

# Feminist Theories of Justice

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## Introduction

Feminist theories of justice begin, of course, by placing women and gender at the centre of analysis. But they also move well beyond a ‘mere’ gender-centric view of justice to engage in multidimensional analyses that, on the whole, tend to throw into question many of the basic assumptions of justice theory, whether developed within liberal, libertarian or more radical approaches. This chapter will focus primarily on ‘western’ feminist theories of justice; further feminist insights are developed in the chapters on postcolonialism (Chapter 6), Indigenous justice (Chapter 7), and environmental justice (Chapter 9) among others.

## Key ideas, key theorists

Feminist theories of justice begin – and began, in the work of Olympia de Gouge and Mary Wollstonecraft in the 1790s – with the assertion that women must be understood as individuals with as full and equal status as their male counterparts. This basic assertion was central to the arguments of the women of Seneca Falls and their *Declaration of Sentiments* in 1848, the writings of Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill in the 1860s, and the suffrage activists of the 1880s–1920s. The question of women’s equal rights reappeared with the revitalisation of the feminist movement in the 1960s and the relationship between rights, justice and the complex politics of identity (race, sexuality, ethnicity, indigeneity, and so on) has been a central focus of feminist justice theorising ever since (Okin, 1989; Williams, 1992).

Though women must be understood as free and equal individuals, feminists understand individuality to always be conditioned – even formed and made possible – by socially structured, power-infused *relations* with

others. A primary relation is that of the family. However, the family cannot be understood as either natural or inevitable and it is not somehow 'beyond justice' (as John Rawls [1971] originally held and some liberals still maintain); nor is it somehow always already *just* (as some tendencies within liberalism and communitarianism suggest). Rather, the family must be understood to be part of the 'basic structure' or society and thus a 'subject of justice' (to use Rawls' terms – terms that, in fact some feminists do not accept [Fraser, 1997]). As Susan Moller Okin (1979; 1989) forcefully argued, the justness of the family must be questioned, and a just family (of whatever configuration) is a precondition for a just society. One reason that some liberals have rejected the family as a subject of justice is that, in their view, family relations are *private* relations, and justice, for them, concerns public relations and institutions. Feminists have countered by throwing into question taken-for-granted assumptions about the relationship between the public and the private, which is also to say the political and the personal. The search for, and analysis of, justice cannot take divisions between public and private for granted: they must be closely examined and their political, social and even geographical preconditions thrown into question.

Neither can 'woman' or 'man' be taken for granted, not only because of the fluidity and constructedness of gender identity but also because it is a question of 'who counts'. At least as far back as Sojourner Truth's famous question, 'Ain't I a woman?', *difference* has been a central factor within women's rights and justice struggles, and *group difference* is particularly important. As Iris Marion Young (1990) argued, group difference is typically accompanied by group-differentiated oppression and domination and any theory of – and struggle for – social justice requires careful attention to these group differences (see Gilmore, 2002). What constitutes any person is determined by dynamics not only of gender, but also race, ethnicity, class, and so forth. In other words, feminist theories of justice require an intersectional analysis (Mohanty, 2003; Crenshaw, 2017).

They also require, as Young (1990, pp 4–5) argued, that concepts of justice cannot 'stand independent of a given social context and yet measure justice', but rather must 'begin from historically specific circumstances, because there is nothing but what is, the given, the situated interest in justice, from which to start' (which is also a point made by Okin [1989]). In this sense, feminist theories of justice tend to be grounded, or materialist, theories. From such a standpoint, which implies 'thinking from women's lives' (Harding, 1988), much feminist analysis argued that a *just distribution* (including within the family) is a necessary, but not even close to sufficient, part of a just society. Rather, as Nancy Fraser (1997; 2008) argues, (economic) *redistributions* need to be considered in relation to (cultural) *recognition* and (political) *representation*. Such recognition demands, in turn and as the Black feminist tradition insists, not only an analysis of how race shapes gender (and vice versa), but

also a definite politics of liberation or emancipation (Davis, 1983; Lorde, 1984; James, 1999; Gilmore, 2002). For Joy James (1999), this requires, at minimum, a thorough transcendence of liberal (feminist) traditions and a recovery of the emancipatory potential of radicalism.

