A Worldview of Care & a New Economics

Elizabeth Garlow & Anne-Marie Slaughter

This essay draws upon scientific insights around care and caregiving, alongside new economic proposals, to distill a worldview of care. This worldview proceeds from an abstraction of human nature and needs that is both individual and relational, departing from Maslow's hierarchy of needs by putting the need for belonging and connection with others on the same plane as self-actualization. In doing so, we reflect on the ways care is only narrowly valued in our status quo economy and current systems of measurement, and encourage a more holistic understanding of value and wealth, rooted in relational terms. We put forth some ideas for how policy-making processes could draw upon a worldview of care to support economic reforms.

Imagine a group of new parents sitting in a circle, feeding, soothing, and talking to their infants. Within our status quo economy, the only way to capture "value" from these activities is if each parent passes their child to another parent and charges for the services they provide. Some kind of "transaction" must occur. This example illustrates one of the many ways that market-based values and relational values diverge. It is drawn from the work of economist Tim Jackson, who argues that care and other sectors in which "time spent by people in the service of each other is the core value proposition" are chronically undervalued in an economy where "rising productivity is viewed as the engine of progress."[1]

When we look at those parents and their children, we see care as a service embedded in care as a relationship, a profound relationship, and the first one infants experience. To develop an economy and society that can properly uphold the value we assign to that relationship requires an ability to understand, appreciate, and, where appropriate, measure the value not just of goods and services, but of connection to other humans. We cannot capture the value of care with the economic measures that exist today.

This essay offers a conception of human nature and needs that encompasses individual and relational dimensions, leading to a richer conception of human nature and development. Care is at the core of that development, but its significance goes beyond whatever physical or emotional need it meets. That first experience of connection to other human beings then leads to broader experiences of care

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and connection shared across a lifespan. We argue that recognizing the essential nature of care and connection for our well-being underpins a relational paradigm that transforms how we measure value in our economy and society more broadly.

All around us, alarms are sounding on the devastating consequences of growing disconnection in our society, and the way it is bound up with an economics rooted in market fundamentalism. We draw on the findings of our colleagues about the science of caregiving, using their insights to flesh out a stylized mode of human nature, *sapiens integra*, that places equal weight on individual and relational needs.[2] We also describe and reflect on current economic proposals and experiments that offer an alternative to the status quo. These proposals display commonalities that anchor relationships of care between humans in a larger context of human and planetary connection. We work inductively to identify these strands and weave them together with scientific insights to generate a worldview of care.

We suggest that this worldview can undergird reforms needed to uphold healthy and fulfilling connections to past, present, and future generations of people, to other-than-human beings of all kinds, to our living planet, and perhaps even to a larger transcendental presence that many call the divine.[3]

In our current industrial-digital economy, which measures value in terms of the quantity, price, and consumption of goods and services, care is defined as a service. It *is* a service, in the sense that it is something one human being does for another, as opposed to a "good," which is an object that can be bought and sold. But this definition captures only the physical activities of care such as feeding, bathing, dressing, accompanying. It ignores or denies the emotional dimension that arises from a connection between two human beings. From this perspective, the essence of care is not a service but a relationship.[4] In fact, as our friend and colleague Hilary Cottam suggests, care is best understood as both a service *and* a relationship. [5]

The word "care" itself carries a strong emotional valence. "I care for you" generally means "I like or love you."[6] "I care about you" at least means friendship. "I will take care of you" suggests a relationship of affection and protection. This kind of relationship is common in families, whether biological or chosen, or among friends and community members who know and value one another, and typically doesn't include paid services. But even in the context of paid caregivers, when the carer and the care recipient have no prior emotional connection, for a service to be worthy of the word *care*, the carer must, at minimum, treat the person being cared for with consideration, respect, and concern for their well-being.[7]

The core of this relationship is a sustained connection to another human being. Other essays in this volume summarize the state of knowledge in neuroscience, psychology, evolutionary biology, and other disciplines about the precise nature of that relationship in different contexts. For children, it should ideally be a relationship that provides security, safety, protection, a buffer from stress, and a foundation for

trust.[8] In their essay, Elizabeth Fetterolf, Andrew Elder, Margaret Levi, and Ranak B. Trivedi explore the extent to which robots might substitute for human carers in caring for seniors, reflecting on the vital importance of "interactions and dyadic human relationships to patient well-being." Interestingly, they suggest that it may be the inevitable ups and downs of a human-to-human relationship – the "unpredictability, mistakes, and emotional risks taken by caregivers" – that cements the necessary emotional bond, as contrasted with the invariant programmed reactions of a robot.[9] We argue a similar dynamic could be present in long-term care, particularly in instances of caring for those with disabilities and chronic illness.

