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Emotional Injustice
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Abstract: In this article we develop a taxonomy of emotional injustice: what occurs when the treatment of emotions is unjust, or emotions are used to treat people unjustly. After providing an overview of previous work on this topic and drawing inspiration from the more developed area of epistemic injustice, we propose working definitions of 'emotion', 'injustice', and 'emotional injustice'. We describe seven classes of emotional injustice: Emotion Misinterpretation, Discounting, Extraction, Policing, Exploitation, Inequality, and Weaponizing. We say why it is useful to distinguish these and also to subsume them under a single concept. Our aims are both theoretical and practical: to provide a unified account of emotional injustice, while recognizing the diversity of this phenomenon; to facilitate further research on this topic; to recognize the political importance of emotions; and to outline some of the ways in which emotional injustice can be combated.

Key Words: emotion, injustice, emotional injustice, affective injustice

Women who express emotions are sometimes dismissed as "hysterical". Black people sometimes misperceived by white people as aggressive. Children are conditioned to believe that "boys don't cry." Each of these can be described as an example of injustice. They work differently. For instance, one is a tactic of dismissal, another is a noxious stereotype, and the third is a behavioral norm, but each selectively targets a social group in ways that can impact the distribution of power. Here we aim to collect and analyze such cases and introduce the umbrella concept of "emotional injustice" to capture what they share. We also subdivide that category to highlight some important differences.

The project undertaken here belongs to a recent corrective in philosophy: areas that once pretended to be value-neutral have seen an injection of social and political consciousness. Philosophy of science was a pioneer in these efforts, with feminist interventions that have, for decades, blurred presumptive boundaries between facts and values. More recently, philosophy of language has taken a political turn, focusing more on linguistic injustice, with important work on generics and slurs (Leslie 2008, 2014; Camp 2013, 2018). There have also been interventions in the philosophy of perception, with work on how biases impact what we see (Siegel 2020). Perhaps the most heralded infusion of political thinking has been in epistemology, with the development of the potent construct of epistemic injustice (Fricker 2007). That work builds on deep roots, including work

on epistemic violence against colonial subjects, the neglect of diverse standpoints in science, the silencing of the voices of women, and white ignorance (Said 1978; Spivak 1983; Harding 1991; Langton 1993; Mills 1997). Standing on the shoulders of many, we want to draw attention to injustice in the domain of emotions. As we will see, some forms of emotional injustice have epistemic implications, but not all; so this addition to philosophical vocabulary can help us articulate what is distinctive about the wide range of cases we examine.

Numerous authors have independently identified ways in which affective and emotional injustice take place and ways in which problematic social norms impact the treatment of emotions (Simone de Beauvoir, Alison Jaggar, Eve Sedgwick, Patricia Hill Collins, Sara Ahmed, and Myisha Cherry, to name a few), and there have been recent efforts to articulate a phenomenon called "affective injustice" (reviewed below). Building on this important work, we offer a new analysis that overcomes some concerns, and covers more cases. We also distinguish different subcategories—a strategy that has been enormously helpful in discussions of epistemic injustice. In our view, emotional injustice is both more diverse and more widespread than hitherto recognized. We hope our construct of emotional injustice and the taxonomy we develop can help forge lines of theoretical alignment and solidarity, and help frame future projects.

We begin by defining emotional injustice, we then compare it to epistemic injustice, and provide reasons for thinking there are several varieties. This brings us to a proposed taxonomy. We hope to capture many cases of emotional injustice, but the taxonomy proposed here should not be taken to be exhaustive. Despite this diversity, we will underscore why it is also useful to deploy the overarching concept, and we will end with some directions for future work.

1. What Is Emotional Injustice?

We now turn to looking into prevailing concepts of emotional injustice and setting up our own understanding of what emotional injustice is. We briefly mention our understanding of what emotions are and what injustice is, and then define what emotional injustice is.

1.1 *"Affective Injustice": Prior Definitions*

As noted, the concept of emotional injustice is not new. It has been presented without an overarching name through examples by many authors for many years. Recently the label "affective injustice" has been introduced to shed light on the topic (e.g., Srinivasan 2018, Whitney 2018, Archer & Mills 2020, Archer &

Matheson 2020, Gallegos 2021). We aim to build on this pioneering work. The extant definitions are enormously helpful, but we aim to provide an analysis that is both more inclusive and divided into subcategories.

One definition owes to Shiloh Whitney. She defines "affective injustice" as a failure of emotional uptake that involves, "*disabling affective sense-making* in marginalized persons by withholding its intercorporeal conditions [and] *disintegrating the sense and the force of affects* from each other" (Whitney 2018: 495, emphasis original). Drawing on Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Whitney argues that emotions are embodied and get their meaning though bodily manifestations that impact the felt experiences of others. She defines injustice in terms of processes that disrupt the sense-making of emotions, depriving emotions of their force. Though sympathetic to embodied views such as Merleau-Ponty's and to Whitney's development thereof, we will try to offer a definition that is not committed to any specific view about how the sense-making of emotions takes place. Whitney's definition exemplifies what we call "discounting," which is one of several forms of injustice we discuss.

Amia Srinivasan offers another definition. For her, "affective injustice" is "the injustice of having to negotiate between one's apt emotional response to the injustice of one's situation and one's desire to better one's situation" (Srinivasan, 2018: 135). She focuses on cases where an individual's justified anger is criticized as counterproductive, as when Martin Luther King, Jr. accused Malcolm X of stirring up distress with fiery speeches (p. 125). Srinivasan is drawing attention to a striking and disturbing phenomenon, and she offers a compelling suggestion for how it might be addressed: instead of concealing apt emotions, such as rage at oppression, we should focus on ways of making such emotions productive of desirable outcomes. Archer and Mills (2019) build on this work; they adopt Srinivasan's definition and argue that emotion regulation plays a role in the process. Both discuss an instance in which Audrey Lorde was admonished by a white feminist that she expresses her feelings "too harshly" (Lorde 1984: 116). In our taxonomy below, the kinds of examples that Srinivasan, Archer, and Mills discuss are cases of "policing". Our aim is to show that there are many other forms of emotional injustice, so we propose a broader definition.

