



From socially just care to socially just distributed ecosystems of care

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Abstract

Actions or interventions intended to redress systemic injustice necessitate centring the values of equity and care. We have pursued work on the complex interrelation of these two important concepts and how they manifest in practice in education, for institutions, for networks and communities, and for people. This article builds on our work on ‘socially just care’, a term we coined while developing our Equity/Care Matrix (Bali and Zamora, 2022). This paper extends that work using a duoautoethnography, building upon our personal experiences. We elaborate and extend the work into a more complex picture: in order to have impact, socially just care must be enacted in a Socially Just Distributed Care ecosystem. This paper articulates our model and uses examples from our duoautoethnography to demonstrate a wide variety of multi-country contexts within education where equity and care work are enacted and theorised. We will analyse the places where some work falls short of our ideals, highlight contexts that give us hope, and share our aspirations for socially just distributed ecosystems of care.

Keywords: social justice; care; pedagogy of care; ecosystems; autoethnography.

Introduction

‘Growing the world we want is like the **slow tending** of a garden, **transforming the plants by fostering relationships**, trust, skills, community accountability, and healing’: Ruha Benjamin (2022, p.54) (emphasis ours).

Actions or interventions intended to redress systemic injustice necessitate centering the values of equity and care. We have thought deeply about the interrelation of these two important concepts and how they manifest in practice: for education, institutions, networks, communities, and people.

This article builds on work we’ve been developing and practising in the field of higher education for years: equity work that does not integrate care is set up to fail, and any care work that does not account for social justice, is not necessarily going to lead to good. And yet, how can equity and care work together, given how complex each of them is on its own? We propose that we should strive towards ‘socially just care’ (SJC), which incorporates care and justice in all their complexity and multidimensionality.

This paper extends our Equity/Care Matrix (Bali and Zamora, 2022) by showing the need to cultivate cultures that recognise, value, and reward care and equity work for all, and consider ‘socially just care’ (SJC) everyone’s responsibility.

Using duoautoethnography allowed us to build upon our personal experiences as educators, parents, adult children of elderly parents, community builders in public and private spaces, supporters of other educators, connectors, and mentors.

We conclude that in order to have the impact we hope for, SJC often needs to work in a Socially Just Distributed Care (SJDC) ecosystem. We need to look at how certain additional factors affect it: public versus private contexts, authenticity versus performativity (Ahmed, 2012), theory/verbalism versus action (Freire, 1970), and the kind of ecosystems surrounding socially just care that individuals are enacting in different contexts.

Literature review

How can equity and care work together, given how complex each is on its own? We propose that we should strive towards ‘socially just care’, which recognises that oppression is multidimensional and multilayered and therefore social justice needs to be multidimensional and multilayered (Fraser, 2005; Gorski and Ponthini, 2013; Collins 2002, cited Costanza-Chock, 2018), that care is complex and deeply needed, but also potentially harmful in multiple ways, and that ‘justice needs care because justice requires the empathy of care in order to generate its principles’ (Okin 1990, cited White and Tronto, 2004, p.427). Care can be harmful, and even well-intentioned care can reduce agency (Eales and Peers, 2020); and people who are carers can be exploited and require care themselves (White and Tronto, 2004; Noddings, 2012). Care can also be inauthentic or exacerbate power differences in relationships involving care: a teacher’s care for their students may be instrumental, transactional, patriarchal, or neoliberal in nature (hooks, 2004; Noddings, 2012; Dowie-Chin and Schroeder, 2020).

