

Political subjectivity and mental health

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The idea of political subjectivity has preoccupied my mind for a few years now, so I am thinking a good number of my contributions here will center around that topic.

The challenge is that there just doesn't seem to be enough thought out there yet to allow an easy grasp of the scope and implications of this concept, especially when it comes to the areas of mental health and cultural psychiatry. While there is a small (and steadily growing) stream of work and thought concerning the implications of the notion of political subjectivity for political theory, I am yet to find other people dedicating serious work and time to developing the idea in the area of mental health. If you are out there, please do let me know about yourself. In fact I would love to hear from you if you are doing *anything* about or in any way related to the question of political subjectivity.

One of the more compelling reasons that I am convinced the notion of political subjectivity is not just an attractive intellectual exercise is that I have originally arrived at it from the other end of the spectrum -from data, that is. I will write more about this in the future, but it is basically through my work on culture and schizophrenia that it has become obvious to me how impossible it would be to conceive 'the subject' in any fashion divorced or even abstracted from the incessant struggles of the realm of power/meaning, the context in which subjectivity comes to 'exist'.

There is something not just reassuring, but exhilarating about starting from hard clinical and ethnographic data and at some point finding yourself face to face with someone who has started from the realm of the abstract, and being able to recognize your 'facts' in their 'theory'.

I hope I manage to be consistent enough in writing these notes so they gradually evolve into some kind of a coherent body. And of course, your presence would obviously make a serious difference.

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