Another important landmark in this recent literature has been published by Francisco Gallegos (2021). Like us, Gallegos aims at a broader definition and cites a number of papers that he aims to subsume under his account (p.13, footnote 1). Our approach resonates with his but differs in several ways. First, we are systematizing the literature and offering a new taxonomy, not just one overarching concept. Gallegos does not discuss or differentiate the forms of injustice he introduces. Second, his analysis does not subsume all the cases we are considering. For example, it does not cover cases where emotions are the vehicles of injustice,

not just the target. Third, we offer a different conceptual framework. Gallegos defines affective injustice as a state in which individuals or groups are deprived of "affective goods" which are owed to them. Affective goods are then defined in terms of affective freedoms, affective resources and opportunities, and affective recognition (p. 7). Although these are interesting and useful concepts, we recommend a different analysis. Gallegos's list of goods is commendably specific, but perhaps too much so since it leaves some things out. The use and abuse of emotions can also impede communication, require extra labor, instill aversive feelings, jeopardize cultural practices, exacerbate inequality, among other harms. These harms are not always emotional in nature (Gallegos's emotional goods). So we will recommend a definition that defines the negative impact of emotional injustice in a less specific, and hence more inclusive way.

In summary, then, we hope to build on this important work, providing a definition that is both more inclusive and divided into more subcategories. We also recommend a small terminological shift. We use the term "emotional injustice" rather than "affective injustice" because we think the phenomena under examination generally involve specific discrete emotions rather than mere negative and positive valence, which the term "affective" is sometimes taken to imply (Deonna & Teroni 2012). Suppressing anger, instilling fear, and shaming are best understood as emotion interventions, not merely shifts in affect. We turn to the topics of emotions, justice, and emotional injustice now.

1.2 Emotional Injustice Defined

In order to clarify our theoretical commitments, let us first say a few words about how we understand emotion and injustice, and then quickly move on to our understanding of emotional injustice.

Our characterization of emotional injustice aims to be compatible with a broad range of theories of emotion, including innate affect programs (Ekman 1972), cognitive theories that include action tendencies (Arnold 1960; Frijda 1986), embodied appraisal theories (Prinz 2004), evaluative perception theories (Tappolet 2016), and attitudinal theories (Deonna & Teroni 2015). It is also compatible with forms of social constructionism that associate emotions with learned embodied scripts (de Sousa 1987; Eickers 2019).

As for injustice, we will define injustice as an arbitrarily imposed disadvantage. By "arbitrary" we mean to capture what Moreau (2010) calls "normatively extraneous"- i.e., features of a person or situation that are morally irrelevant or fail to justify the disadvantage or mistreatment. By "disadvantage" we mean the deprivation of a valued resource (cf. Haslanger 2000). Being

disadvantaged is not simply being harmed. Being disadvantaged involves a demotion in position or potential. We are pluralists about disadvantages. Injustice can involve material resources, opportunities, dignity, status, free expression, and decisional capacities.

We are now in a position to define our key term. We offer the following:

Emotional injustice occurs when the treatment of emotions is unjust, or emotions are used to treat people unjustly.

We have clarified how we understand the key terms in this definition. Those who prefer different analyses of "emotion" or "injustice" can understand it accordingly. Narrower definitions of either might affect which cases get included in our taxonomy below.

At the center of our definition is a disjunction. Emotional injustice includes both unjust treatment of emotions and cases where emotions themselves are wielded as instruments of injustice — mistreatment *of* or *by.* Most of the cases we will consider fall into the first category. Those who dislike disjunctive definitions are welcome to reserve "emotional injustice" for cases of mistreated emotions, and reserve "unjust emotions" for cases where emotions are used to mistreat. It is useful to keep both in our discussion, since unjust emotions and unjust treatment often go hand-in-hand. Unjust emotions can elicit emotions in others, and emotions so elicited may qualify as cases of unjustly treated emotions.

In the next section we will illustrate emotional injustice with many different cases organized into a taxonomical list. These cases are unified by the proposed definition, but it will be instructive to draw finer distinctions as well. One can organize a taxonomy in different ways. We are inspired by Myisha Cherry's (2019) account of the different stages at which emotions might be subject to "extrinsic regulation". Cherry distinguished three stages at which interference with emotions can be problematic: recognition, strategy, and implementation. Our breakdown is a bit different, but it builds on hers.

Imagine an emotional episode in which someone becomes angry. There are various stages at which we can consider this anger. In the first, akin to Cherry's recognition state, the emotion may be perceived by others, allowing them to *ascribe* an emotion to the angry party. Next, there is the *uptake* of that emotion, however it is ascribed; observers may, for example, ignore it or respond. Prior to any of this, the emotion must have been *elicited*; some event, or behavior by another party caused it to occur. At longer time scales, we can also think of the inculcation of *norms* that affect which emotions are likely to arise in a given individual or group. Beyond those standing norms, there may also be more specific situational *demands* placed on the individual, which may or may not succeed in elicitation of an

emotional response. As we will see, unjust treatment might occur at any of these stages.

Where an emotion is treated unjustly, it is primarily the emoter who suffers the effects of that injustice. But emotional injustice can also have collateral effects. Sometimes injustice arises because the emoter is encouraged to feel emotions that negatively affect others. For example, when men are socialized to feel overconfident, that can worsen the subordination of other gender groups. "Unjust treatment" is formulated to be neutral about the question, unjust for whom?

