

WHY AFFECTIVE EQUALITY & RELATIONAL JUSTICE MATTERS

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Human rights, Social Work and Responsibilities, Challenging
Inequality, Injustice and Discrimination

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OUTLINE

- Defining Affective Care Relations
- Key Assumptions and Claims about Affective Equality
- Critique of Dominant Theories of Justice and their neglect of love, care and solidarity in relational life
- The Four Key sites of Social Injustice and Inequality – where Affective Equality fits
- Why is Care work treated as Abject?
 - Role of Liberalism
 - Role of Neoliberal capitalism and the treat to caring professions
- Why Affective Relations matter for the politics and social change

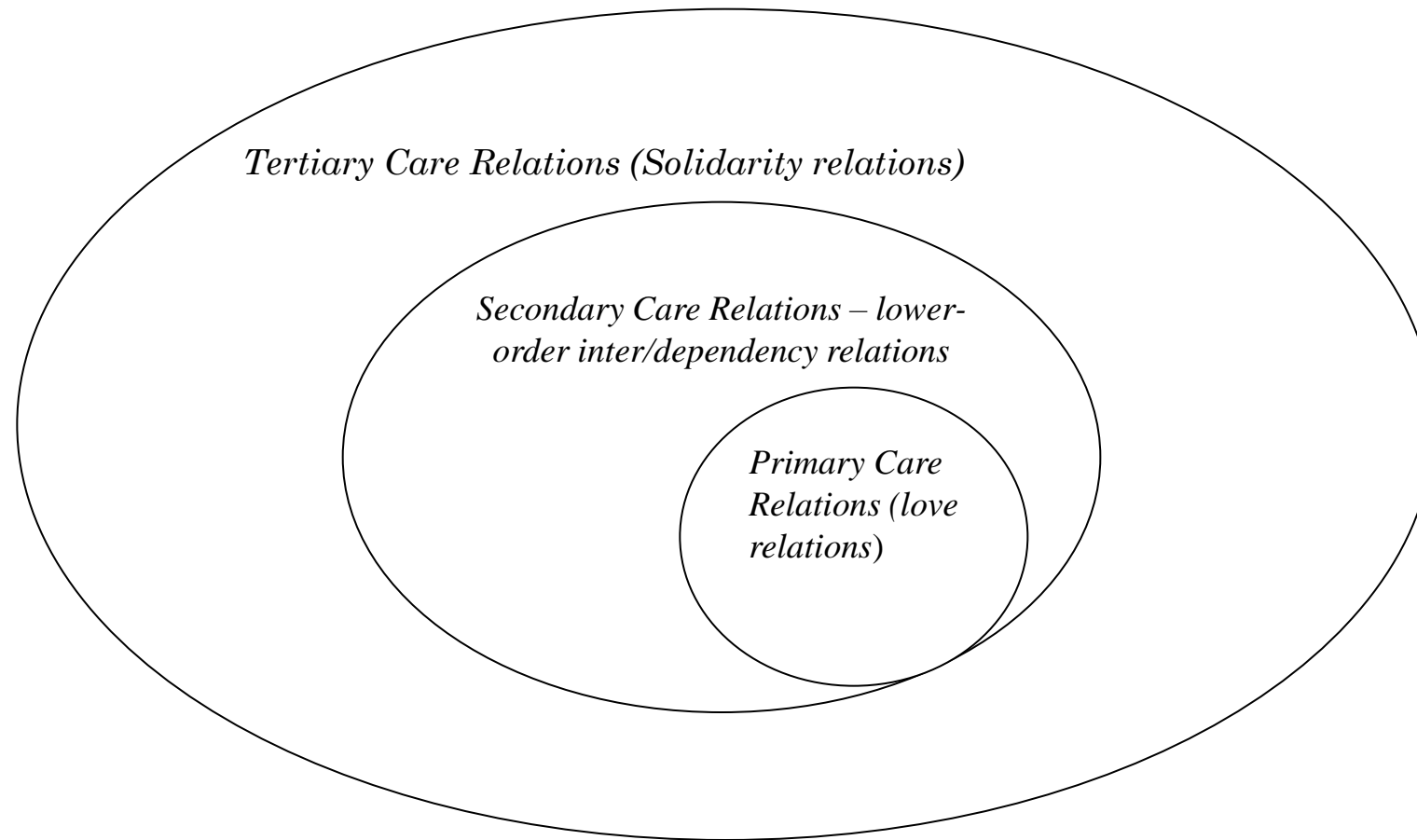
CARE

- Affective care relations are those human relations that produce, reproduce and repair the world relationally so that humans and all other species can live in it as well as possible
- Being deprived of care is a relational injustice, as is the non-recognition of care work for those do the caring