Thus, for feminists, a solitary, or even primary, focus on creating – or reforming – the ‘basic structure’ to create the conditions of possibility for a just distribution (of resources, offices, and so on) is a kind of misdirection. Whatever the subject of justice (and however defined), *injustice* is always domination and oppression, as Young (1990) thoroughly showed. Oppression, Young theorised, has five ‘faces’ (exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence) and is structural – part and parcel of the structure of society (though it can have interpersonal manifestations). It often arises within contexts in which individuals and groups are behaving morally and ethically in terms of the rules of society and institutions. Justice is therefore not some predefined state, or set of goods, however distributed, but rather arises in efforts to minimise and eliminate domination and oppression, especially, perhaps, when oppression and domination are the result of society otherwise acting lawfully and ethically. In this sense, according to Young (2011), it is profitless to seek to assign guilt for many forms of injustice, and more profitable to find ways to understand *shared responsibility* for producing it and thus shared responsibility for rectifying it.

*Gender injustice* is a significant aspect of injustice more generally: it is those forms of domination and oppression that are centrally focused on gender, and gender justice is the struggle to eliminate those forms of domination and oppression. Of central importance here, as Raewyn Connell (2011) argues, is understanding how the *patriarchal dividend* – the unearned benefits that accrue to men (or the masculine gender) simply because they are men; that is, the duty regularly required of women by patriarchy – extends well beyond economic and distributional matters.

For contemporary feminist theorists, gender justice and justice more generally are spatially complex, rooted in scales as small as the bedroom and home (or coffee room and office suite) and as large as the globe, and it is the complex interaction of these that must be understood. In these terms, theorising – and struggling for – justice only in relation to the Westphalian nation state is unavailing. Contemporary feminist justice theorising is thus increasingly linked to developed discourses of *global justice*, as in the work of Alison Jaggar (2009), among others. Young’s (2011) *social connection model* shows promise for both assessing responsibility for injustice and organising to address it. At the same time, there is a growing recognition of, and efforts to redress, the dominance of feminists from the west/Global North in feminist justice theory and philosophy. Perspectives from the South are necessarily different from, though not necessarily unrelated to perspectives from the North (Connell, 2011). Such work begins from a critical understanding of

locally embedded values in relation to histories of colonial domination and oppression (see [Chapter 6](#)).

Feminist theories of justice in both the South and the North are, moreover, centrally concerned with *social reproduction*, in a sense reversing the standard Marxist focus on the reproduction of the means of production (and the society this gives rise to) to understand relations of production as seated *within* reproduction. Theorists like Cindi [Katz \(2001; 2004\)](#) and more recently Nancy [Fraser \(2016\)](#) have argued that contemporary capitalist social reproduction is in deep crisis and this crisis reshapes (and inhibits) the conditions of possibilities for justice. Social reproduction is deeply entwined with questions of care, and thus a focus on the *politics of care* is an increasingly prominent and indispensable component of feminist theories and practices of justice, as Virginia [Held \(2005\)](#) insists.

## Debates and critiques

There are, of course, significant debates within feminism over how best to conceptualise key aspects of justice, like its substance, the centrality (or not) of distribution, the constitution of procedural justice, and so forth. In broad outline, these debates have unfolded in three steps:

1. The disruptive insertion of gender into justice theorising.
2. The theorisation of gender justice as a central component of the shift from *individuals* to *individuals-in-relation-to-groups* as the subject of justice.
3. The resulting focus on social reproduction, social connection, responsibility and care within the context of the globalisation of justice and the efforts to develop appropriately sophisticated theories of global gender justice.

In turn, these debates have spawned a significant reconsideration of how the main forms of justice – substance, distribution, procedure and retribution – should be understood.