Somewhat paradoxically, however, the best care recognizes dependence while encouraging independence. According to Ashley J. Thomas, Christina M. Steele, Alison Gopnik, and Rebecca R. Saxe, "The goal in caregiving is not to pool individual capabilities but often to increase the capabilities of the cared-for."[10] To the extent possible, carers should enable autonomy, encouraging growth and development in children or any care recipients who can still expand their capabilities.[11] Physician Atul Gawande has described this autonomy as "the freedom . . . to be authors of our own lives."[12] A carer should still be able to provide an elderly person with what he calls their "best day possible," however they define it.[13]

Since human beings, as Maisha T. Winn and Nim Tottenham explain, are an "an altricial species, a species born without the ability to live independently," we are born with "an innate expectation and need for caregiving."[14] Traditional models of human development, however, assume a linear movement from dependence to independence and back to dependence over the course of human lives. That is physically accurate for most human beings, but clearly inadequate for well-being. Increasingly, with evidence surrounding deaths of despair, indices and policy efforts to measure and prioritize happiness, and the U.S. Surgeon General's report on a national epidemic of loneliness and isolation, it is reasonable to hypothesize an *ongoing* need for connection that can be just as strong as the need to separate, individuate, and lead independent lives.[15]

Over time, connections develop a relational identity – defining ourselves *in relation to* others – that exists alongside an individual identity. Our status as parent, child, sibling, spouse, friend, or community member is a critical part of our overall identity. Indeed, a core driver of the feminist movement was the desire of women to have an individual identity that was more than mother, daughter, sister, wife. At the same time, women have not wanted to give up those relational identities just because they now have more freedom to pursue individual desires and achievements. We want both.

A further dimension of the need for connection is the desire for belonging, the connection to a larger group or community. Sociologist Allison Pugh explores and catalogs different types of "connective labor."[16] After reviewing scores of studies linking loneliness and isolation to negative health effects, she concludes:

"Belongingness is crucial to human thriving . . . 'almost as compelling a need as food.'"[17] Psychologist Abraham Maslow recognized this need long ago in his famous "hierarchy of needs," in which "love and belongingness needs" sit above "safety needs" and below "esteem needs" as motivators of human behavior (Figure 1).[18]

Maslow's hierarchy places the need to connect and belong at a lower level than the need to self-actualize or reach our individual potential. Suppose instead we posit that these dual needs – to connect to others and to separate from them – are equally important, not only in early life, but throughout life; a partial account of fundamental human needs could look like Figure 2.

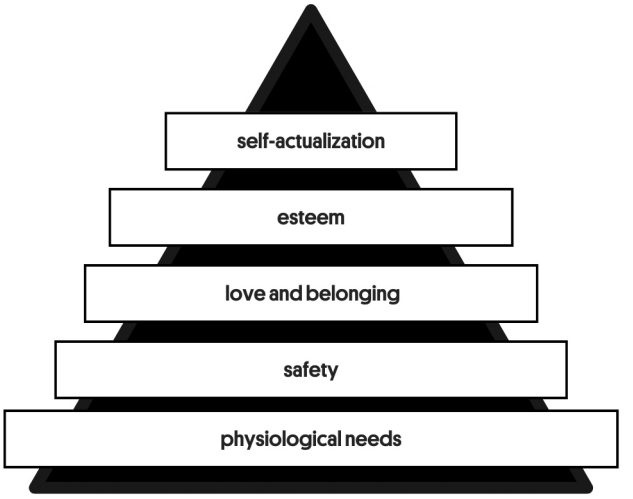
Ongoing work in the natural and social sciences will develop more nuanced and empirically grounded models of human development and motivation. For our purposes, this conception of needs underpins the abstraction of what Anne-Marie Slaughter and Hilary Cottam have called *sapiens integra*, who *"seeks to* develop her unique self and to develop strong relationships with others."[19] *Sapiens integra* is no less and likely far more grounded in science than the Enlightenment abstraction of human nature described as *homo economicus* and in law as "the reasonable man." Alison Gopnik characterizes these assumed beings, which underlie a contractual view both of the market economy and the social contract, as "independent, autonomous, reciprocal decision-makers exchanging goods."[20]

