based theory. Certainly, Pogge is

especially concerned with the connections which exist in the world today; indeed, our connection, or implication in creating and perpetuating poverty and inequality is the source of our responsibility to work towards alleviating it. But in spite of this causal link, the ontology which guides his project is, like Nussbaum's, thoroughly individualistic. Individuals may be institutional and structurally connected through the institutions and processes of the global political economy, but they remain individualized moral agents, making and acting on individually-willed decisions.

An ethic of care, by contrast, is guided by a fully relational moral ontology. What this means is not simply that individuals are implicated in the lives of other individuals through participation in institutions and social orders. Indeed, it means that the notion of the self is incoherent unless it is understood as constructed and existing through a series of complex and ever-changing networks of relations with others. As Margaret Urban Walker explains, our identities, moral and otherwise, are produced by and in histories of specific relationships (Walker 1998, p. 112-113). Morality, from this perspective, is not an 'individually action-guiding system within or for a person'. Rather, it is a 'socially-embodied medium of understanding and adjustment in which people account to each other for the identities, relationships and values that define their responsibilities' (Walker 1998, p. 61).

Seen from this perspective, the connectedness of persons is not something new that has emerged with globalization. Rather, people have always existed as individuals only through their relationships with others. Thus, the relatedness of persons, on a variety of different levels, has important ethical and policy implications for the problem of poverty and inequality in an era of globalization; those implications, however, are not related to the apportioning of 'blame', or the conceptualization of rights as moral claims on the organization of one's society. Rather, it must lead to a recognition of the need for social and economic policies which allow all persons the capacities, time and resources to maintain and nurture their relationships in order that they may lead truly human, flourishing lives. Thus, a care-based perspective starts from an ontology of relationships, and then goes on to build an ethics of interdependence. Rather than privileging independence and autonomy in terms of moral judgement and action, a moral orientation

based on care breaks down the dichotomies between autonomy and dependence, individual and community (Sevenhuijsen 2003, p. 183). As Selma Sevenhuijsen argues,

The human capacity for self-determination can only fully blossom in a relational context. People develop a sense of 'self' because there are others who recognize and confirm their sense of individuality, who value their presence in the world and who make concrete efforts to enable them to develop their capacities (Sevenhuijsen 2003, p. 184).

Furthermore, unlike the universalizing rights and rights-capabilities frameworks, an approach to global social justice based on a political ethic of care 'contextualizes' the human condition. In other words, it focuses on the wider social, economic, and political contexts in which claims – for justice, needs, rights and interests – arise. In so doing, it gives 'new meaning and significance to human differences that arise from gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability and geographic location' (Hankivsky 2004, p. 59, 2).

But an ethic of care is about more than a relational ontology and a contextualized morality; indeed, it is about the place of care itself within those relationships at all levels of human society. A feminist political ethic of care, by contrast, starts from the idea that everybody needs care and is, in principle, capable of care giving, and that a democratic society should recognize and value this, and enable its members to give these activities a meaningful place in their lives if they so want (Sevenhuijsen 2000, p. 15). While it is tempting to frame this idea in terms of a universal principle or even a universal human right – 'all human beings are entitled to equal care' – such a formulation obfuscates the essence of an ethic of care. A moral orientation based on care recognizes that all persons rely on care, but recognizes that caring takes place in specific personal and social contexts with particular others. 'Care' is not a 'good' which can be universally delivered by, say, an international organization; indeed, the need to give and receive care, and the nature of that care, are constantly changing throughout one's life. Care is often and should be delivered by a wide variety of agents – family members, friends, neighbours, communities, schools, health care organizations, as well as states, corporations and even regional or international organizations. While this ethic is feminist, in that it seeks to address gender imbalances in the role of care in societies, and to attach value to attributes

normally associated with women, it provides a moral and policy orientation which is not only 'for women'. Indeed, Sevenhuijsen has argued that the ethics of care must be located within a 'neo-republican' idea of active citizenship – where the values of care – attentiveness, responsiveness and responsibility – can help us cope with diversity and plurality, make better informed judgements, and make us better able to decide what should be considered valuable and relevant collective aims (Sevenhuijsen 1998, p. 14-15). A focus on care as the cornerstone of human existence is particularly important in an era of globalization where neo-liberal macroeconomic policies have meant the scaling back of state services, leading to the exacerbation of the already under-resourced caring sector.