The five stages at which unjust treatment can arise can be supplemented with a further locus of unjust treatment that is not a stage in any episodic sense but an aggregate effect on whole populations. Within a population, we can ask whether the *distribution* of emotions is just. When members of a certain groups are deemed not entitled to experience a given emotion, this would still be an issue of how emotions are treated, but it moves beyond any given episode.

In addition to these six potential loci of mistreatment, we can ask about *unjust emotions*. As noted, however, the majority of cases we introduce below are ones in which emotions are treated unjustly. We frame these around the six loci just mentioned, offering examples and subcategories of each. We then end the taxonomy with cases where emotion itself is used in an unjust way.

It is important to recognize that emotional injustice is not simply a special case of epistemic injustice (see also, Whitney, 2018: 495, n. 12). Emotional injustice involves disadvantage, and sometimes that disadvantage is epistemic. But not always. Emotional injustice can negatively impact autonomous action, personal expression, and well-being, among other things. Being unjustly deprived of happiness because of the way one's emotions are treated need not involve any epistemic deprivation. It follows that, on pain of missing some important case, our taxonomy must depart somewhat from extant taxonomies of epistemic injustice. Still, we regard that literature as a fruitful resource for building the present account (e.g., Fricker 2007).

2. A Taxonomy of Emotional Injustices

We now turn to our taxonomy. As indicated, we divide emotional injustices into seven categories. Six of these involve unjust treatment of emotions, including unjust distributions. The remaining category comprises cases where emotions themselves are unjust. This taxonomy is not exhaustive and could be organized differently. The divisions we favor stem largely from the fact that emotions can be impacted at different stages or loci, as emphasized by Cherry (2019). In addition to these broad divisions, we identify a number of subtypes, many of which have

been discussed in the literature. Our goal is to organize these under one umbrella. Some might wonder what we have to gain from bringing so many different examples together. We answer that questions in our penultimate section.

2.1 Unjust Ascription: Emotion Misinterpreted

Some ascriptions are inaccurate in ways that are unjust. We will refer to this as Emotion Misinterpretation. By stipulation, we reserve the term for unjust cases, though emotions can also be misinterpreted innocently.

One form of emotion misinterpretation is *Emotion Misperception*. It consists in under- or overestimating an emotion's intensity or ascribing an emotion that isn't there at all. Consider, for example, Lisa Feldman Barrett's research on the "Resting Bitch Face" (RBF), where women's neutral faces are often perceived as angry (Barrett & Bliss-Moreau 2009; Barrett 2017; see also Cherry 2019). In such cases, a social group, women, are systematically misperceived in ways that can be disadvantageous. As the pejorative "b"-word implies, women may be perceived in a negative light that can erode trust, cooperation, and understanding.

Another example of this kind is commonly endured by Black Americans. Black men, in particular, are perceived as aggressive and threatening in the U.S. (Ferber 2007; Curry 2017; Kleider-Offutt et al. 2017; Hester & Gray 2018; Táíwò 2020). This stereotype in part explains police brutality and the use of excessive force against Black men that is shockingly common. Little attempt is made to deescalate the situation, and instead, brute force is used to respond to a perceived threat originating in a prejudicial stereotype (Goff et al. 2014). The trauma suffered by Black Americans from their interactions with police is well-documented (Butts 2002; Carter 2007; Liu et al. 2019). Because 'the aggressive Black man' is a known stereotype, many Black parents teach their young sons strategies for interacting with police so that their behavior is less likely to be perceived as aggressive (Gandbhir & Foster 2015; Blake 2020).

It is noteworthy that misperceptions can involve over-perceiving or under-perceiving emotional states. Black aggression is a case of over-perception. Another such example is the tendency of white people to over-perceive Black sex drive (or for men to perceive women as more sexually interested in them than they actually are). Under-perception is chillingly illustrated by the tendency of white people to underestimate Black pain. Both white laypersons and medical practitioners often believe that Black people are more pain tolerant, and the prescribe weaker pain treatments as a result (Hoffman et al. 2016).

A second category of Misinterpretation is *Emotion Inversion*. Catherine MacKinnon (1994: 6) discusses the disturbing phenomenon of men interpreting

women as meaning "yes" when they say "no". MacKinnon calls this "silencing," but as Caroline West (2003: 400) points out, it goes beyond the mere ignoring of words, and can involve false emotional ascriptions. Such inversions are epistemically unjust (see Fricker, 2007: 148-52), but the emotional dimension is equally important and disturbing: a lack of interest or even feelings of disgust, anger, and terror get misclassified as romantic interest.

A related form of misinterpretation is *Emotion Gaslighting*. Cherry (2018: 61f) describes cases in which someone calls others out for racism and is told that their accusations are over-sensitive or unfounded (as when people deny systematic racism in law enforcement). Another notorious example is that of Sigmund Freud's patient, Dora, who seems to have suffered sexual assault from her father's friend, Herr K., which resulted in Dora having a variety of symptoms, including a loss of voice. While treating Dora, Freud diagnosed her with hysteria caused by her jealousy and sexual attraction for Herr K. (Gay 2006; for a brief history of hysteria, see Tasca et al. 2012). By doing so, he attributed the symptoms not to the sexual assault suffered by Dora, but instead to the inner workings of her mind. Freud does not interpret the situation as traumatic but instead finds the underlying causes in Dora herself, implying that her version of events, and the resulting emotions are delusional.

The Dora case draws attention to a fourth form of unjust misinterpretation: *Emotion Pathologizing*. Sometimes emotions are distorted by being viewed through a medical lens, as they are regarded as symptoms of a psychiatric disturbance. This form of injustice can be perpetrated by medical professionals, as when clinicians treat depression as a chemical imbalance even in cases where life circumstances are clearly to blame. Pathologizing is often perpetrated by non-professionals as well, as with the cliché attribution of "PMS" to people who express irritation or unhappiness during their menstrual cycles. Another example is the common narrative that trans people are all unhappy or experience dysphoria the same way. For example, presumptive unhappiness prior to medical transition is an instance of "transmedicalism", which assumes every trans person is miserable without surgery and hormones. In some countries, "suffering" is required by health insurances in order to cover trans surgeries and hormone replacement therapy (DGfS 2019).