RELATIONAL LIFE

- Humans co-create each other relationally (for better or worse) as they are fundamentally sociable beings
 - The selves we become ‘*can only exist in definite relationships to other selves*’ (Mead, G. H. 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*)
 - To become and remain a person with a strong sense of one’s own value and self worth, **one needs care**, not just intimate care, but also community care, professional care, and care in the form of political and economic solidarity:
 - **Love**, intimate primary care, **secondary care** from neighbours, colleagues and friends, **and tertiary** or political care, in the form of **solidarity** are vital for human well being
 - As care, in all its forms, is vital for human survival & flourishing, **being deprived of Care is a Relational Injustice**. It denies people the nurture they need to live well. The non-recognition of caring work is also a relational-related injustice

THE HUMAN CONDITION IS EMBEDDED IN AFFECTIVE CARE RELATIONS*, BOTH POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY



CARE IS FOUNDATIONAL TO SUSTAINING LIFE

- Care labouring, in its primary (**love labouring**),
- Secondary (**professional and community caring**)
- Tertiary (political and economic expressions of **solidarity**) forms
 - are foundational for the production of human sociability, and the development of political trust
- It is through good care, nurturing, that humans are produced and reproduced in their humanness.
- In ecological terms, all species and plants need care to flourish

AFFECTIVE RELATIONS – OPERATE ALONG A CONTINUUM FROM PROFOUND LOVE AND CARE TO NEGLECT AND ABUSE

- **Primary care relations are love relations:** These refer to relations of high interdependency where there is greatest attachment, intimacy and responsibility over time. Love labouring is the work undertaken to create, maintain and enhance primary care relations – it is **non-substitutable and inalienable**
- **Secondary care relations** are lower order inter/dependency relations: While they involve care responsibilities and attachments, they do not carry the same depth of moral obligation in terms of meeting dependency needs, especially long-term dependency needs.
- **Tertiary care relations** refer to relations of solidarity and do not involve intimacy: Solidarity, in its non-calculative form, is the social and political expression of love.

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KEY PREMISE – ONTOLOGICAL MYTH OF INDEPENDENCE

- As sociable beings, humans co-create each other relationally
- As relatings inevitability create **interdependencies**, and, at times, **dependencies**, care is a necessity, not an optional extra for human survival.
- Affective Care Relations, constitutes **a distinct structural system** of social relations in sociological terms: they are not social derivatives, subordinate to economic, political, or cultural relations
 - They ‘make people up’ constitute people mentally, emotionally, physically, & socially
 - **Relational Justice** means recognising the central the role of affective care relations, and the related dependency and interdependency of the human condition

Key Claims re Affective Care Relations

- They are **materially produced** and reproduced in bodies, hands, heart and minds (love, care and solidarity involve work, both pleasurable and burdensome)
- They exercise a **central structural role in people's relational care life** similar to the role economic relations exercise in material life
- They **integrate a concept of dependency and interdependency** into our understanding of personal, legal, social, political and economic life
- **Because women are the default (paid and unpaid) care workers of humanity, silencing affective relations is a way of silencing women, AND those with high dependency needs at any given time**
- Current theories of justice (and human rights) need to be revised to take account of the centrality of care relations

CARE CRITIQUES OF DOMINANT ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS (CONCEPTION OF THE PERSON) IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

- The concept of the person underpinning dominant social scientific thinking is based on at least four key premises about the human condition:
 - (a) Cartesian Rationalism - **rational** view of the person (*homo sapiens*) Ignores *homo curans* (Tronto, 2013)
 - (b) the **autonomous view** of the person as an ideal state (denial of the vulnerability of the embodied human subject)
 - (c) the person is presumed to be **non-relational in making decisions** - assumes that social actions are driven primarily by self-referential interests (power, status, money) rather than other-centred interests
 - (d) the citizen that counts is a **public adult citizen in theories of justice**, especially the citizen who can enter into contract, especially *homo economicus* (Tronto, 1993, 2017). **Most do not address the rights of those who cannot name or claim their rights**, e.g. children, the infirm, some intellectually disabled persons

*Systems where
Inequality can be generated*

- Economic system
- Cultural system
- Political system
- Affective system

*Dimensions of Inequality:
where it is manifested*

Resource inequalities
income and wealth (social class)

Respect and Recognition inequalities
identity –related: race, colour, sexuality, disability, age, etc

Representation inequalities
Lack of power and parity of representation

Relational inequalities –
inequalities in receiving and doing love, care and solidarity

THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF INJUSTICE – GENERATIVE SITES OF INJUSTICE VARY ACROSS SOCIAL GROUPS

4 KEY SYSTEMS WHERE EQUALITY/INEQUALITY IS GENERATED MAPPED WITH 4 KEY DIMENSIONS OF EQUALITY/INEQUALITY SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM *EQUALITY: FROM THEORY TO ACTION* (2004)