Gregg Gonsalves and Amy Kapczynski posit a dichotomy between care as an intimate activity, a "kind of activity and commitment that happens between *particular* persons, commonly within the family," and as a social activity, "the life-sustaining activities and infrastructures that enable all other things we do."[21] From our perspective, however, it is valuable to array these conceptualizations of care along a spectrum, rather than contrast them (see Figure 3). Both are based on the importance of seeing and creating connection – among humans and between humans and the natural world. The principal difference is the level of activity at which that connection is perceived and practiced.

At one end of our spectrum of connection is a state of oneness or near fusion. Gopnik describes this as "the expansion of the self" to "prioritize the values and interests of another."[22] Less clinically, consider the countless love poems and songs across history in which lovers describe themselves as two hearts beating as one. New parents also often describe the expansions of their identity this way.

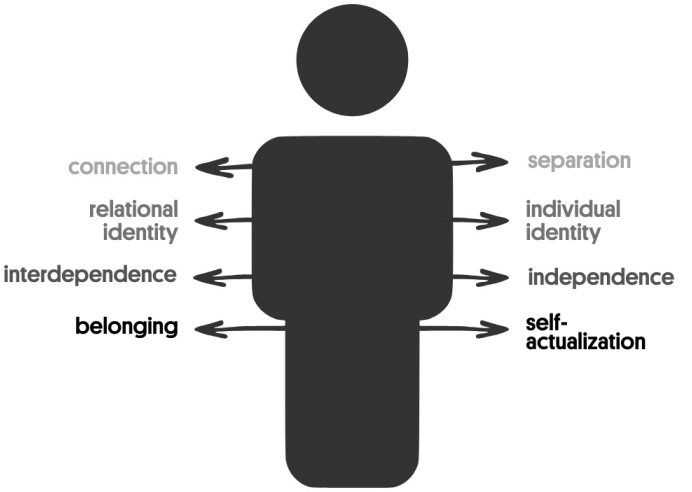
Next to near-oneness are the close relationships and commitments that help define us: we are children, parents, spouses, siblings, friends. Then come a variety of identities that depend on relationships with specific professional carers in our lives: patient, client, student, mentee, advisee. The flip side would include doctor, nurse, therapist, lawyer, teacher, coach, mentor, and many other professions in the "care-plus economy" that involve connective labor.[23] For most of us, our lives will unfold across various points along this spectrum. Consider the dynamics of relational inti-

Figure 1
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Figure by the authors based on Abraham Maslow's theory.

Figure 2
An Account of Coexisting Human Needs



Source: Figure by the authors.

Figure 3
A Spectrum of Human Connection

Source : Figure by the authors.

macy described by activist Mia Birdsong: "We exist, not as wholly singular, autonomous beings, nor completely merged, but in a fluctuating space in between."[24]

This spectrum can easily include the kind of social care that Gonsalves and Kapczynski call for "among intimates, but also in public."[25] Indeed, these are the "activities of provisioning, care-giving, and interaction that produce and maintain social bonds."[26] Care reflects and responds to the vital need for human connection, whether at the family, friend, community, or society level.