A useful critique of global inequality, then, must look not only at the 'macro' picture, but at the actual conditions and relations that obtain within working and caring households. In particular, such a critique must have a gender dimension; without it, there can be no real grasp of the actual distribution of paid labour, paid and unpaid caring work and resources. While the systems of global trade, production and finance are clearly inequitable, alleviating the harm caused by this inequity must involve some examination about *how these arrangements are affecting particular groups of people*. Rather than concentrating on extended finger-pointing, the more important task should be to work towards a wider recognition of the need for care in the lives of all people, and the solutions for the more extensive and equitable provision and facilitation of care. While responsibility is an important moral concept where social justice is concerned, the focus should be on paying attention to the way in which moral and social responsibilities are assigned and distributed within different social-moral systems, and examining the attendant power relations and material consequences of those distributions. The goal must be the recognition of that all human persons are fundamentally embodied beings, and that we are all dependent on care. The collective moral responsibility to ensure the provision on care must be the responsibility not simply of wealthy welfare states (although this would be a good start) but also of the institutions and organizations responsible for the making of global social policy. Thus, our starting point for global social justice must not be that impoverished states and people lack the resources (either through their own doing, or through our doing) to meet their needs; rather, it must be the

conviction that the giving and receiving of care is fundamental to all interdependent human lives, and that global economic and social policies must be directed towards facilitating this in order to achieve social justice.

Thus, our normative analysis of globalization should include, for example, addressing the underestimation of (largely women's) unpaid work in national and international statistics by addressing the biases in the way in which 'work' has traditionally been defined. This would allow us to recognize the real gendered international division of labour and responsibilities, and to formulate policies which recognize the importance of this unpaid labour to individuals, families, communities and the global economy (Beneria 2003, p. 133). It might also include, furthermore, a thorough examination of the causes and effects of globalization of domestic labour and the attendant patterns of female migration, including the North's failure to deal with the care needs of working women, and the 'wrenching global inequality' of the largely invisible globalization of domestic workers (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003, p. 2). Finally, examine globalization through the lens of care would also mean that we examine global crises – such as the AIDS pandemic, or natural disasters such as the tsunami of 2004 – in a new light, focusing not only on the victims, but on who must care for the victims who remain alive but require almost constant physical and emotional care. According to the World Health Organization, gender roles dictate that women become the primary caretakers for those affected by disasters – including children, the injured and sick, and the elderly – substantially increasing their emotional and material workload (WHO 2005). Moreover, a recent WHO study estimates that in many developing countries, the need for long-term care for people with chronic illnesses and disabilities will increase by as much as 400% in the coming decades (WHO 2002). Already, women in sub-Saharan Africa are physically overworked, mentally stressed and economically under-utilized due to the enormous amount of time and physical and emotional energy required in order to care for sick relatives until death (Kayumba 2000). Recognizing the unequal distribution of care work burdens across gender, race and class lines, as well as the enormous requirements for care in both the North and the South, is the first step towards formulating social and economic policies which can address these needs.

Certainly, this orientation will not magically supersede protectionist policies, state self-interest or a focus in global economic policy on efficiency and wealth-maximization. But neither, I would argue, does any other theory. What a feminist political ethic of care can offer, however, that a theory of rights cannot, is an alternative source for moral and political judgements. As Olena Hankivsky has eloquently argued:

It (an ethic of care) can be instrumental in contributing to the kind of debate and discussion that often precipitate fundamental changes in social policy. If a care ethic and its associated values came to bear on social policy decision making, then the traditional policy paradigm would be replaced by one that brings into view the realities of our lives and aspects of policy choices that have been traditionally overlooked or ignored. (Hankivsky 2004, p. 2-3).