<i>Systems of In/equality</i>	Re/distribution (Resources)	<u><i>Dimensions of</i></u> Respect/ Recognition (identities/difference)	<u><i>In/equality</i></u> Representation (parity in power and participation)	Relational Justice Affective equality = A. equality in the doing & B. receiving of Love, Care and Solidarity
Economic System	Xx Social Class (working class, poor)	X	X	X
Political System	X	X	Xx Children/ Intellectually disabled/Very ill	X
Cultural System	X	Xx Deaf (Sign users)/ Ethnic minorities; Gender, Black, LGBTI/	X	X
Affective System	X		X	Xx A. Women, girls, carers B. Incarcerated, Refugees,
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Why Affective Relations matter for promoting social justice

- All forms of inequality are interrelated: *inequalities in economic, political, and cultural relations undermine the capacities and resources to do love, care and solidarity work and vice versa (e.g. Maggie Feeley Learning Care Lessons, 2014)*
- Those who do primary **non-substitutable love labouring** work (mothers and other carers especially) are excluded from political (and academic) framing – denied parity of political and academic representation.
 - They literally have no time, and often no resources, to **claim their rights, and neither do those who are highly dependent, including children**
 - *The inalienability, urgency and immanence of love and care labouring limits the ability of lovers / carers, and those who are highly care-dependent physically and mentally, to take care and love issues into the public domain*

The neglect of affective equality is a political issue

- Dominant theories of justice are about regulating contractual relations between strangers
- Net outcome is that injustices arising from and within caring, nurturing and love labouring are generally disrespected- people are treated as individuals, not **individuals-in-relation** (e.g. family unification issues for refugees, incarcerated people)
- *Much of care work is treated as a political derivative, or incidental work (including social work) , AND those who need care, especially those who are highly dependent at a given time, are peripheralised in the debates about social justice*
- *The abjection of private intimate caring spills over into the abjection of public care, reflected in the lack of investment in public care-related services*

Why is Care treated as Abject?

- Defining Care work as low-grade work is not new, nor is it unique to capitalism or even contemporary liberalism
 - Care work was made abject historically by the deep cultural assumption that it is **not citizenship-defining labour**; it is not the kind of work that those who are fully human, (part of Society rather than Nature), undertake
 - False binary in Western thought, between **Society (thinking persons)** and **Nature (doing persons)** provided a justification for exploiting care Natural work (for women)
- Societies where production is oriented **to exchange (capitalism)** rather than use or provisioning, also develop a profound disregard for **care as a use value**
- Unpaid Carers and professional workers doing caring (including social workers) experience the abjection of care

Liberalism's Neglect of Care as a matter of social justice and human rights

- Within political liberalism, care and love were regarded as private ethical matters- something that was done naturally (by women and subordinate people) and did not require mind work (not *res cogitans*).
- **The community and public dimensions of care work, including work in care-related services like social work, were (and still are in some societies) seen as incidental**, hence provided by charities; many care-based public services, such as health, care of vulnerable dependent elderly, and children, are **currently being returned from the public to the private sector (for profit)**

Cultural logics and morality of neoliberal capitalism are antithetical to care (*Care and Capitalism* Lynch 2022)

- *Capitalist ethic of time* is speed-driven, linear and measurable— one is required to produce more and more in less and less time; time for care is not factored into capitalism's logic
 - Care time is fluid, relational and cyclical; it does not have clear boundaries, and in its voluntary dimensions it is uncommodifiable
- *Capitalism validates ambition and competition as virtues*, endorsing forms of entrepreneurial individualism and self- responsibilisation that are highly self-referential
- Neoliberalism is focused on *creating privatised citizens* who manage their own 'risks'. Focus on individual responsibility for failure and 'owning' success — Those who 'fail' are blamed