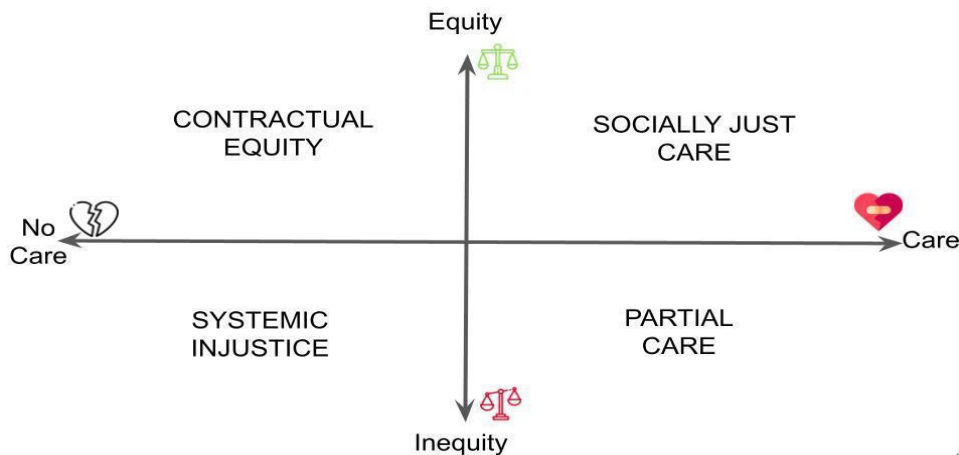
We need to cultivate ecosystems and cultures that recognise, value, support, and reward care and equity work for all, and consider ‘socially just care’ everyone’s responsibility. In education, ecosystems need to be addressed because ‘teachers who care, who serve their students, are usually at odds with the environments wherein we teach’ (hooks, 2004, p.91).

If we are to offer care to those who are marginalised, we need to ensure there is ‘parity of participation’ (Fraser, 2005), that they are participating fully and on their own terms – which also entails co-developing ecosystems to adjust for their needs, rather than inviting them to ready-made spaces not made with them in mind: ‘we would prefer to advise: do unto others as they would have done unto them’ (Noddings, 2012, p.52). The parallel in education is to involve (marginalised) learners in decisions of how they wish to be cared for and included.

The Equity/Care matrix (Bali and Zamora, 2022) in Figure 1 shows two dimensions: the x-axis represents no care and care. The y-axis represents no justice and justice. When we have equity without care, we call this quadrant ‘contractual equity’, because it becomes a checkbox exercise, ‘performative’ (Ahmed, 2012), and is ineffective, because the spirit of justice is not realised. Care without equity is what we call ‘partial care’ – i.e., some but not all people

receive, and some but not all people give, care. It is also partial because it is biased towards certain groups noticed by caregivers. Our ideal quadrant is where equity and care happen together and we call this socially just care (SJC), where everyone gives and receives care, and recipients of care have agency over decisions related to their own care. In this paper, we introduce Socially Just [Distributed] Care (SJDC), placing 'distributed' between square brackets because we have realised that in practice, distributing the care and building an ecosystem is needed in order for SJC to come to fruition.

Figure 1. Equity/Care matrix (Bali and Zamora, 2022).



Methodology

Autoethnography is a participatory research methodology that 'seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience' (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011). Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE) (of which a duoautoethnography is a special kind involving two collaborators) builds on and contrasts the experiences of multiple researchers.

We conducted this process digitally and iteratively rather than linearly, over several months, contributing our personal reflections/narratives in Zoom meetings, text messages, Whatsapp voicenotes, and a shared Google doc. We then discussed the work, revisited, analysed, and related our observations to the literature (Geist-Martin, et al., 2010), building a new model from our experiences.

Autoethnographic research ‘challenges the hegemony of objectivity or the artificial distancing of self from one’s research subjects’ (Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2013, p.18). We believe that ‘all understanding is already interpretation’ and therefore we as researchers and interpreters are ‘always already part of what is being interpreted’ (Gadamer 2001, cited Nixon, 2012, p.33). Working together, we discuss and become more conscious of our understanding of our own selves, because ‘all understanding necessarily involves an element of self-understanding’ (Gadamer 2001, cited Nixon, 2012, p.34). This involves mirroring for each other and co-interpreting in ways that we would likely not have arrived at individually.

Our duoauthoethnography focuses on examples where equity and care work are enacted.

We encourage you to consider how our observations translate in your own context. Which actions are familiar for you personally or for others you have observed? Which moves matter in aspiring to socially just care? We analyse the circumstances wherein some work falls short of our ideals, highlight contexts that give us hope, and share our aspirations for socially just distributed ecosystems of care.