Who Cares? Women, Caring and the Global Economy

In the 1980s, the World Bank began a program of lending which went beyond individual infrastructure projects; structural adjustment loans provided broad-based support for developing countries. Tied to these loans, however, were a series of conditions imposed by the IMF – conditions which included devaluing currencies, raising interest rates and imposing austerity programs. These programs were, as Joseph Stiglitz points out, basically the same for every country (Stiglitz 2002, p. 14). Later in the decade, the fall of the Berlin Wall opened up a new area in which the IMF could impose its market ideology. Currently, not only debt-ridden states in the South, but also Post-Communist States and the so-called Asian Tigers have fallen under the rigors of SAPs, which involve significant reductions in public funding and the increasing privatization of social welfare programs. Even welfare states in the North have subjected themselves to similar austerity measures, as structural adjustment has become more globalized (Marchand and Runyan 200, p. 17).

The gendered effects of these measures, and neo-liberal macroeconomic policies in general, are well-documented. Cutbacks in social services provided by the state particularly disadvantage women, who are the major recipients and providers of such

services. Moreover, where state run care services or support for care work has been reduced, women have found their burden of care – for children, the elderly, the long-term sick or permanently disabled – increased. Finally, the reorganization of global production has led to the ‘feminization’ of the labour work, where more and more women are taking up waged labour in manufacturing, especially in the South where MNCs have relocated their production processes. This has created ‘gaps in caregiving’, as more and more women are working in factories (World Health Organization 2002, p. x). Thus, while globalization has brought increased opportunities for women’s paid employment, it has also brought more unpaid care work and dependency work for women in the domestic sector (Schutte 2002, p. 151). Globalization has, in effect, altered the ‘gender contract’, shifting activities from the public sector to the household or domestic sphere; in so doing, it has placed an increased burden of caring for family members as well as additional community related activities (Marchand 2003, p. 148).

In the light of this, I would argue that an understanding of global inequality is based on much more than simply the unfair advantage in power and knowledge that the rich countries of the North have over the poor countries of the South. Specifically, the multilayered structure of inequality in the global economy must be understood through the lens of gender and care. As Marchand points out, only a gender perspective can bring to the fore how profound a transformation globalisation entails in terms of the day-to-day lived realities of people (Marchand 2003, p. 148). For example, Dickinson and Schaeffer argue that the underpaid labour and unpaid work done by most women have made it possible for the structure of global inequality to remain intact. Although women comprise 50 percent of the population, they do over two-thirds of the world’s work, most of it low-paid or unpaid. Moreover, because women still do almost all of the household work in addition to their wage labour and informal work, they often work between sixteen and eighteen hours a day (Dickinson and Schaffer 2001, p. 15). Certainly, wage work in the periphery has helped intensify global production. That said, wages in the periphery usually do not even cover the cost of maintaining one household member. When we add to this the fact that state benefits in the South have declined, it is not surprising that more than half of the income of households in the South is generated by ‘self-organized’ work, or other survival strategies such as house sharing, which eases the

burden of reproductive labour to enable working for wages outside of the home. As Dickinson and Schaeffer argue:

The global organization of production is difficult to discern because household work units almost always overlap with emotional, family units. The work that families do for 'love' is mixed up with the unpaid and low-paid self-organized work that households undertake to sustain themselves. This work also maintains the global system of inequality (Dickinson and Schaeffer, p. 18).

Unlike a liberal rights perspective which is predicated on the division of public and private, a care-based perspective provides a framework for making sense of the true nature of 'work' under conditions of globalization by destabilizing and ultimately transcending this dichotomy. 'Private' and 'public', 'work' and 'care' become intertwined, all part of a varied array of responsibilities and forms of civic participation undertaken by both men and women.

