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Political Repair

»After all, it is because their history and ours is so deeply and profoundly and
inextricably intertwined that racism exists.
For otherwise, how could they keep us apart?«
(Stuart Hall)

For societies striving to overcome a shared history of collective wrongdoing and political violence, political approaches to transitional justice are all too often shortened to realpolitik issues. That way, broad dimensions of harm and injustice, as well as other political objectives that are not measurable in absolute quantities, but rather would include repairing the Social Fabric, restoring moral relationships, social trust, recognition and hope, the incorporation of political acts of violence and injustice into individual and collective narrations, and meeting the very diverse individual and collective needs that have been generated by experienced collective injustice and violence, remain unattended to.

The dissertation proposal at hand explores the very approaches in political science and political philosophy that understand the (Re)Gestaltung of adequate moral relationships and the Social Fabric on an interpersonal, inter-communitarian, societal and supranational level as a crucial prerequisite for meaningful political transition.

I argue that a genuine political concept of Political Repair is needed that will allow for constricted concepts of responsibility and accountability to be overcome, for a systematic regard of human needs and subjective well-being within political deliberations, and the fracturability of human mattersⁱ to be positioned conceptually within politics. I thereby argue for not merely perceiving Repair as a political practice in reaction to disruptions that have already occurred, but to rather understand and conceptualize Repair as a strategy to deal with the boundlessness of human actionⁱⁱ, and as enabling political action in the first place. After deriving the key elements of Repair from Restorative Justice approaches in the USA, Great Britain and Australia, from case studies on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and from evaluation studies of the transformative processes in Bosnia, Croatia, Germany, Herzegovina, and Rwanda, I will suggest my outline of a political theory of Repair, move over to position the Fracturability of Human Matters conceptually within Political Theory and then meditate on the transferability of the concept into the U.S. Black ReAddress context, which will function as a touch stone to my considerations.

ⁱ Hannah Arendt: boundlessness of human action in: *The Human Condition*.

ⁱⁱ I strongly borrow from Hannah Arendt's account of the Frailty of Human Affairs here.