Positionality statement

I, Maha, am an educational developer at The American University in Cairo in Egypt – my main role is to support other educators in their teaching, and I also teach an undergraduate course.

I, Mia, am a Professor of Literature and Writing at Kean University, USA, where I am a Director of the MA in Writing Studies program.

Beside our institutional roles, we also co-facilitate an online learning community called Equity Unbound which supports and mentors this global community of educators, most of whom are concerned with issues of equity and care, many of whom are interested in digital pedagogy. Additionally, we both have care responsibilities as mothers and children of elderly parents. More importantly, we are best friends who connect over WhatsApp texts and voice notes regularly. We have established some rhythms and regularity for communicating. We write together and co-organise events, meeting on Zoom, almost weekly. As close friends, we don’t

just meet and work. We also share our days, frustrations at work, in parenting, and more. We often notice connections between everyday experiences and our scholarly concerns. We tie our thinking with existing literature, a podcast, or conversation we had with other educators. Sometimes we find that what we are trying to analyse is new, and we build a new model. This is what we're sharing here.

Socially just distributed care in practice: duoautoethnography cases

We share below a selection of cases that helped us form the models for SJDC in Table 1.

The ally

Sometimes care is more profound at the small-scale level, where key relationships – built on kindness, trust and respect – become the mutual ‘seeding ground’ for reassurance and fortitude. As allies and trusted confidants, we shore up in each other the internal strength needed to move forward in hard times. A key relationship can provide someone the necessary energy and strength to keep contributing positively and continue to work for change that matters in the world. This form of care is often invisible, but it is always action oriented. I, Mia, am thinking now of the kind of trust that develops between mentor and former student, later blossoming into friendship. An example is my own relationship with my former student, a gifted Palestinian poet and teacher, who now is simply my friend. I am called to devote my attention to her when I can. Since the trauma of 7 October 2023, and beyond, we hold vigil for each other's grief. We share both our concerns for this world and the fear of our own shortcomings in meeting the call to justice. The mere act of listening intently provides new foundations for moving forward when the well of hope is drained. The point is, one can do ‘work’ in sustaining people by listening, by holding space for someone else to express their deepest fears and concerns about justice. In this way, one can offer someone else a dose of faith in humankind, which translates into energy for those who will move forward with grace.

When I, Maha, heard Mia talk about her relationship with her former-student-now-friend, about how this was ‘not enough’ in the context of the war, I reminded her of the importance of this for that one person she was supporting. We ended up talking about safety for the ally and the person you're helping, and the difference between supporting a Palestinian in the US

higher education context versus the Egyptian context where everyone was by default on the 'same side'. We also talked about how the differences in our contexts made it difficult for us as Equity Unbound to take public action in an international context. However, not being able to support publicly did not mean that private support was meaningless.

'Care as private personal praxis', through allyship, is rooted in intimate interrelationality and trust – it is care that requires our personal investment and sacred time. The authenticity of that support becomes refuge and sanctuary for giver and receiver, it is reciprocal (see Noddings, 2012), and it often becomes critical to internal transformation – moving one from a struggle to cope into a capacity for hope in hard times. Although it is 'partial' in the sense that not everyone receives and gives it, it is necessarily so, yet justice is central to it when the marginalised cannot safely receive support in more public ways because of hostile ecosystems.

Care as pragmatist

Sometimes care must be a thoughtful 'calculation' of the constraints that one must work within. This is not always straightforward, and often we must enact forms of care from certain uneasy realities on the ground. For example, there are kind and caring middle-managers who are working towards more equitable solutions within the domain of their responsibility, but they are mired in the fact of regulations, budgetary constraint, hierarchies of power, and processes that are rigid with specific deadlines. I, Maha, often notice people in middle management trying to solve a big problem with what I consider a 'band-aid' solution, such as addressing faculty wellbeing issues by offering monthly wellbeing workshops for faculty, rather than addressing the root causes of the problem; sometimes focusing on what can be done quickly rather than what can have longer term impact, yet may be harder to get upper-admin approval for. I was complaining that such people might be 'caring' managers, yet the ceiling of their ambition was lower than mine. But then in conversation with Mia, we realised that being in a manager position means being forced to face the limits of one's own power to make change that matters, and managers are working within constraints that perhaps not everyone sees.