Where this spectrum cannot reach is, by very definition, to the "arms-length transactions" that characterize commodified market activities. The phrase "arms-length transaction" implies sufficient distance between two humans that any dealings between them will not be colored by an intimate relationship. In legal and financial contexts, the term is used to indicate parties to an agreement or deal who are independent and on equal footing. Anthropologist and economist David Graeber has argued that our economic system actively requires the breakdown of nonmonetary forms of exchange, which are often seen in caring relationships, thereby making us "strangers" so that we'll use money to manage our economic transactions.[27]

An economy that recognizes the critical role of connection in human well-being would value caring relationships of many different kinds. It would deliver support through adequate wages and benefits for paid caregivers, and new economic and social supports for unpaid caregivers. It would also point to the long-term value of healthy, sustaining connections to nature and the planet as well as to other human beings.

This section uplifts economic proposals that are enacting transformative visions for the economy through relational principles and processes.[28] These, like

many other models, originated or gained traction during the COVID-19 pandemic, when our current system's failures were acutely visible and a confluence of flexible public investment and imaginative partnerships rose to meet the moment. What we see in these models is a commitment to creating the conditions to enable care to flourish in our lives.

These proposals reflect a broader movement to transition from a vision of progress rooted in short-term economic growth to holistic and longer-term visions for the thriving of people, places, and the planet. The Wellbeing Economy network of governments around the world point to a desire to question the nature and purpose of the economy.[29] Many nations and communities are asking what truly matters for well-being today and for generations to come. In such inquiries, the purpose of the economy – one system embedded within a broader ecology of systems – becomes to serve our individual and shared well-being, a state of being that requires strong relationships and a sense of belonging.

In the United States, a federal-level effort prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic focuses policymaking on long-term individual and community resilience, while addressing disparities in well-being. The Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience draws upon the Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being framework, which outlines conditions necessary for well-being such as "belonging and civic muscle," a "thriving natural world," and "basic needs for health and safety."[30] This effort aims to systematize approaches to policymaking that more effectively and efficiently address issues undergirding individual and community well-being nationwide.

To that end, the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Treasury co-led an effort through the Census Bureau's Opportunity Project initiative in 2022 to create new measures of progress through the use of open federal data and in collaboration with private sector data and technology experts.[31] It is clear that these efforts are not intended to impose a top-down framework for policymaking, but rather serve as organizing mechanisms for federal infrastructure to become more aligned, as well as more people- and place-oriented.

Local places, in turn, are birthing new systems for economic transformations rooted in local context. Such efforts are underway in Washington State, for example, where a coalition of organizations began coalescing around a vision for systemic change in the state's economy during the pandemic, articulating a vision of "an economy that is rooted in democracy and self-determination, is sustainable and equitable, and creates shared economic well-being."[32] The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services convened a technical advisory group to shift the state's thinking on economic recovery through the use of comprehensive measures of progress beyond GDP.

This initiative helped catalyze the "Just Futures" project, a collaborative of advocacy organizations working to engage frontline communities in creating a vi-

sion, a definition, and measures for equitable economic recovery, and to hold the state accountable to implementing that vision. The project calls for a shift from a consumerist and colonial mindset to a worldview grounded in caring and sacredness.[33] In this framework, the economy "values care, uses resources conscientiously, prioritizes ecological and social well-being for people and the planet."[34]

The Just Futures project emphasizes insights gained from listening sessions with community members about how they experience Washington's economy and what the government can do to improve it. Amid ample reflection on financial insecurity, insufficient benefits, a lack of dignified working conditions, and other structural barriers, participants also described their desire for essential neighbor and family care, as well as support for navigating assistance programs and accessing essential goods. Many also shared a desire to have resources to engage in more forms of mutual care in their communities.[35] The Just Futures project has committed both to incorporating the knowledge and expertise of those most affected by poverty and injustice and to sharing power and resources with them. Work is ongoing to incorporate community assemblies to cocreate solutions via government funds through the Washington State Environmental Justice Council. Through these strides, Washington is seeking to transform economic and environmental structures from within by valuing care, participation, and cocreation.

Another emergent model is the ʻĀina Aloha Economic Futures (AAEF), a coalition of over 2,700 community members and 540 organizations that have come together to craft a new economic policy framework for Hawaiʻi centered on connection and care for the land and waters (ʻĀina), well-being, and equity.[36] Hawaiʻi has struggled with unemployment, low-wage work, and a high cost of living, making it difficult for many local, particularly Native Hawaiian, residents to thrive. Today the islands rely heavily on fragile supply chains for moving goods to and from the mainland. The pandemic also exposed the fragility of an economy centered primarily on tourism.