### *The disruptive insertion of justice*

In her indispensable *Women in Western Political Thought*, [Susan Moller Okin \(1979\)](#) shows two things. First, the presumably universal language of ‘man’ or ‘he’ is not generic for humanity (and cannot be dismissed as mere dated language). The effect is to exclude women as subjects of politics and philosophy (and thus justice), sometimes actively, as with Rousseau, but more often passively (and thus more consequentially) as with Rawls. Second, and related, when women are recognised as real, individual beings, the questions asked concerning them are different than for men. For men,

philosophers ask: ‘What are men like?’ ‘What is man’s potential?’ But for women, the question is nearly always: ‘What is woman *for*?’ (Okin, 1979, p 10, emphasis in original). Then, in her later work, Okin (1989) showed a third, exceptionally consequential, thing. When male theorists did start to include women (saying ‘men and women’ instead of only ‘men’), or use more gender-neutral language (‘people’ instead of ‘man’), this tended to be a *false* neutrality that had the effect of further subsuming women into men while appearing to treat each as unique.

The frequently unacknowledged shift from ‘what are men like’ to ‘what are women for’ is especially consequential for theories of justice and again for two reasons. First, if (as much liberal and cosmopolitan philosophy hold) a primary basis for a just society is the Kantian imperative that individuals must be treated as ends in themselves and never as means for others’ profit, enjoyment or sovereignty, then right at its heart, western philosophy violates one of its most cherished principles. Second, in the western tradition, up to and including the western liberal tradition of justice philosophy (within which Okin places herself), what appears to be about individuals in a polity is really about the *patriarchal family* in society. Women are subordinated – actively – and made to exist insofar as they are *for* their husbands and fathers. The assumption of individuality is always violated (Okin, 1989, p 202). Indeed, Rawls (1971) is inadvertently explicit about this; those in the ‘original position’ in his theory are ‘heads of families’, not ‘individuals’ as such (a position he did not revise until quite late in his life).

Okin (1989) developed this analysis with devastating effect on much justice theorising, especially within the liberal, libertarian and communitarian traditions. Though there are exceptions among male philosophers, most prominently J.S. Mill, who argued in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) that ‘[j]ust treatment no less than liberty is [to be] regarded as essential for the happiness of women themselves and as a necessary condition for the advancement of humanity’ (Okin, 1989, p 214), western philosophy assumes that the family is ‘beyond justice’, or always-already just. Mill differed, arguing that families were frequently unjust and that unjust families were ‘a school of despotism’; but he also never really questioned the division of labour within the family (Okin, 1989, pp 20–21). Yet, Okin (1989, p 4) argued, a just society would only be possible if it was rooted in just families (however configured), families – or households – in which a just division of labour, rather than an exploitative one, obtained: ‘Until there is justice within the family, women will not be able to gain equality in politics, at work, or in any other sphere.’

### *From individuals to individuals-in-relation-to-groups*

Taking gender seriously, Okin made clear, requires a thorough reconceptualisation of both the subject and object of justice and therefore

a transformation of the *most basic* structures of society, like the family. Okin is careful in her analysis not to assume or over-value the heterosexual, nuclear family, nor does she assume gender as given, but even so, her work sits reasonably comfortably within White, western, liberal thought. By the time she published *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (1989), however, the assumption of monadic individuality that undergirds her work was under multi-flanked attack.

Black feminist theories and theorising from the ‘third world’ together contributed to a questioning of feminism’s understanding of the liberal (gendered) subject. Radical, emancipatory work by scholars and activists like Angela Davis (1983) and Joy James (1998; 1999), the influential arguments related to identity – and social struggle – by the Combahee River Collective (Taylor, 2017) including Audre Lorde (1984; 2017) and bell hooks (1984; 2000), the work of borderlands scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), and the reconceptualisation of feminism as a decolonising project by Chandra Mohanty (2003), among others, all contributed to ‘dethroning’ the liberal, White (middle-class) woman as the subject of feminism and the development of a much more complex politics of identity – as formed through interlocking systems of oppression – in the last quarter of the 20th century. Eventually codified by Kimberlé Crenshaw (2017) as ‘intersectionality’, this reorientation of feminist theory is profoundly important for theorising justice. Remarkably, however, there has been surprisingly little direct engagement by feminists of colour with theories and philosophies of justice. While the struggle for social justice is frequently invoked (and, importantly, such justice struggles have been the focus of significant historical and sociological work), justice itself is rarely theorised. It is typically assumed to be the opposite of oppression.

Even so, the importance of intersectionality and group difference (and the relations of power that structure these) has been directly incorporated into some feminist justice theorising, even as aspects of it have been contested. Fraser (1997, p 1), for example, worried that concern with group identity was coming to supplant ‘class interest as the chief medium of political mobilization’ and particularly the development of a situation – in the world as well as in theory – where ‘cultural domination supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice’ and she thus argued for a theory of justice that understood recognition in relation to redistribution. Jaggar (2009, pp 5–6) saw matters differently. For her, critical race theory (among others) helped expand the *domain* of justice (not just supplant one domain with another) to incorporate institutions as well as individuals, the *subjects* of justice to include groups as well as individuals, and the *objects* of justice to include recognition as well as redistribution. None of this is that far from Fraser’s formulations (especially Fraser, 2008), but the weight of emphasis is different.

*Social reproduction, social connection, responsibility and care: global justice*

As a consequence of these debates, feminism demands that the domain of justice includes the personal (or domestic, in Okin's terms) and that the object of justice includes responsibility for unpaid care-work, and thus that matters of *social reproduction* take centre stage (Katz, 2001; 2004; Fraser, 2016). As Katz in particular showed, gendered structures of social reproduction are under severe strain in the post-Fordist, neoliberal, globalising era (which is also the postcolonial era). Under such pressures, feminists have sought to construct a more global feminism, a 'feminism without borders' in Mohanty's (2003) phrase, that has had profound effects on feminist justice theorising. Young's (2011) *social connection model* is designed to understand responsibility in a globalised world in which, for example, exploitative supply chains are global in scope (as will be discussed in the section 'Procedure and distribution', later).

For her part, Jaggard (2009) argues that globalisation and its colonial/postcolonial legacies, together with the increasing importance of international law, has shifted nation states from being the *domain* of justice to being *subjects* of justice, at least in part. For this reason, she argues, there is a need to further develop notions of – and possibilities for – a 'global basic structure'. At the same time, the *objects* of justice are now dispersed or distributed as much as, or more than, they are consolidated (for example in the nation state, city or home). Analyses of gendered justice in the contemporary conjuncture thus cannot afford to be particularistic, but must focus on the extended and distributed networks of power and processes that shape the contemporary world. As regards *principles* – how justice should be enacted – this also requires considerable reconsideration of the structures of power that guide political intervention and new modes of solidarity (a key concern of Young at the end of her life, and a central focus on the work of Ann Ferguson [2009]).

*Substance and distribution*

As already indicated, the earliest feminist theorising (as well as organising and struggle) in relation to justice concerned women's inclusion in the polity, their own standing as full human beings and thus subjects of justice in their own right, and not either subsumed by, or understood to be appendages of, men. This is, obviously, the most fundamental *substantive* justice question: Who has the right to have rights (as Hannah Arendt [1951] influentially framed the matter)? Who counts? Who has a recognised voice? These questions remain vital today. They have been expanded in one direction to question the necessity of *humanity* (can other species, or whole ecosystems, count?), in a second to question temporality (do past and future generations count?), and in a third to question scale – or the 'where' of justice (is the family or

household a subject of justice? Is the nation state the appropriate ‘container’ for justice claims, especially given the facts of globalisation?).

Such questions lead to a central debate within feminism: to what extent can we theorise a *universality* of justice? Martha Nussbaum (1997) defends liberalism and its universalising theories of justice from critics like Alison Jaggar (1983, pp 47–48), who argue that ‘the liberal conception of human nature and political philosophy cannot constitute a philosophical foundation for an adequate theory of women’s liberation’ because of its stark individualism and essentialising tendencies. For Nussbaum, liberalism’s core assumption of individualism is precisely its strength:

Liberalism does think that the core of rational and moral personhood is something that all human beings share, shaped though it may be in different ways by their differing social circumstances. And it does give this core a special salience in political thought, defining the public realm in terms of it, purposely refusing the same salience in the public political conception to differences of gender and rank and class and religion. (Nussbaum, 1997, p 23)

If there is to be a feminist critique of liberal universalism and individualism, according to Nussbaum (1997, p 13), then it is simply that liberalism has not been individualist enough.

Susan Moller Okin (1989) made something of a similar argument in her examinations of how women’s individuality – and humanity – has been subsumed into the family and subordinated to male authority, both in liberal philosophy and in historical practice. When, in this view, the universal fact of women’s selfhood is truly taken seriously, as Nussbaum (1997, p 2) argued was beginning to be the case in international and human rights law in the 1990s, then and only then would liberalism’s ‘radical feminist potential ... [begin] to be realized’. On this account, substantive gender justice will be accomplished when and to the degree women’s personhood comes to be accepted, protected and legally defined. Substantive justice, to put it somewhat oversimply, inheres in the degree to which women’s personhood is not violated, socially, politically, in law, through violence, or otherwise.

It also inheres in another, empirical, fact. When, as Okin (1989) argues, standard theories of justice assume a false gender-blindness, feigning a world in which gender equality already exists, they inevitably imply the *actual* oppression of women. To the degree, for example, that there remain unequal and unjust divisions of labour in the home, granting women equal status by theoretical fiat, without also attending to these domestic power relations, means that women have to be free and equal citizens *and* tend the home and family while men only need to be free and equal citizens. Assuming a false equality in these cases leads to theories, and thus likely to policies, that



further oppress women. Substantive justice, taking the form of full equality and sovereign individuality, leads to substantive injustice in the form of this double burden. And it is for exactly this reason that Okin insists that the family is and must be a 'subject of justice': if the family is set off-limits as part of the private sphere (as in Rawls, 1971), there can be no chance for justice.

Feminist critics of liberal feminism take this argument a step further. They do not deny the centrality of women's personhood or the marginalisation and violence that accompanies women's subsumption into men and their interests (that is, the fundamental injustice of defining women *for* men or *for* the family, as Okin [1979] describes). But (as noted) they often work from a rather different theory of personhood, and this has important implications for understanding the substance of justice. Rather than a monadic ontology of personhood, more radical feminist philosophers understand that the *individual is indivisible* (the worlds are closely related [Williams, 1983, pp 161–165]) from the groups of which she is a part: individuality is *relationally* determined. This is to say that there are no individuals without groups to give them form and, indeed, individuality. Understood in this way, close attention to group differentiation in theories of justice is as vital as close attention to individuals as subjects of justice. As Young (1990, p 43) puts it, '[s]ocial groups ... are not simply collections of people, for they are more fundamentally intertwined with the identities of the people described as belonging to them. They are a specific kind of collectivity, with specific consequences for how people understand one another and themselves'. The individual does not pre-exist the group. In Young's (1990, p 43) words again, '[p]olitical philosophy typically has no place for a specific concept of the social group. When philosophers and political theorists discuss groups, they tend to conceive of them on the model of aggregates or the model of associations, both of which are methodologically individualist'. In this view, it is insufficient to focus theorising on individuals *qua* individuals (as liberalism does). Instead, a more multidimensional analysis is required that understands individuals in relation to groups and each other.

Socialist-feminist theorising, such as that associated with Fraser, Jaggar and Young, starts from just this ontological assumption, and the implications for how such feminist approaches understand the substance of justice, and how it differs from liberalism, are clear. First, *justice substantively concerns the just treatment of individuals, but only insofar as that treatment is just for the group*. A just distribution of goods, offices and opportunities (the traditional focus of liberal justice theorising) remains a vital focus in radical feminist philosophies of justice, but such redistribution must be analysed in relation to questions of – and claims for – *recognition*, often precisely of ontologically essential group differentiations that have been and are marginalised and silenced. In this sense, redistribution and recognition cannot be divorced; each must be predicated on the other.

