

Commitment

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I wrote [yesterday about the importance of commitment](#). It is the foundation of the freedom from fear to which I believe our society should aspire.

Commitment is to a person, family, friends, community, workplace, region, culture, religion, gender or identity, country, humanity, the planet. And I am aware I will have made omissions. Commitment is a message that others matter. Equally, it's a sign that the commitment of others matters to us.

Writing this made me think about commitment. Almost without exception we humans know what it means. And again, almost without exception we have it. So I thought of plotting our commitment on a vertical, Y, axis.

I think it appropriate to allow for the opposite of commitment. I call that antipathy. Since few hate everyone I think we all start with positive commitment. But it can become negative

The horizontal, X, axis I use to plot remoteness. The resulting plot shows that as some groups are more remote from us we are as less committed to them.

The function may well not be straight, by the way. In an enlightened person who never feels antipathy to others it may be asymptotic to the X axis: Most of us, I fear, are not so enlightened. We do suffer from antipathy. We have a commitment function that becomes negative.

Why does this matter? It does because I think two things have happened in my lifetime. The first is that our personal commitment may have reduced. If we were once where the red line, shown below, was then we are now at the blue one. We are less committed. Even if our commitment function has remained a constant gradient than we are as a result hostile to more in society. The increase in our own selfishness, which might be the best explanation for our reduced commitment, has consequences in our attitude towards increasing parts of society.

Alternatively, we are just as committed to those close to us but our wider commitment falls away rapidly. Again, we have moved from red to blue.

In either case, commitment has fallen in society.

Why has that happened, as I think is the case? I would simply offer neoliberalism - the political argument that only the individual matters - as the cause. And we are suffering the consequences.

NB: I am sure there are those who have written this much more elegantly than I have here. This is just my morning musing.