I, Mia, have come up against this truth as a programme director, and I have chosen to navigate such constraints with nimble and strategic calculations along with a necessary dose of realism. Even idealists, when put in a management position, may have to take on the role of the pragmatic caring manager, must pick and choose the ‘battles’ that can be won. This pragmatic assessment of intentional care is public and authentic, but it is admittedly limited. Ultimately, pragmatic care is not as ambitious as other forms of care, but it achieves small, imperceptible gains that are not apprehensible in the big picture, or long term, but make a difference in the moment. We suggest that managers are constrained in their ambitions by environments that are not conducive to larger socially just care.

Collective and distributed care: nurturing authentic idealism in students

One semester, I (Maha) had a class with four students who were visually impaired. The dean said we could keep the course to a lower enrollment number so I could focus with them, since I didn’t have a Teaching Assistant. When sharing this with Mia, we realised that the dean’s decision to keep numbers small created an ecosystem more fertile for socially just distributed care. I was able to ensure all activities had a combination of sighted and visually impaired persons (VIPs), and I gave every student a responsibility of care: sighted students to support VIPs in small group activities with visuals, VIPs to support sighted students in making sure their assignments were accessible. Distributed care became collective, not just centered on the teacher. At first it was perhaps inauthentic, students doing what they were asked. Later, they internalised this responsibility and did it spontaneously. Sighted students remembered to create alternative text, and to verbalise any visuals we use in class without prompting. Narrating what was happening in my class throughout the semester with Mia helped me apprehend and articulate what was happening, and how I could actually transform class towards a model for socially just distributed care.

The need for an accessibility ecosystem

In my (Maha’s) practice as an educational developer, occasionally I am asked to support educators to figure out how to accommodate students with disabilities. This kind of work is sometimes straightforward, but sometimes the accessibility office sends me frustrated faculty

who are overwhelmed with being assigned courses they had not planned to teach, with no time to design/plan, and surprised they must also accommodate disabilities without preparation. They don't even want to fulfil the minimum required by law ('contractual equity' as per accommodation letters).

Over several weeks, I shared the story of one such faculty member. They were initially frustrated and resistant to any change in order to accommodate the student. This attitude also frustrated the student and the accessibility support. However, once we formed a team with different expertise and perspectives from the accessibility office, an educational developer (me), and a student accessibility intern, we were able to imagine solutions. We approached this from a 'calling in' not a 'calling out' (Ross, 2021) strategy: to believe that the person wanted, but did not know how, to help, rather than refused to. Frustration was alleviated once the faculty member saw a supportive ecosystem that helped them imagine ways to support students initially out of their reach. Here, this ecosystem needed not just socially just distributed care, but distributed care to include diverse expertise. If we make such socially just distributed care available, by default, socially just care would occur more smoothly. Institutions that offer scholarships to learners with disabilities but then do not provide the infrastructures of a socially just distributed care ecosystem are enacting 'contractual equity' or 'care as optics', giving the appearance of supporting disabilities without the system needed to deliver it.

Equity Unbound as public idealism

Equity Unbound began as an equity-oriented, open, intercultural, connected learning curriculum for our own students (Zamora et al., 2021). Since its founding, it has developed beyond that original context into a networked online community supporting educators and learners everywhere. We center emergence and co-creation in order to be responsive to the needs and values of our community of educators and learners worldwide, which isn't (yet) offered within institutions.

During the pandemic, we embodied socially just care as we created spaces for continuity with care. Educators worldwide shared community-building activities openly for others to use as a

resource (distributing this care work equitably) and brought people together to explore ways to dismantle colonialist, racist practices in academia at the time of the global racial reckoning following the murder of George Floyd.