Neoliberal capitalist ethics undermine care

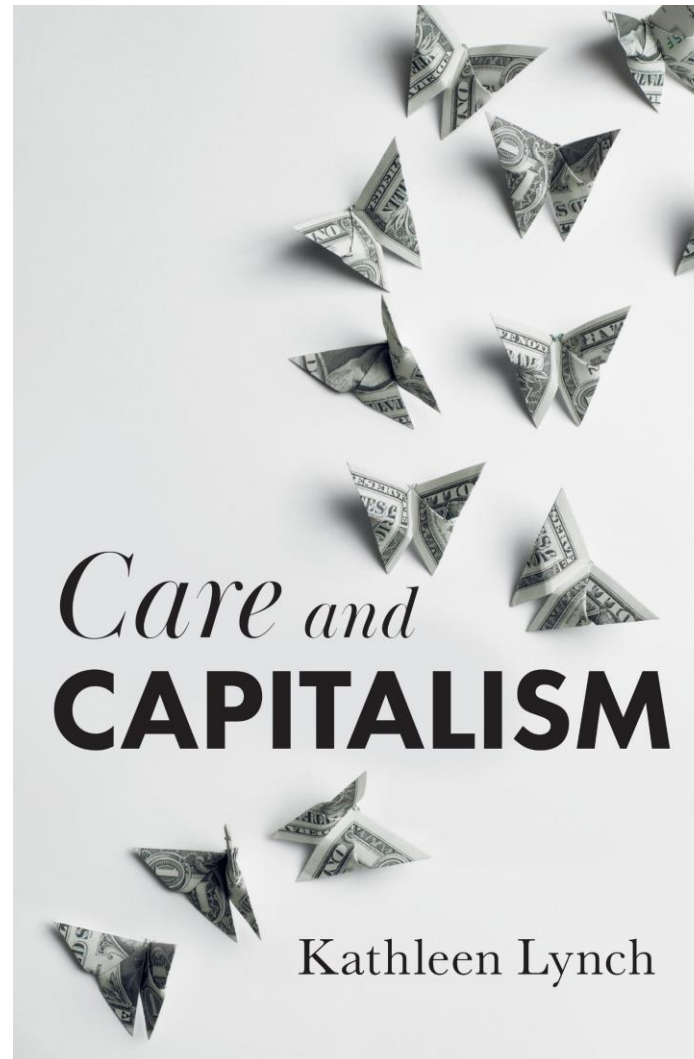
- Neoliberal ethics encourage **an actuarial approach and transactional approach** to human relations- risk/ gain focus
- Neoliberalism **promotes self responsibilisation**, providing a moral rationale for disinterest in needy 'Others'.
- All of the above generate a deep **carelessness**, both collective and individual, to the suffering of much of humanity, other non-human species
- Political 'coldness' is no longer just the preserve of the bourgeoisie (as Adorno had suggested); **coldness and carelessness are universalised and morally sanctified**- An actuarial spirit of calculation is normalized

Why Affective relations matter for politics and social change

- Care is **not just a mode of action**, it is also a **disposition** in action – it encompasses the way we relate to each other personally and collectively and how we relate to all living creatures and the environment
 - *Care is also a way of relating ethically* through attentiveness, responsiveness, informed other-centredness – This is not to deny that care relations are open to abuse (they have a dark side) especially when embedded in unequal power relations
 - However, in an age governed by neoliberal capitalist values, care (nurturing) dispositions and institutions are seriously under threat as relations are governed by the principles of personal gain and profitability
 - *Neo-liberalism does not just attempt to explain how the world is, it also prescribes how it should be: it is both a normative (moral) and analytical (explanatory) capitalist framework that undermines the ethic of care*

Research on Care, Love and Solidarity Work

- A series of studies of family caring, and institutional caring for *Affective Equality: love, care and injustice* (2009) <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9780230212497>
- A series of interviews with Senior Managers re the impact of neoliberalism on work and its relationship to caring (2012, 2015) *New Managerialism in Education: Commercialisation, Carelessness and Gender*. <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9780230275119>
- Studies of care among workers in higher education (all occupations) for Irish Research Council (IRC) *Equality in Working, Learning and Caring* study 2014-2017. papers: Lynch, K. et al. (2020) The care ceiling in higher education, *Irish Educational Studies*, 39:2, 157-174; Ivancheva, Lynch and Keating 2019. Precarity, Gender and Care in the Neoliberal Academy. *Gender, Work & Organization* 26: 448–462.
- Studies of Solidarity organisations for EU Horizons 2020 project, SOLIDUS (five Irish case studies) Lynch, K. and Kalaitzake, M. 2018. Affective and calculative solidarity: The impact of individualism and neoliberal capitalism. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 17 (3): 343–58.
- Lynch, K. 2022 *Care and Capitalism: Why Affective Equality Matters for Social Justice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lynch, K. 2023 *Care and Covid 19: Lessons for Liberals and Neoliberals*. *Child & Family Social Work*, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/share/ZBFIEXUMAZ7SAS6UNWXI?target=10.1111/cfs.13119>



Care and Capitalism: Why affective equality matters for social justice (2022)

Introduction

1 Care and Capitalism: Matters of Social Justice and Resistance

Part I Care Matters Inside and Outside Capitalism

2 Care as Abject: Capitalism, Masculinity, Bureaucracy, Class and Race

3 Making Love: Love Labour as Distinctive and Non-Commodifiable

4 Time to Care

Part II Challenges

5 Liberalism, Care and Neoliberalism

6 Individualism and Capitalism: From Personalized Salvation to Human Capitals

7 Care-Harming Ideologies of Capitalism: Competition, Measurement and Meritocratic Myths

Part III Violence – the Nemesis of Care

8 The Violation of Non-Human Animals

9 Violence and Capitalism

Part IV Conclusions

10 Resisting Intellectually, Politically, Culturally and Educationally

Postscript: Care Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic