

Networks, Deliberation, and an Open Public Sphere

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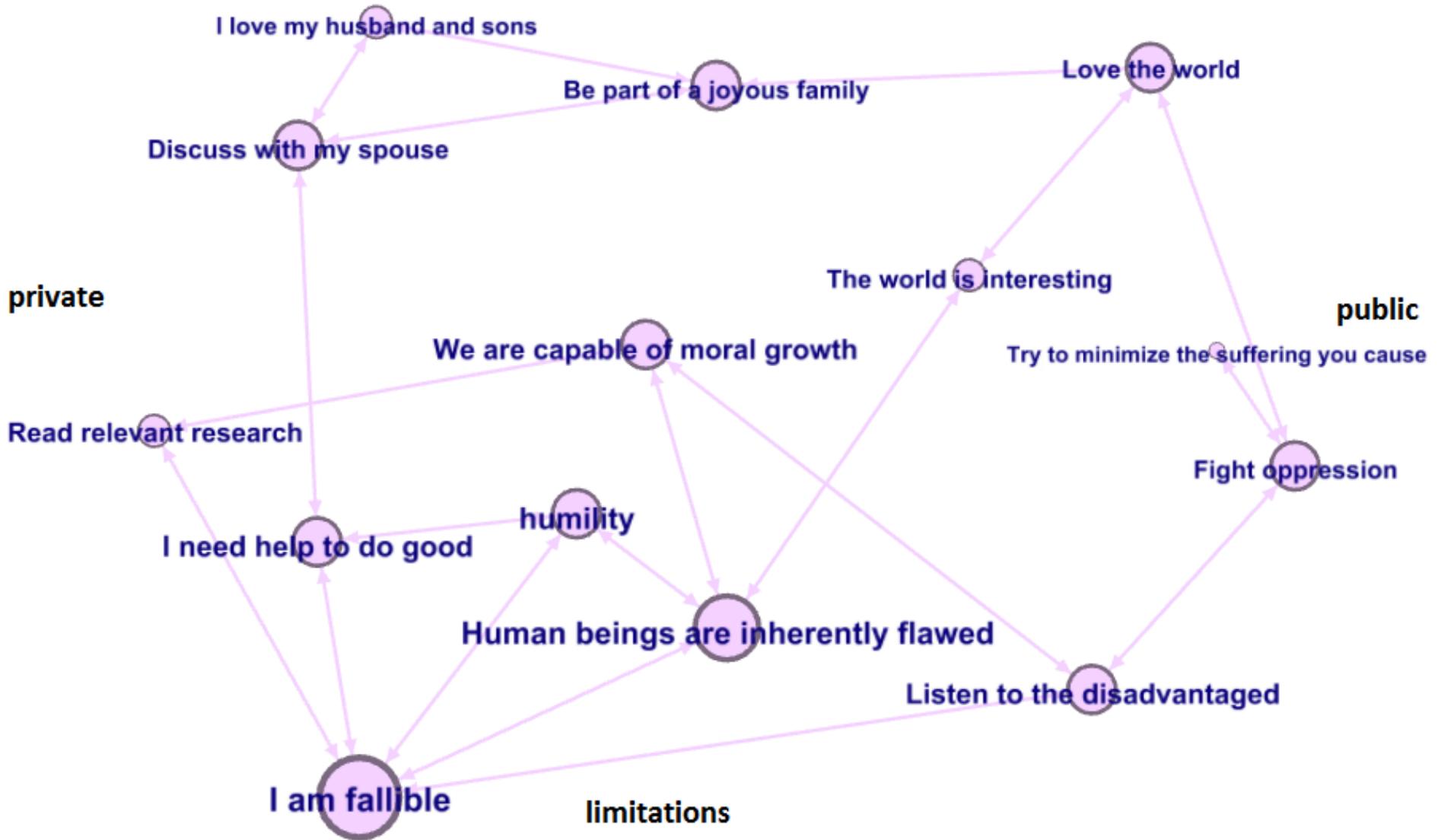
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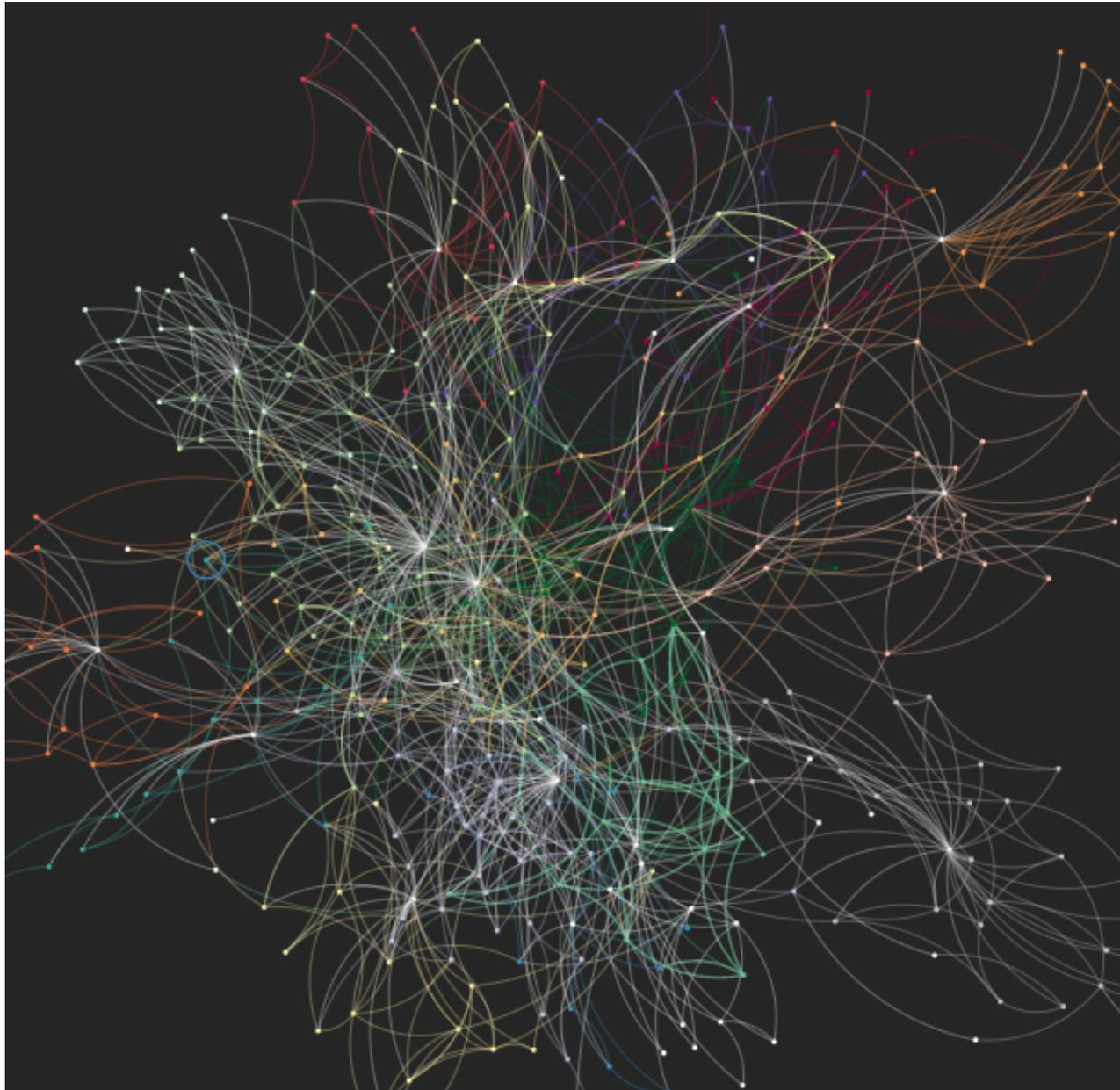
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Law & Order: Special Victims Unit
Taboo