Another example of public idealism is Equity Unbound's MYFest. This three-month online learning festival and choose-your-own-learning-journey for recharge and renewal was designed as an alternative to the typical academic conference. We were mindful of the global inequity of in-person events and the Zoom fatigue of three-day online events, and designed for a couple of sessions each day (never overlapping) with accessibility for multiple time zones. MYFest has evolved into a brave space where we sometimes open conversations that might be more difficult to pursue within our institutions (for example, ungrading or trauma-informed pedagogy). As a further example, some educators in the US context are currently at risk when speaking about their EDI work. But with Equity Unbound, they can open up their work to thoughtful conversation and feedback (under pseudonyms in some cases, or without the weight of institutional affiliation). Frequent participants took on organiser roles and we distributed the work amongst ourselves so none of us carries the weight of all the affective labor.

We reflected on how this approach allows us to transcend our limited localised forms of 'pragmatic care', now supplemented by our Equity Unbound work: pragmatic care bypassed using networked justice-oriented community building. We are able to take timely action by remaining attuned to our community's needs and co-designing with them. As such, we are working within what Benjamin (2024, p.88) calls 'freedom dreaming'. We are 'imagining and materialising justice by combining the fight for social, political, and economic self-determination with the vital work of freedom dreaming', initiating 'a radical tradition of people who have no interest in being "included" inside a 'burning house'; rather we try 'sounding the alarm about the treacherous blaze while, at the same time, laying down the bricks for more habitable social structures' (Benjamin, 2024, p.87).

Development of a model: socially just distributed ecosystems of care

When social justice is realised and embodied in a caring manner by participants in a social space, the burden of care can be transformed. In a dynamic distribution of socially just care, pathways towards self-actualisation open for each individual within the collective. Care work that has been experienced as burdensome or even harmful (because it is rooted in the pitfalls of burn out and invisible labour) might instead be reconfigured as a transformative source for new energy and even joy; everyone's presence is a critical contribution and a resource for learning. Through SJDC we celebrate care that enables 'transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries' (hooks, 1994, p.12). It is that movement which leads to the overall practice of freedom.

Why distributed?

The murmuration of starlings is an ideal metaphor for SJDC. Starlings navigate the skies with startling ease, just by paying attention to each other. Regardless of the size of their murmuration, hundreds or thousands of birds seem to be connected to the same network. The magic here is in the birds' ability to manage uncertainty while also maintaining consensus. Scientists believe murmurations are similar to other systems, which are 'on the edge,' which means they're ready to be completely transformed in an instant. Starlings do not all follow one leader, they only pay attention to their seven neighbours and adjust their movement according to the behaviour of just those seven.

The number seven always struck me (Maha) because there is a saying by prophet Muhammad about how each of us is responsible for our seventh neighbour. As in, we are responsible for all neighbours up until the seventh one. This is almost identical to the murmuration of starlings, but how does it or can it look in practice, in a non-hierarchical way in a professional or social context? Can it work in large classrooms where students work in pods with five-six others? Can it work in departments? In families?

Can the earlier accessibility case have pre-planned, continual equitably distributed care within an ecosystem?

Tronto (2015) differentiates between 'caring with' rather than just 'caring about' (from a distance) or 'caring for' (paternalistic, sort of) and transitioning to 'caring with' where it is interrelational and reciprocal and agentic care. Therefore, ecosystems of SJDC need to fully involve all the carers and care-receivers playing various roles within the community. How do we transfer this 'caring with' to SJDC, and to the spheres of private vs public?

Emergent energy in community

How can we care for each other, while also building communities that adjust and bend to accommodate, fully incorporating many different individuals like the murmuration phenomenon? If our work thus far has considered the challenges (and failures) in reconciling the just aspirations of equity with the specificities of individualised forms of care, then the principle of 'SJDC' is our hope. It is the attribute of both responsiveness and spontaneity exhibited in the murmuration of birds, and the ability to manage uncertainty while also maintaining consensus that can serve as a guiding light when seeking equitable communities of care in a challenging world of difference. This is what our Equity Unbound aspires to be.