Misinterpretation of emotions can also arise in self-attribution, and sometimes this reflects an unjust *Emotion Inarticulation*. This can be compared to Fricker's (2007) category of hermeneutical injustice since it often involves conceptual lacunae that prevent someone from understanding their own feelings. One class of examples serves as a counterpoint to *Pathologizing*. Some individuals lack concepts for feelings they experience, which leaves them ill-equipped to address them. A person without the concept of depression might mistake

psychological symptoms for bodily aches, and a person with no concept of gender dysphoria may be slow to recognize an underlying dissatisfaction with their assigned sex/gender. For another example, consider the fact that men are often discouraged from talking about their emotions. Such pressures, which have been called "normative alexithymia" (Karakis & Levant, 2012), can lead to failures of insight and communication. This disadvantages them, and others who may experience them as cold, emotionally unavailable, and lacking in empathy.

2.2 Unjust Uptake: Emotion Discounting

In a seminal discussion of women's anger, Frye (1983) points out that emotions are sometimes given inadequate "uptake." An uptake failure is when an emotion is recognized, but then unjustly discounted. This is Emotion Discounting, an emotional analogue of testimonial injustice (Fricker 2007).

One example of this is *Emotion Invalidating*. This occurs when one's responses are taken to lack credibility or worth. For example, women's anger is typically dismissed or deemed illegitimate because of the stereotype that women are "emotional" (Scheman 1980). The characterization of women as emotional suggests that their emotional responses are irrational, and therefore are not to be taken seriously. The stereotype is not limited to cis women, but also impacts emotional uptake for trans women, intersex and nonbinary people, as well as gay men. Another closely related stereotype is that of an "angry Black woman" characterized as aggressive, threatening, out of control, irrational, loud. The anger of Black women is also dismissed as unfounded. Furthermore, the stereotype is imbued with a racist prejudice that Black women "should know their place" (Jones & Norwood 2017; Cherry 2019). Notice that these examples need not involve misperception. Invalidation can begin with a correct attribution, but the emotion in question is discredited in some way (cf. Whitney 2018).

Another form of discounting goes even further: some emotions are silenced. As we use this term, *Emotion Silencing* is not mere discrediting; it is a refusal to even acknowledge an emotion, or an active effort to prevent it from being recognized by others (for epistemic silencing, Fricker 2007; Maitra 2009; Dotson 2011). Silencing can occur in contexts of what Iris Marion Young (1990: 53-5) calls "marginalization"; marginalized people include the elderly, the unemployed, the disabled, and indigenous people living on reservations. Likewise, silencing is, according to Gayatri Spivak (1988), a condition faced by "subalterns" – non-elite subjects in countries that have been colonized. Neither Young nor Spivak emphasize emotions, but it follows from their analysis that the emotional

experiences of those on the margins are unlikely to be noticed or recorded by those in positions of power.

A third class of examples can be called *Emotion Defaming*. Such cases relate to Medina's (2012) concept of dynamic hermeneutic injustice, in which there is an active effort to misrepresent. Consider uses of the pejorative labels such as "uppity" and "attitude" to describe Black anger. These are thick concepts that serve to criticize as they ascribe. Other examples include the term "snowflake" to describe cases where people with progressive politics take offense, and calling women "hysterical" for being angered by offensive behavior. The latter term has a pathologizing connotation, but in conversational contexts it is usually used to discredit, not to diagnose.

2.3 Unjust Elicitation: Emotion Extraction

Misinterpretation and Emotional Discounting both involve responses to emotions after they occur. The next two forms of injustice involve unjust ways of causing or influencing emotions. First, consider unjust forms of elicitation. We will refer to this as emotion extraction to capture the idea that some people try to elicit emotions in others that would not have arisen on their own. Such extraction can be coercive, forceful, and even violent.

One familiar class of cases involves *Emotion Manipulation*. Familiar examples include guilt tripping, induced gratitude, flattery, and extraction of undeserved trust. Such tactics can contribute to injustice, as when a politician builds trust in a voting demographic by misrepresenting commitments on an issue important to them. At a more local level, manipulation can play a role in sustaining abusive relationships. An abuser might apologize profusely to evoke forgiveness and then return to a cycle of abuse.

A second kind of problematic extraction we will call *Emotion Soliciting*. To borrow an example from Myisha Cherry, the phrase "smile, lady" is a strategy often adopted by men who perceive women's expression as that of anger or sadness, and who regard themselves as entitled to impose a norm of agreeableness on any woman (Cherry 2019: 99). Such directives, uttered by strangers in public settings, can be experienced as invasive power plays or sexual aggression. As such, "smile, lady" disadvantages women by compromising their expressive autonomy and exposing their vulnerability.

The final kind of extraction we will consider is more extreme: *Emotion Terrorizing*. Political terrorism is a tactic to instill fear; it often targets civilians, including some who may be victims or active opponents of the very regimes the terrorists hope to destabilize (Khan-Cullors & Bandele 2017). We consider

Terrorizing a more commonplace form of fear-instilling tactics. For example, members of marginalized groups live in fear during daily activities. For women, it can be walking alone at night; for Black people, it can be an encounter with police, or the simple act of driving; for people with Muslim names, it can be travelling by plane; for people who are queer, it can be showing public affection; for people who are trans or gender non-conforming, it can be strolling down the street. For many groups, mundane activities are precarious because the fear of being attacked prevents them from or makes it difficult to engage in everyday activities nonmarginalized groups take for granted. There are also cases of *Emotion Terrorizing* directed at individuals: stalking, bullying, and harassment are examples. For many, the morning commute, the workplace, or the classroom can become sites of significant anxiety because others chose to undermine their sense of security.