Second, as [Okin \(1989\)](#) and nearly all other feminist philosophers of justice argue, since theories of justice must not be distracted by abstractions and ideals, but must concern themselves with what actually exists, *the substance of justice inheres not in some ideal, but arises from within, and is defined by struggles against actually-existing injustice*. Young, for instance, argues that injustice is domination and oppression (maldistribution is a function of these, more than vice versa) and something is substantively just when it undercuts, ameliorates or eliminates group-enabled and group-defined domination and oppression (and thus their particular effects on group-defined individuals).

Third, therefore, *the substance of gender justice is that which counteracts gender-based domination and oppression while not enhancing (indeed while seeking to counteract) domination and oppression operating through other group differences*.

Finally, then, this sort of radical feminist philosophy is also radically anti-essentialist in that it understands all factors of group differentiation (gender, class, sexuality, race, and so on) as historically and socially produced, no more pre-given than human individuality. In this sense, *the substance of justice also therefore inheres in power – in this case the ‘power to define’* (cf [Western, 1981](#)). A just society is one in which all members, within and because of their group differentiations, have access to the power to define – in collaboration, in struggle and in full relation to the groups of which they are a part – the conditions of their being, not as monadic individuals, but as fully social beings.

### *Procedure and distribution*

Much of Okin’s work was devoted to the critiquing and repairing of the standard mid-20th-century canon – the world of Rawls, Sandel, Nozick, Dworkin, Walzer – by showing what happens when women are not ignored, not subsumed into men, or not falsely included through bogus gender-neutral language, which enabled her to develop some important tenets for understanding what is and is not procedurally just. At the most basic level, a practice cannot be procedurally just if it subsumes the interests of one individual into the interests of another. To speak of ‘heads of families’ (as [Rawls \[1971\]](#) did in his most influential work) already indicates that a theory of justice will lead to procedurally unjust outcomes, whatever its other virtues ([Okin, 1989](#)).

This is, of course, a question of *recognition*, or as legal scholars put it, a question of who has ‘standing’: who has the right to participate of their own accord in some process, practice or institution. As a whole, feminist theories of justice are centrally concerned with this question of recognition ([Fraser and Honneth, 2003](#); [Fraser, 2008](#)). But equally important, in relation to procedural justice, is who has ‘voice’ – who has the ability to be heard and have their concerns addressed ([Fricker, 2007](#)). This matter of *inclusion* ([Young, 2000](#)) is of vital importance given the shifting scales at which

(in)justice operates. The nation state can no longer in any simple sense be understood as the natural container for justice. A vital question from Fraser thus becomes the procedures by which representation becomes possible and a reality. ‘Rethinking the public sphere’ (Fraser, 1991) requires rethinking the *scale* of the public sphere and the institutional structures that can produce new scales of representation.

For Young (2000; 2011), these questions led in a somewhat different direction and addressing them entailed a significant shift in theorising people’s relation to processes that produce injustice. Much justice theory, and most law, seeks to attribute guilt and culpability for the creation of some wrong. Young calls this a ‘liability model’. It is a model that asks who is liable for the creation of some condition and then seeks redress from them. Young did not deny the importance of assigning liability, but recognised its limitations. In particular, she argued that many processes, relations and practices may be perfectly just – moral, ethical and following the rule of law – and still lead to unjust outcomes. Under these circumstances, ‘no one’ is to blame. Yet all who are implicated in the processes nonetheless bear some *responsibility* for the outcomes. Guilt, according to Young, is backward-looking and therefore not necessarily oriented towards more just futures; the assignment of guilt might do nothing to transform putatively just institutions, systems, and so forth that produce injustice. Responsibility is forward-looking. When we take responsibility for the production of injustice, we seek to transform the conditions that produce injustice so they stop doing so.