Why ecosystems?

Multiplex interconnected ties

A community that thrives is one in which all individuals are truly integrated, because everyone is held to the network by multiple and differing relationships. Multiplex (multidimensional and complex) interconnected ties, unbound to the authority of 'star figures', ensures a deeper individual commitment and a more kindred sense of self-determined connection for each individual who is a unique member of the network. Power is dispersed, agency is rooted in trust, and collective decision-making and action support the community's ability to adjust to a challenging environment.

It is painfully evident how far we are from such a vision for community in our institutions. Many speak of failed leaders and the absence of moral courage when accounting for the collapse of societal systems that ensure safety and solutions for everyone. Perhaps possibilities lie in SJDC.

Ecosystems of care

We need to work in a SJDC ecosystem. Combinations of factors, coupled with individuals taking more idealistic versus more realistic approaches in various contexts, can change the shape of socially just care work and the extent to which we fulfill what we intend to do. An individual may switch between modes or personas according to ecosystems and situations.

Table 1 represents the various permutations of actions of individuals: public/private contexts, authenticity/performativity (Ahmed, 2012), theory/verbalism vs. action vs. praxis/reflective practice (Freire, 1970), and the kind of ecosystems surrounding the socially just care individuals are enacting in different contexts.

Ecosystems that are heavily neoliberal which focus on measurement and profit, where people within the ecosystem don't have a lot of critical consciousness, will likely resort to inauthentic forms of care – care as optics or care as theory. They may offer 'contractual equity' which pays lip service and signals virtue but does not provide real impact. In ecosystems that do not support socially just care, an 'authentic realist' would likely take on pragmatic care in their public approach, aiming to achieve a little bit of what they perceive is possible (within constraints set by institutions and those above them in hierarchy). They recognise the risks of going further and focus their energy on getting results that are feasible rather than ideal. Dissimilarly, an 'authentic idealist' might only remain safe in private types of care – a calculation made in order to preserve their energy and those they care for, while striving towards their idealist goals, rather than settling for pragmatic ones. The hope of the 'private idealist' is that they might quietly find more idealists, eventually form allyships, making it safer to offer more collectivist, public, idealist work. The 'public idealist' may be the vocal person who speaks alone without garnering support, and in the process, may harm themselves. However, they may also be taking risks that make them known to others who privately share similar ideals, and this may help build allyships as well. In the age of social media, sometimes a 'public idealist' works outside the confines of their own institution – more publicly, but paradoxically, more safely (Bali, 2022). This positionality can actually help form deeper allyship at the institutional level. Our Equity Unbound work has helped us achieve this delicate balance between public vs. private work while navigating idealism with bouts of necessary pragmatism in our localised contexts.

One may move from private idealism to collective private idealism, evolving to more public idealism – eventually progressing in an arc towards socially just care (SJC). Our capacity to offer and experience socially just care interdependently with others and with the systems within which we operate can involve small actions that over time lead to shifts in the ecosystems, though these shifts are neither guaranteed nor linear. Those who offer authentic private socially just care are nourished by something different from extrinsic reward – they recognise that ‘[s]erving students well is an act of critical resistance. It is political’, and as such ‘will not yield the normal rewards provided when we are simply perpetuating the status quo. The lack of rewards may be less disappointing than rejection by the very students we have served’ (hooks, 2004, p.90). Collectivism is so important here to avoid burn out, since carers ‘need the support of a caring community to sustain them’ (Noddings, 2012, p.54).

Discussion

‘When the fruit of any tree is diseased, or the branches are unhealthy, we don’t heal the fruit or the branches; we must heal the roots. We must look at the health of the soil’ (Mogahed, 2022, p.32).

We recognise that the way higher education is structured does not provide fertile soil for an equitably caring ecosystem. Much equity work is contractual – check box exercises to measure what is visible (counting diversity workshops, counting learners with disabilities we accept) while actual care work goes unrewarded, unrecognised, inequitably distributed.