2.4 Unjust Norms: Emotion Policing

Emotion Extraction is an attempt to elicit emotions that a person is presumed to already have in their repertoire. Our next form of injustice goes further: sometimes efforts are made to distort the nature of the emotions that an individual or a social group is disposed to have, or the ways those emotions are expressed. We refer to this as emotion policing (see also, Cherry 2018, for helpful discussion). Policing and extraction can be closely related, in so far as extraction, when applied systematically, can serve as a method of policing. The difference, though, is that policing occurs when attempts are made to establish an emotion norm, i.e., when specific people are expected to have specific emotions in specific circumstances.

Our first example is *Emotion Stereotyping*. Among the many stereotypes that we apply to groups of people, some involve emotions. These stereotypes inform our beliefs about people and can contribute to Emotion Misinterpretation, but they also function as norms regulating group behavior. It is in that capacity that we consider stereotyping here. For example, although women are not allowed to experience and express anger, they are allowed to experience fear and sadness (Hess et al. 2004). Such norms differ intersectionally. The norms around expressing anger are different for white and Black women (e.g., Wingfield 2010). Patricia Hill Collins (2008) describes different "controlling images" that govern Black women. For example, she contrasts the "mammy" stereotype, which presents Black women as faithful, servile, nurturing, and asexual, with the "matriarch" stereotype, which presents Black women as aggressive, assertive, and emasculating. Stereotypes also play a role in governing the emotions of people with disabilities. Consider the stereotype of a "supercrip" defined by Joseph Shapiro as an "inspirational

disabled person […] glorified [… and] lavishly lauded in the press and on television" (Shapiro 1994:16). Sami Schalk points out that 'supercrip' is associated with heroism, overcoming adversity, individual achievement, and inspiration (Schalk 2016). The material conditions and other forms of systemic oppression suffered by people with disabilities are not given nearly as much attention as the individual's overcoming their handicaps. Given the stereotype, the emotional regulation expected from a disabled individual is suppressing negative emotions and replacing them with positive ones such as confidence and enthusiasm (Scott 2006). This is also a case of Emotion Silencing, since it suggests that people with disabilities should take life in stride for the comfort of others.

A second example of policing is *Emotion Display Suppression*. This arises when one is forced to conceal one's true feelings to avoid negative consequences. For example, Claudia Rankine (2014) describes a case in which Serena Williams was penalized for an angry outburst, forcing her to conceal justified anger on later occasions. With over 100 thousand dollars in past fines, Williams is one of the most penalized players. These penalties, and the intended suppression, may indicate that Williams is being stereotyped as an angry Black woman. It is also noteworthy that Black girls have disproportionate suspension rates in American schools (Green 2020). Efforts to suppress emotional displays also arise in Srinivasan's (2018) examples of "affective injustice", including the disturbing anecdote in which a white feminist asked Audre Lorde to convey her grievances less harshly (Lorde 1984).

For a very different example of Display Suppression, consider the "boys don't cry" stereotype. Boys and men are expected not to express sadness. Showing sadness is interpreted as a sign of weakness associated with femininity. It might be objected, however, that such a norm does not constitute an injustice because it does not contribute to oppression. Men are the most powerful stratum of society. So it might be argued that while the prohibition to exhibit sadness is harmful to men, it nonetheless does not constitute oppression, since men are not oppressed (Manne 2017). We think, however, that such an argument is too hasty. First, it is a kind of structural injustice just to have gendered (or racialized etc.) norms around emotions because such norms lead to unequal access to emotional skill development, and thereby social behavior. Second, such norms flatten differences across masculinities, including differences of race, class, culture, and sexuality, catering to old-fashioned straight, cis ideals. Third, the traits of one social group can be used to oppress another. Even if "boys do not cry" were not oppressive to cis men, it is oppressive to trans men, non-binary people, and women, since the irrational emotionality stereotype is reinforced through this norm. Thus, constraints of male expressivity can contribute to patriarchy.

Where *Display Suppression* typically targets specific social groups (e.g., we men, we Britons), there are also forms of emotion policing that are intended to apply to everyone. This can be termed *Emotion Hegemonizing.* Examples here include compulsory heterosexuality and monogamy, both of which aim to police sexual desires for all. Other examples include widespread norms to have patriotic feelings, to love one's parents, and to be content with one's lot in life.

Emotion Hegemonizing is an attempt to create affective uniformity; sometimes this uniformity is imposed by one cultural group on another. That qualifies as a special case of policing, which we call *Emotion Imperialism* (see also Archer & Matheson 2020). For example, sexuality—which involves emotionally charged states such as attraction, arousal, desire, romantic love, intimate affection, flirtatious play, and amorous longing—has been heavily policed in colonial contexts. Compulsory heterosexuality led to the elimination of *wakashudō* (a codified system of homosexual eroticism involving adult men and younger men) when imperial Japan came under Western influence. Compulsive monogamy has been a mainstay of colonialism as well. Sarah Pearsall (2019) describes the clash between European enlightenment views of sexuality and systems of plural marriage among indigenous and African Americans under settler colonialism and chattel slavery. Colonizers wanted to replace lust with "nobler sentiments of affection" which they saw as monogamous (p. 154). Colonial conquest has also led to the spread of Western psychology throughout the globe, in ways that undermine traditional frameworks. Against this background, Nuria Ciofalo (2019: 11) calls for the "decolonization of emotions." She mentions the suppression of shame, the emphasis on happiness, and the supplanting of traditional conceptions of emotional normalcy. The imposition of Western norms is problematic given extensive cultural differences in ideal emotions (Tsai 2017) and conceptions of well-being (Suh & Koo 2008).