love/joy





- **Aaron** frustrates discussion of moral questions by constantly linking every idea that he endorses back to one foundational principle, whether it's a constitutional right to individual freedom, God's will, or equality for all. His network is too **centralized**.
- **Beth** offers many ideas but cannot provide a reason for most of them. If we think of a reason as a link between two ideas, then this person's network has no links. Beth's network is **disconnected**.
- **Carlos** simply has nothing to say about many choices, dilemmas, and cases that arise in conversation and practice. He can discuss some topics cogently, but many others seem not to interest or concern them. The problem with Carlos' network is that it is too **small** (having too few nodes) or is too **restricted** in scope.
- **Dominique** cheerfully holds logically incompatible ideas, depending on her mood or perhaps her self-interest or convenience. Dominique frustrates deliberation because her network harbors blatant **inconsistencies** that she does not attempt to resolve.
- **Donald T.** makes disconnected statements with a noteworthy lack of parataxis (explicit transitional phrases), a great deal of repetition, and constant **evocations of himself**.

- **Eduardo** is committed to one idea, like personal liberty or economic equality, and he will not recognize the legitimate pull of other values that conflict with his Highest Good, such as order and security, solidarity and community, or democracy. Eduardo's network **is consistent but impossible to connect to if one holds other values.**
- **Fiona** says things like this: We must execute murderers because they deserve to die, and they deserve to die because they are murderers. This is "**circular reasoning**," considered a fallacy since ancient times. Both of her ideas may be true and logically linked, but the circularity offers no reason to believe either one.
- **When Gayatri** encounters new ideas, she connects the ones that are consistent with her favorite ones to those already central nodes, further increasing their centrality, and she either ignores or shunts to the edges any ideas that are inconsistent with her core. She manifests **Asymmetric Bayesianism** .