Funding the Future

Developing our thinking on the politics of care

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I mentioned yesterday the issues we have encountered on social media when using the phrase **the politics of care** to describe the thinking I have been developing on this blog.

It seems that people, and so social media, have either got bored with talking about care, or they associate it with low-quality, overly optimistic, insincere social-media commentary that they do not wish to read. As a result, YouTube, most definitely, does not push such material. As a consequence, we need to find another term to describe this thinking if it is going to travel as we wish across social media platforms.

The team here has put quite a lot of thought into this over a relatively short period, using the bottom-up, open discussion framework we have used in the past for tasks such as creating book titles. The difference on this occasion was that James and Thomas joined Jacqueline and me when undertaking the process.

The one thing I can say about discussion in our household is that if an idea does not pass muster, whoever promoted it soon discovers why. Debate is always fast and respectful, but it is dismissive of any ideas that fail to meet an agreed goal, which allows very rapid progress in idea development.

During these discussions, it quickly became clear that we had several objectives, which are important to understand to contextualise the posts that will follow this one.

The first was that we wanted to be as positive as possible. In other words, the description we sought had to state what we are for without further explanation being required. We think that is vital to successful political campaigning, which is what we are engaged in, albeit without party allegiance. In that case, anything that does not precisely describe what we want to achieve will not do.

That said, and secondly, we are also aware that we are opposing neoliberalism and its obvious destination, which is fascism. Recognising this, we do, however, want to depersonalise that opposition to the greatest degree possible. We oppose the

behaviours, choices, and consequences associated with these ideologies, but not the people who hold them. This is essential if we are to change minds. Alienating opponents can never help achieve that goal. As such, we were keen to find a term that might replace neoliberalism in our narratives, given that the word is neither well-known or understood.

Thirdly, before any idea was considered acceptable, we needed to frame it within its potential setting when in use, and most particularly in the context of debate, to make sure that what we were putting forward was a positive idea, and that what any opponent might suggest in response could be shown to be negative without making that accusation personal, class-based, or ideological. The aim was to describe failed behaviour, because that is the framing we think the vast majority of people, most of whom are not politically aligned, will relate to best.

Fourthly, all that being said, we also wanted to continue using the terms politics of care, economics of care, and, perhaps most appropriately, the political economy of care, which, unlike the economics of care, emphasises that care is always chosen behaviour. We therefore wanted to weave these within the narratives we sought to create.

In summary, we sought a headline phrase that allows us to be positive while also creating narratives of disagreement which are not personal but are, instead, descriptive of behaviour, without leaving the concept of care behind or replacing it with any narrative based on blame, because that is potentially alienating and, within this political sphere, we do not think this benefits anyone. That was a tall order.

Over the posts that will follow, you will see how we got on.