2.5 Unjust Demands: Emotion Exploitation

Extraction and Policing respectively involve efforts to determine what emotions people have and what shape they take. Emotional Exploitation is related, insofar as it can involve efforts to bring about emotion, but the emphasis is on emotions as a kind of labor. Like any form of labor, emotion labor can be exploited. Exploitation has been a theme in Marxist thought, feminist theory, and epistemic injustice theory (Young 1990; Berenstain 2016). Here we also draw on the sociology of emotions, where exploitation has long been recognized (Hochschild 1983).

Our first class of cases parallels Nora Berenstain's (2016) concept of epistemic exploitation: cases in which privileged individuals burden oppressed

people with the task of explaining the oppression. Something similar happens with emotions: individuals who have endured something bad (either structural oppression or a specific bad experience) are, in some circumstances, asked to take on the emotionally taxing job of both explaining this to others and also calming or reassuring them. We call this *Emotion Double-Burdening* since the initial hardship is burden enough without having to take on this further role, which often involves reliving the hardship, concealing it, and tending to the discomfort reported by others on hearing about it (Munch-Jurisic 2020). For example, the victims of sexual violence who report their experiences to others often have to quell others' revenge fantasies and downplay their own trauma to mitigate others' concern.

Another class of cases has been influentially described by Arlie Hochschild (1983). In a study of jobs that involve interaction with customers, employees must often exhibit positive emotions even under difficult conditions. Airline flight attendants, for example, must smile cheerfully even when passengers are nervous, sick, or belligerent. Among other costs, Hochschild argues that such individuals become an extension of the company and are pressured to internalize these feelings to such a degree that their own reactions as individuals get displaced or repressed. For that reason, we refer to this as *Ego-Evacuating Emotion Work*. Many lines of work leave little room for our own feelings and require something akin to method acting, in which we actually experience the emotional states we are asked to perform.

A third class of cases also builds on Hochschild and Berenstain: both note that emotion labor can be uncompensated. *Uncompensated Emotion Work*, as we call it, overlaps with the two other categories, but it is useful to define separately, since all three are dissociable. Hochschild (1983: 170) reserves the word "labor" for compensated cases and "work" for uncompensated cases. She introduces the latter with the example of women's traditional roles in the household, which include calming down rowdy or distressed children. Another example comes from the disability literature: as Eva Kittay (2020) argues, family members often serve as uncompensated care workers, who are given no remuneration by the state. Kittay refers to this as "love's labor" since it is a labor for those we love, and thus a labor of love, but also requires considerable emotional energies (p. 2, 40, 193). As Kittay has also shown, professional caretakers—often women of color—are also undercompensated by the institutions that employ them. Emotion labor exacts a heavy toll, and it can increase the state of disadvantage for individuals who already occupy vulnerable social positions.

There is a final form of exploitation we want to mention that we call *Emotion Appropriation*. Sometimes one group will display the emotions of another to serve its own ends. Consider cases where Black pain is used for profit, entertainment, or virtue signaling. In 2017, the Whitney Museum exhibited a painting of Emmett

Till's open casket by Dana Schutz. The pain endured by Till and his family, along with fear and anguish of those who are imperiled by a culture that tolerates various forms lynching, was being evoked by a Jewish artist, in an exhibition curated by two Asian Americans, in a museum predominantly frequented by white viewers. Critics viewed this as a commodification of Black suffering that gave moral capital and financial gain to non-Black people.

2.6 Unjust Distribution: Emotion Inequality

Our final two categories are a little different from the preceding five. So far we've been looking at factors that impact emotions and responses to emotions, ranging from perception to compensation. Here we turn briefly to a question about distributive injustice. At the level of population, emotional distribution can be unfair, with some individuals or groups placed in emotional conditions that differ from others in disadvantageous ways.

First, there is *Positive Emotion Inequality*. Positive emotions are not equally accessible to all (cf. Gallegos 2021). For example, groups that have more leisure time and material resources have greater access to recreational activities and consumer goods that can be sources of comfort, relaxation, and pleasure. Well-being is modestly correlated with wealth (Biswas-Diener 2008), and wealth correlates with sex, race, health, and economic starting place. Emotional well-being can also increase health, creativity, and success (Huppert 2009). Social arrangements result in greater well-being for certain groups and contribute to the disadvantage of others.

The flipside of this is *Negative Emotion Inequality*. Some people experience more negative emotions as a result of their neighborhoods, class, gender, sexual orientation, or ability status. Such individuals are taxed with more anxiety, depression, and discomfort. Underprivileged individuals often find themselves working monotonous or unfulfilling jobs that increase boredom and burnout, and employment insecurity can lead to erratic fluctuations in emotions. Research suggests that emotional consistency, as well as positivity, is important for well-being (Diener et al. 1990).

Writers on epistemic injustice sometimes note that it is a strain to think about knowledge on the model of distributive justice (Fricker 2007: 19). Not so with emotions. Just as there can be unjust interpretations, uptake, and demands, there can also be unjust distributions. The United States names the pursuit of happiness as a foundational right but does not provide equal opportunities to do so.

2.7 Unjust Emotions: Emotion Weaponizing

Our final case of emotional injustice contrasts with all those previously listed, in that it concerns not unjust treatment *of* emotions, but rather unjust treatment *by* emotion. Emotions can be used to disadvantage people. We refer to this as *Emotion Weaponizing*. This topic is big enough to deserve its own treatment, but since our goal is to provide a springboard for future work, we offer a brief overview.

Emotions can be weaponized in many ways. Here, alphabetically, are some of ones we have come up with. First, emotions can be *Belittling*. Adam Smith (1759/2002: III.iii.18) captures this when he notes that people feel contempt for the poor. Contempt, in general, tends to diminish its objects in ways that can be unjust (Bell 2013: chap. 3).

Second, there is the phenomenon of *Blame-Shifting*. Examples of this arise in the context of "white fragility" (DiAngelo 2018) or "white innocence" (Wekker 2016): white people who are called out for bad behavior may cry to divert attention from their misconduct, or to turn the table by making angry accusations of "reverse racism." There are also cases of backlash, where those who have been accused of something retaliate with increased hostility.

A third form of weaponization arises in cases of *Stigmatizing*, which occurs when people are subjected to humiliating forms of condemnation or scrutiny for traits that deviate from prevailing norms. Such stigmatizing can result in shame, and this is directed at unjust elicitation. Moreover, internalized shame requires a lot of emotional work and often therapy to counteract its effects (Hatzenbuehler 2009). Still, we think it is instructive to classify stigmatization as a form of emotion weaponization, because "shaming" expresses the emotions of those who perform it at least as much as those they abuse. Shaming deploys a number of affective attitudes, such as repugnance, loathing, suspicion, smugness, and especially ridicule. The paradigm case of this may be homophobia, and related forms of bigotry such as transphobia. Stigmatization can also arise within the LGBTQIA+ community, as when individuals are stigmatized for a positive HIV status, for their gender expression (e.g., being femme), for sexual proclivities (e.g., being "slutty", being asexual, being a "bottom"), or being inadequately committed or inauthentic (e.g., shaming of bisexual people for "not picking a team", or trans people who have not had surgery or taken hormones). Shaming is also often used against people with disabilities, people with substance dependencies, and people whose bodies do not conform to prevailing beauty norms (e.g., fat shaming, shaming men who are small in stature, women for body hair). In each of these cases, negative emotions are directed against individuals who then often internalize them.

A fourth, and related case weaponization arises when emotions are used in a *Dehumanizing* way. We think dehumanization is best regarded as a specific kind of injustice rather than a blanket category for all cases (though see Mikkola 2016). One reason for this usage is that it can be instructively applied to cases where emotions are used to make some person of group seem less than human. This often involves group-directed disgust (Ahmed 2014; Nussbaum 2006). This goes beyond stigmatization in a subtle way. Where stigmatization treats a behavior or trait as repellant, dehumanization pushes the inferiority to a point of inhumanity. One is stigmatized for being a certain way, where there may be some expectation that change is possible. When one is dehumanized, one's being is demoted. Often one leads to the other. If one holds on to a stigmatized trait as an aspect of identity, dehumanization is likely to follow. One goes from having a repellant trait to being a repellant person. Bigots marshal disgust to denigrate those they dislike: for example, Nazis compared Jews to rats or parasites; under conditions of Jim Crow and redlining, segregation of African American were presented as potentially infesting and polluting white spaces; and sexual acts that depart from heterosexual norms have been condemned as crimes against nature.

Our next case is the familiar phenomenon of *Fear Mongering*. Consider moral panics, which are often highly gendered or raced, and used to oppress social groups: examples include witch trials, crack mothers, gay parents (Herdt, 2009). Recently there has been much fear mongering directed at the transgender community, especially transgender women: transphobes think trans people will destroy women's sports, make women's bathrooms unsafe, derail feminism, and convince cis gender children to transition in droves (for an egregious example, see Joyce 2021).

There is a sixth class of examples we call *Intruding*. Here the key emotion is curiosity. As Perry Zurn (2021) argues, curiosity can be weaponized by exposing people to unwanted attention (see also Guilmette 2017). It can make someone who does not conform to prevailing norms or ideas into a spectacle. It can make people feel that they are entitled to ask invasive private questions. Zurn focuses on gender non-conformity in some of his analyses, and there is also related literature in disability studies. Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's (2009) book on staring examines the way in which people with unusual bodies are subjected to excessive looking. This contributes to disadvantage, but Garland-Thompson invites us to shift perspective and think about the skills developed by those who are stared at – the "starees".

This list can no doubt be expanded. Perhaps every emotion can be weaponized, from rage to ridicule. One might also expand this list to include *Implicit Bias*. Unconscious prejudice may be grounded in negative emotional reactions, and these, in turn, may lead to various forms of discrimination. To the

extent that structural conditions, such as media culture, segregation, and social inequality, reinforce such biases, a case can be made that there are systemic forces weaponizing emotions without our awareness. We tentatively classify Implicit Bias under unjust emotions, though it may deserve separate treatment from the cases where emotions are more deliberately deployed.

3. Do We Need an Overarching Concept?

Thus ends our taxonomy of emotional injustices. Readers who have been patient enough to stay with us may have been wondering why we need an overarching concept. The examples we have touched on here are so varied and so deserving of close individual attention that this effort to compile a grand list may seem unmotivated. We want to end our discussion by underscoring our goals in introducing the concept of emotional injustice. We offer several motivations.

First, we tried show that there is, indeed, conceptual unity in this morass. Phenomena that are different in detail are united by the fact that they involve treatment of or by emotions that qualifies as unjust. Second, in addition to this conceptual unity, there is considerable functional unity in the form of integration or overlap between cases. Impatient readers may have noticed that some of our examples can be classified in different ways. For example, calling women emotional can serve to discredit (uptake), color perception (attribution), and influence behavior (norms); and the norm that "boys don't cry" is also silencing (uptake). There are also causal links adjoining our categories: weaponized rage (an unjust emotion) can terrorize (elicitation) and stigmatization (unjust emotion) can lead to pathologizing (uptake), as when queer desire is medicalized. Some readers may be bothered by this, but we consider it an advantage. Injustice is a messy affair and bad behavior tends to be wrong in multiple ways. We think our conceptual distinctions are real and informative, even if some instances exemplify more than one category. Such co-morbidities motivate a framework for viewing these categories under a single umbrella.

There are also political reasons for introducing the term "emotional injustice". One of these reasons is tactical. In combating misuses of emotions, it is helpful to have a term. It may be easier to criticize individual cases if they belong to a broader species. The label also identifies emotions as a site of potential abuse, and can serve prudential ends, and perhaps even ends of policy.

Another political factor has more to do with scholarly work than activism, though we see the two as connected. As we noted at the outset, there has been a healthy infusion of political thinking into domains that were traditionally seen as value-free. We think this is a good direction for emotion theory. Here we have

built on the work of others, showing that many researchers are already viewing emotions through a political lens. Our goal has been to put these different projects into alignment with the hope that they can have even greater impact on the field. By compiling together authors who have explored political dimensions of emotions, we hope to build strength in numbers, and more firmly establish this as a central aspect of emotion research.

4. Resisting Emotion Injustice

We have been focusing on problems here, and not solutions. Remedying emotional injustices is no easy task. It seems to require changes on a systemic level, by way of deconstructing oppressive norms and stereotypes. Of course, it also requires changes from individuals in whose minds these prejudices reside. Those who endure emotional injustice can and do find ways to fight back. To end on a positive note, we want to mention several paths of resistance. A full development of these ideas awaits another occasion. Instead of discussing strategies in detail, we want to use our taxonomy to demonstrate that multiple paths are needed.

In response to failures of uptake, one might build on Alison Jaggar's (1989) concept of "outlaw emotions"—negative emotions experienced by oppressed people under conditions where they are expected to be content. These are just the kind of emotions that tend to get discounted, but, as Silva (2021) argues, outlaw emotions are generally justified. Demonstrating why this is so, as Silva does, can establish the legitimacy and epistemic value of feelings that are regularly dismissed.

When emotions are misinterpreted, one might pursue strategies of legibility. This can be pursued through efforts to decolonize public discourse, so that members of marginalized groups can speak for themselves and explain what they are feeling and why. As an alternative, Édouard Glissant (1997: 189-194) has argued for right to opacity. When people's inner lives are expected to be transparent, opacity can be deployed as a strategy to subvert facile interpretation (see also, Zurn 2021; Glissant & Palmer, 2017, for some reservations).

When faced with emotion extraction, outlaw emotions are a kind of involuntary resistance, but they can also be exercised more deliberately. Within trans philosophy, Kate Bornstein (1994) used the term "gender outlaw" to refer to those who defy the gender norms associated with one's assigned sex/gender. In the same spirit, we think it is useful to distinguish the unruly emotions of the involuntary outlaw from the nonconformity of a willful outlaw. Just as Jean Genet (1964) valorized criminality, opponents of extraction can brazenly embrace the outlaw status.

Outlaw emotions can be willfully used in response to emotion policing as well. They are a powerful tool against stereotyping, hegemony, imperialism and some cases of solicitation. When asked to smile on the street, for example, one can reply with an extended middle finger. This response can't generalize however, since it can increase the danger for those who are already vulnerable. In this context, we also want to emphasize that, while oppressed people are often saddled with the task of combating injustice, the moral burden falls on people who are privileged. When discussing cases of stereotyping and solicitation, Myisha Cherry (2019) recommends the cultivation of feminist emotional intelligence—a skillset that can help those who police others' emotions understand the error of their ways.

Emotion exploitation requires resistance of a different sort. When individuals are placed under coercive pressure to perform emotional labor, they might look to tactics that have been effective in fighting other forms of labor exploitation. One example would be the emotional analogue of going on strike. Service industry workers can refuse to put on a happy face, for example. Another tactic draws on a popular response to epistemic exploitation. In social media circles, members of marginalized groups sometimes reply "Google it" when asked to explain aspects of their experience. This same move is available to those who are asked to explain their emotions. If a trans person is asked why misgendering, deadnaming, and disrespecting pronouns is hurtful and offense, a reasonable reply is, "Do your own homework."

To address inequality in emotional distribution, structural changes are needed, such as increased economic opportunity and leisure time allocations. Efforts might also be made to mitigate workplace monotony, or to enrich the lives of people who are incarcerated, or homebound due to disability. Both researchers and policy makers might also invest in efforts to study and cultivate "emodiversity" – or emotional variation, which has been linked to well-being (Quoidbach et al. 2014).

Our final category of injustice, the weaponizing of emotions, takes many forms, and requires multiple strategies of resistance, but we want to draw attention to a strategy that has proven especially fruitful in response to stigmatization and dehumanization. We call it *reclamation*. To reclaim is to take something that has been taken from you, such as the worth and dignity of the traits that contribute to identity. Reclaiming one's identity as opposed to allowing oneself to be defined by prejudice is one way to combat emotional denigration. Attitudes such as 'I am Black and I am proud', 'Black Lives Matter', and LGBTQIA+ pride are examples. Here, individuals are not simply refusing to perform prescribed emotions (e.g., shame); they are expressing precisely the emotions that have been proscribed. This is a special case of being a willful outlaw. It transforms imposed weakness into emboldening strength.

5. Summing up

In the foregoing discussion, we aimed to accomplish five things: we tried to motivate the concept of emotional injustice; develop a preliminary analysis; provide a taxonomy demonstrating the many phenomena that can be brought under this rubric; celebrate all the extraordinary work already done on this topic; and gesture at some paths of resistance. Our main goal looking forward is to motivate more work in this area. To cover all this ground, we've been all too brief in the presentation of examples and the explication of distinctions. Much work needs to be done to provide adequate detail and specify why each our subcategories serves to disadvantage individuals or groups. We hope to have constructed scaffolding on which others can build. Our taxonomy can be expanded, contracted, and reconfigured. We would welcome such developments. In addition, there would be much to gain from work expanding on the themes of resistance and redress. Our modest hope is that this taxonomic exercise can contribute in some way to the arduous efforts that are everywhere already underway.

Acknowledgements

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