But what if systemic changes occurred in higher education that would distribute the affective labour more equitably: what if grading/assessment became supportive/collaborative rather than competitive? What if supportive community and pre-planned pathways were by default available from day one to all, not in case of emergencies, not requiring documentation? What if mentoring others was valued alongside research work, rather than being treated like a distraction from what is valued? What if all support services in universities were well-resourced and well-connected with the educators?

What if anyone who is teaching a class with multiple accommodations had more TAs to offer more distribution of care in the class? What if we had a culture of care within classrooms such that it is not only the teacher’s responsibility to make sure the class is inclusive and accommodating, but every student’s responsibility too? What if organisations that funded scholarships for student refugees also funded training for faculty and students to support people undergoing displacement and possible trauma due to conflict in their countries, and what if cultural awareness was part of that training?

Table 1. Unpacking idealism and authenticity in socially just care.

Name/ Example	Private/ Public	Idealist/ Realist	Authentic/ Performative	Action/ Theory/Talk	Possible Persona & Ecosystem
Care as public praxis	Public	Idealist	Authentic	Action & talk/theory	SJDC. Distributed, collective, caring community: this is idealist, authentic and public care work done within a collective of people who share similar values and who all contribute to the care for each other within each person’s preferences and needs. Grassroots community work founded on shared values outside formal institutions can be like this. This collective allyship empowers courage and creates an ecosystem to nourish socially just care.
Care as private personal praxis	Private /small-scale	Idealist	Authentic	Action & talk/theory	Ally/Listener. Care is intimate and directed towards individual support. The care offered lends hope for both those giving and those receiving because trust, authenticity, and idealism are shared. This is the caring teacher/mentor in a department/institution that does not reward this behaviour. The ecosystem likely does not support this behaviour to

					occur safely. May occur underground as affective labour, but as people get to know each other, they can become allies, give each other support and build towards collective work.
Care as theory/ Scholarly	Public	Idealist	Performative	Theory/talk	Scholar/Theorist. This is someone who may be deeply involved in the scholarship of social justice and/or care, may even take action to redress injustice on a governmental or institutional level, with a deep theoretical awareness of systemic issues. However, in their daily interactions with people with less power than themselves, they do not behave in a kind, caring manner.
Care as optics (contractual care)	Public	Realist	Performative	Theory/talk	Opportunist/Performative leader. Likely an administrator who realises that care is needed in this context and that people want to hear them acknowledge it. They may form a committee or hold sessions to offer care, but this is ‘contractual care’ and is performative. This person may then never apply what the committee recommends or the values advocated in the sessions they sponsored. But they may continue to talk about the importance of care.
Care as pragmatist	Public	Realist	Authentic	Action	Kind manager. Likely a mid-level manager who understands the value of care/justice but is also aware of institutional constraints to what is possible. They concern themselves with what is feasible within their circle of

					power and control, but not the ideal systemic solutions. They are authentic but limited in ambition. They may be better able to convince upper admin to do something because they choose something feasible. However, with low ambitions, their suggested solutions are not systemic solutions. The ecosystem likely does not support them, and to succeed in their position, they cannot go further.
Private pragmatist care	Private	Realist	Authentic	Action	Caregiver work. Like some people who are caregivers for children/elderly, where someone is authentic in doing the work but it is not their vocation, so they do it privately and pragmatically, but do not necessarily go beyond.

Conclusion

Benjamin suggests that ‘pragmatism and imagination, policy change and speculative vision need not be at odds’ (2024, p.87) and so perhaps the aspiration is for idealist socially just care work to have a long term radical vision while incorporating smaller, private, or pragmatic moves that help build stepping stones towards the larger vision, whether the radical imagination work happens within an institution or in parallel outside of it. The most important thing is to not lose sight of the ultimate goal of justice, and to be willing and open to intentionally adapting (brown, 2017) as the targets shift slightly within our contexts and throughout our lifetime. A lifelong commitment to justice involves a lifelong effort for community building so that our collective efforts support one another and help build and nurture ecosystems that lead to transformative change.

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