The impact of this care work burden on women, however, cannot be underestimated. According to the UNIFEM 2000 report on the Progress of Women Worldwide, the double burden of paid work and unpaid care work is putting pressure on the health of poor women and children, as well as on the education of daughters who may have to drop out of school to substitute for their mothers. As the report points out, the domestic sector, managed globally by women, cannot be treated as a 'bottomless well', able to provide the care needed regardless of the resources it gets from other sectors (UNIFEM 2000, p. 29).

In an effort to better understand the nature of women's work, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has recently adopted two definitions of economic activity: (a) a conventional one that includes only activities done for pay or profit; and (b) an 'extended' one that also includes productive work done for own consumption. As Naila Kabeer notes, however, neither provides information on women's contribution to the care and maintenance of the family, and hence of the labour efforts that underpin survival, subsistence and accumulation. Moreover, she adds that the continued tendency to record only primary activity often leads to women being classified as 'housewives' despite the variety of different ways in which they contribute economically (Kabeer 2003, p. 23-36).

Kabeer argues in favour of a re-interpretation of the two-sector model from the perspective of the reproductive economy, such that women's actual activities were considered, instead of treating them as part of the pool of 'surplus labour' in the traditional sector. She argues that efforts to improve the productivity of labour in the unpaid 'care' economy would have important implications not only for the women themselves -- but for the growth process (Kabeer 2003, pp. 23-36). Thus, while the integration of care into macroeconomic policy and development planning can have beneficial effects for women, children and entire families, they can also assist with chronic problems of limits to growth, poverty and 'under' development.

What I am suggesting here is that while the workings of the World Trade Organization are certainly important for understanding global inequality, so too are the workings of households and local communities. When household members, mostly women, undertake work taking care of children and elders and preparing their own food, they are making it possible for employers to pay workers wages that are lower than the cost of maintaining worker households. Employers count on women in households to do the work that enables households to survive without adequate wages (Dickinson and Schaeffer, p. 32). This growing reliance on low-cost female labour has driven down male wages and global wage levels (Dickinson and Schaeffer, p. 279). Only when we understand this can we make sense of the actual realities of inequality and poverty in a globalized economy. It is also crucial for helping us to understand the dynamics of resistance and the possibilities for transformation.

Because women do most of the nonwage work and try to sustain their families, women have been at the center of efforts to defend these activities and develop social-change strategies. As Dickinson and Schaeffer point out, rather than trying to persuade capitalist institutions to meet the needs of working people, workers in what they call "diversifying movements" have instead tried to redefine nonwage work and cultural relations so that they meet the economic and political needs of working people. By imagining and presenting alternative visions of work and politics, such diversifying movements are moving towards the creation of new economic and political 'microworlds'. Unlike large movements which call for the redistribution of wealth and power, diversifying movements typically reorganize economic and social life at the grass-

roots or regional levels, and show workers how to create new relations based on economic equality and political democracy (Dickson and Schaeffer, pp. 253-254). One excellent example of these diversifying movements is SEWA, the Self-Employed Women's Association of India. Through their cooperative, the women of SEWA are organizing self-employed workers and developing a comprehensive set of alternative work, self-governance and household support relations (Dickinson and Schaeffer p. 255).

I am arguing in favour of a framework for ethical globalization which pushes us to consider a number of factors about caring work in the global economy: the differing and constantly changing responsibilities for caring work within the household and the community; the way in which these responsibilities are affected by macroeconomic constraints imposed by external and internal organizations; the ways in which unpaid or low-paid caring work helps to sustain a cycle of exploitation and inequality on a global scale. Because it is also a moral orientation, an ethic of care also leads us to consider different values in terms of human flourishing and, ultimately, the transformation of peoples' lives. Maximizing entry into wage labour would no longer be seen as the key to individual well-being, or as the sole means of being a 'responsible' citizen; rather, there would be greater consideration of the responsibility to care for others – including and especially children, the elderly, the long-term ill and the permanently disabled. Furthermore, a care perspective demands the recognition of the reality of dependency as a 'fact of human existence'.⁵ Thus, the focus on the actual conditions of the survival, maintenance and flourishing of households would force a change in the expectations and objectives of economic and social policy. The tasks of social reproduction – including fostering the virtues of caring and the carrying out the practices of daily caring work – would be seen as important forms of civic participation. As such, they need to be publicly supported through the creation of social policy. Such policy would obviously differ widely from country to country; that said, all states need to consider how daily care is going to be carried out, giving carers the resources they need to engage in caring activities. As Sevehuijsen explains:

... it still seems necessary to deconstruct the normative image of the independent wage-earning citizen that is still at the heart of contemporary notions of social participation and citizenship and to acknowledge the fact

that everybody is dependent on care ... there is a need to analyse the gendered dynamics of access to and exit from caring arrangements and corresponding patterns ... in ... paid labour and political decision-making. (Sevenhuijsen p. 24).

This focus on relationality, responsibility and care in the global political economy is certainly not to suggest that moral and policy energy should not be directed against the obviously unfair workings of the WTO, and the hypocrisy and self-interest of powerful states, and the powerful corporate interests which they serve. I would claim, however, that this type of argument will do little to bring alternative moral concepts and policy-making directions to the table. Certainly, it is important that 'we' in the global North recognize that we bear some important moral responsibility for the current state of the world, and that the power and riches that we enjoy in the North are dependent upon the underpaid and unpaid work done by the world's majority in the South. I have argued, however, that the focus should be on a more detailed analysis of patterns of responsibility at a variety of different social and political levels – how these responsibilities are assigned, how they are valued, and how they create, and shed light on, asymmetrical relations of power and unequal material conditions. For example, as noted above, one of the most startling aspects of our globalizing world is the extent of the migration of care workers from impoverished and developing countries to wealthy, developed countries, where they perform much of the paid care work. While these workers may experience economic benefit, they also create gaps in their own families and communities. What responsibility might these developed countries have, for example, for the 'care gap' which these migrants leave behind?

Politically, a feminist political ethic of care reminds us that unpaid caring work is partially responsible not only for the oppression of women worldwide, but for contributing to *the overall system of global inequality*. Morally, it reminds us that, amidst our acquisitive and competitive struggle for ever-larger pieces of the pie, all of us are at some time, and potentially at any time, vulnerable and interdependent persons who rely on others, and ourselves, for care. Recognizing this could help us to regard the distant poor less as Other, and more as unique, socially-embedded and interdependent persons with whom we share this fundamental human need. Moreover, while an analysis

of the impact of unpaid care work demands a gender perspective, it cannot be viewed solely as a 'women's issue'. Care and care work is the moral and social fabric of any society, and it affects all people – boys and girls, women and men. Policy should be directed towards the support of such work, rather than simply to, for example, the creation of codes of conduct, labour standards or workers rights. While these are all important, at the moment they are constructed around a model of a lone male breadwinner, and they are often very weak on gender issues related to employment, such as childcare and reproductive health (Barrientos and Kabeer 2004, p. 158).

A feminist political ethic of care points us towards a moral framework for ethical globalization which recognizes the giving and receiving of care as a central aspect of human existence, and regards attentiveness, responsiveness, responsibility and competence not only as private virtues, but also as civic virtues. But these virtues should, under no circumstances, be cast in an idealized light; neither the ethics nor the policy implications of care should be romanticized, or assumed to stand for 'social harmony'. Indeed, as Sevenhuijsen argues, we should regard the triangle of *power, dependency and vulnerability* as the core moral problematic of an ethic of care (Sevenhuijsen 2002, pp. 24-25). This triangle, I would argue, also provides a useful framework from which to analyze the global economy, and from which to build a programme for social justice in an era of globalization.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have made a case for an approach to 'ethical globalization' which is built around 'care', where care is understood as both a moral orientation and a set of practices. In terms of the former, care involves starting from a relational ontology which sees all human beings as existing in relations with others. Moreover, it regards the need to give and receive care as a fundamental part of human existence, and recognizes the values of care – attentiveness, responsiveness, responsibility and competence – as central yet widely undervalued aspects of morality. As a set of practices, care involves the care of the self and others in which most of the world's people engage on a daily basis. While these practices are often undertaken out of 'love' – and thus involve the recognition of

responsibility and the desire to give care to particular others— they are also a form of work which has been largely unrecognized and undervalued in developed and developing countries. Moreover, it is evident that throughout the world, most caring work is performed by women; thus, there is an obvious and important gender dimension to this approach.

In particular, I have argued that a care based approach to global poverty and inequality can provide the basis for both normative critique and transformative global social policy with respect to these issues. In particular, such an approach provides a framework from which to understand the effects of the globalization of production on peoples of the South not on a ‘macro’ level, but at the level of the household and the local community. Understanding the ways in which unpaid female ‘care’ work supports worker households in the South and North, and supports the global structure of inequality, can help us to unpack the workings of the global political economy in order to see how it affects the poorest of the poor – women and children of the global South.

I have contrasted this framework to the rights-based approach used by Thomas Pogge in his 2000 book *World Poverty and Human Rights*. In this book, Pogge argues, correctly, that the global economic order is currently organized such that developed countries have a huge advantage in terms of power and expertise, and that decisions are reached purely and exclusively through self-interest. He also argues that direct responsibility for global poverty and inequality lies with the citizens of developed countries, since suffering and death are caused by global economic arrangements designed and imposed by our governments. In his normative assessment of this, Pogge employs an institutional rights framework:

if institutions are structured so that the universal core criterion of basic justice – individual human rights – is unfulfilled, then those involved in upholding those institutions have a responsibility either to discontinue their involvement, or else compensate for it by working for reform of institutions or for the protection of the victims (Pogge 2002, pp. 49-50).

While this argument is certainly compelling, I have argued that it tells us little about the actual effects of globalization on the real people of the South – including an account of the particular vulnerabilities of women, children and the elderly -- and that, as

a result, can offer little in the way of real alternatives or policy prescriptions. While a feminist political ethic of care should not be regarded as a panacea, it can, I would argue, provide a framework for rethinking not only the basic values of social justice, but also for reshaping our political and economic priorities at local, state and global levels.

Notes

¹ See especially Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. New York: Routledge, 1993; Selma Sevenhuijsen, *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care*. New York: Routledge, 1998; Virginia Held, *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society and Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993; Kimberley Hutchings, 'Towards a Feminist International Ethics', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 25, Special Issue, December, 2000; Olena Hankivsky, *Social Policy and the Ethic of Care*. Toronto and Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004. It is Selma Sevenhuijsen who most consistently uses 'feminist' and 'political' to describe the ethics of care. See also Selma Sevenhuijsen, 'Caring in the third way: the relation between obligation, responsibility and care in Third Way discourse', *Critical Social Policy* 20:1, 2000, 5-47.

² Here I mean realist theory in International Relations, as opposed to philosophical realism.

³ Ibid., p. 50. Although Pogge does not specify to which particular contributions he is referring, the beginning of this chapter cites approximately 20 books which have addressed questions of human flourishing and justice over the past 20 years. There is one woman author on this list – Martha Nussbaum – who is cited for her 'capabilities' approach, developed with economist Amartya Sen.

⁴ For a discussion of feminist methodology for normative IR theory, see Fiona Robinson, 'Methods of feminist normative theory: A political ethic of care in international relations' in Brooke Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True, eds., *Feminist Methodology in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming.

⁵ Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild point out that the global division of women's traditional work forces us to see dependency in a new light. Conventionally, the poorer countries are thought to be dependent on the richer ones, symbolized by the huge debt they owe to financial institutions. However, now, many affluent and middle-class families in the First world are dependent on migrants from developing countries to provide child care, homemaking and sexual services (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003, p. 11). This aptly demonstrates the point made repeatedly by care ethicists that everyone is, at some point and in some way, dependent upon care, and that for this reason it should be made more visible as a public value and should receive adequate attention and resources by public institutions.

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