Incomplete at the time of her death, Young’s arguments concerning how responsibility can be discharged in a solidaristic manner (her ‘social connection model’) are compelling, perhaps most importantly for the clarity with which they show the inadequacy of theories – like much of the Rawlsian tradition – aiming simply to get procedures right. Though compelling, her arguments have not been convincing to everyone. In her introduction to Young’s (2011) posthumous *Responsibility for Justice*, for example, Martha Nussbaum presents an equally compelling critique of Young’s divisions between backward- and forward-looking approaches, noting that the refusal to look back means that we always start from an imminent present. If we delay acting today, we are absolved from guilt as long as we act tomorrow. But tomorrow, we are once again absolved as long as we act the next day. Young’s theory suffers, perhaps, from infinite regress. But it does not have to, at least not if a fuller theory of responsibility is developed than Young was able to achieve in her lifetime.

Such a fuller theory might begin, following Fraser (1997), by assessing any interventions into process – today *and* tomorrow – in relation to their *affirmative characteristics* and *transformative potential*. Affirmative interventions tend to ameliorate a wound but, at minimum, leave the injuring processes untouched and more likely prop them up and reinforce the status quo.

Affirmative interventions are exactly the ‘charity’ Mary Wollstonecraft (1792 [1988]) railed against 230 years ago when she declared: ‘It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world!’ By contrast, potentially transformative interventions serve to transform basic conditions, the ‘basic structure’. Taking responsibility, as Young wanted us to do, requires identification of potentially transformative interventions and working towards solidaristically implementing them.

## Conclusion

Taken together, feminist theories offer a set of key propositions that are indispensable for social scientists seeking to understand the constitution of, and the struggle for, justice. They not only force serious consideration of the who, what, where, when and how of justice (Jaggar, 2009), but in doing so they require a reconsideration of the individualism that undergirds much liberal – and common sense – thinking about justice. They contest methodological, but also ontological, individualism in social science research in general and research on social justice in particular. They require that any focus on (re)distribution as a core of justice must be understood in relation to recognition and representation. Research on redistributive practices and policies that fails to consider effects of and on recognition and representation is simply inadequate. They require, therefore, taking intersectionality seriously. Intersectionality is ontological, since individuals exist only insofar as they form dialectically with and as part of groups, and therefore not merely epistemological or methodological. Finally, feminist theories turn social science work in the direction of understanding the complex, distributed nature of responsibility. To put this schematically, feminist theories of justice turn attention towards:

- gender, but only in relation to
- other factors of identity with which gender is enmeshed, which always implicates
- geographical scale, or a reassessment of the *where* of justice, which requires a particular focus on
- the family/household, as well as
- the global, in all its unevenness, and
- the scales in between.

More specifically feminist justice theories ask social scientists to consider:

- How justice only appears in the struggle to address questions of domination and oppression, that is, *injustice*.
- How domination and oppression operate through complex group differentiation and thus, since individuals are defined through their

membership in and indivisibility from groups, any intervention will have uneven effects depending on ‘position’.

- How injustice is structural and not (or not only) interpersonal or epiphenomenal.
- How policies, practices and interventions will always potentially either entrench or ameliorate injustice *within* families and households – the private sphere cannot be ignored and neither can the structures and practices of social reproduction.
- How policies, practices and interventions will always have effects that extend across nation-state (and other governance) lines, and may have grossly uneven, gendered effects in different, seemingly disconnected locales, given the grossly uneven development of geographical space.
- And finally, therefore, how or whether policies, practices and interventions are likely to be *affirmative* of the status quo or *transformative* of it, and if the latter, how it is the direction of change (towards or away from justice, towards or away from enhancing the ‘patriarchal dividend’) that matters.

Of central importance for social science research, then, is that feminism does not define what is *just a priori*, but understands justice as a (potentially transformative) move away from domination and oppression. The content of justice arises in, and is internally related to, this move. The content of justice is a function of responsibility, care and social connection.

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