The pandemic led to the launch of an economic recovery task force. After requesting and being denied participation, fourteen Native Hawaiians launched an effort to galvanize native voices and values to help inform Hawaiʻi's economic recovery.[37] The AAEF framework was developed to draw upon native Hawaiian values and perspectives to reimagine Hawaiʻi's social and economic fabric. It centers Indigenous Hawaiian philosophy rooted in an ancestral worldview that considers natural systems as existing in relationship, as kin.

> The goal is an economy that takes care of our ʻāina, that is regenerative, that is equitable, that supports the many and not just the few, and that honors the ʻike of our kūpuna (ancestral knowledge) that fed this place in abundance for centuries. Our ancestral economy was circular. Nothing went to waste. It was equitable. This isn't a utopian vision. Hawaiʻi can be a leader in creating an Indigenous circular economy.[38]

The AAEF coalition initiated an extensive, open participatory engagement process to develop concrete proposals reflected in a policy playbook and self-assessment tool. These proposals have sparked policy reforms including a farm-to-school bill mandating that public schools throughout the state source at least 30 percent of school meal ingredients from local producers by 2030; and detailed resolutions for county governments to support a circular economy as a criterion for future policy decisions.[39] With growing input from the community, the coalition also developed the Huliau Action Agenda, which calls for the development of supports that foster family well-being, such as "longer paid maternity and paternity leave, programs that nurture strong and engaged parenting, anger management training, and access to affordable child and senior care centers."[40]

These proposals are inspired by a practice of economics through intimate, place-based relationships developed over generations. This practice includes, for example, looking to historical closed-loop agriculture and aquaculture systems, which continue to be maintained today, and using ongoing observation and experimental learning in nature as our teacher on how to build a regenerative social and economic fabric.

In light of recent natural disasters, the coalition drafted a declaration outlining a set of values to guide state economic planning, pointing to the role of human beings as hosts of the earth and its limited resources.[41] The declaration invites a long-term view, calling for government to embrace "integrative ways to balance power and benefit."

These emerging economic models illustrate dissatisfaction with status quo approaches, even as GDP is rising and official measures of unemployment are falling. Efficient progress across these typical indicators neither guarantees equitable outcomes nor meets deeper needs expressed around care and connection.

The emergent practices described above flesh out what an economy and society might look like with care at the core. If we combine that practice with the scientific findings set forth in this volume of *Dædalus*, building on decades of work in evolutionary biology, psychology, anthropology, neuroscience, and other related disciplines, we can articulate a worldview of care that can be used as both a lens on the world and a foundation for reform. Such a worldview rests on the following propositions:

1. *Strong connections are essential to human health and well-being; disconnection or misconnection can be fatal.* Care is a human being's first experience of positive connection to another human, a connection that is necessary for food, safety, and healthy development. Over the course of a lifetime, those connections correlate strongly with mental and physical health. In contrast, to be disconnected or misconnected (connected to those who abuse, neglect, or exploit

you) is devastating to human health and well-being. As Fetterolf, Elder, Levi, and Trivedi highlight in their essay, today's epidemic of loneliness is especially pronounced among the "fifty-three million family caregivers who shoulder significant responsibilities of managing chronic and serious health conditions among adults."[42] In August 2024, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an advisory on the mental health and well-being of parents, remarking on the tremendous pressures they face.[43] What often goes unquestioned are the structural causes that contribute to the burdens on these caregivers, including growing economic precarity and a lack of time and support, alongside the widespread forces of "status anxiety, and disconnection from meaningful work that afflicts Americans in the age of neoliberalism."[44]

2. *The human experience must be understood through both an individual and a relational lens.* Understanding care as a relationship invites us to move from neoclassical theory's abstraction of *homo economicus*, which Margaret Levi argues we should have rejected long ago, to *sapiens integra*, a whole being who needs both separation *and* connection and who develops in both directions over the course of a lifetime.[45] The resulting life experiences develop both individual and relational identities. Seeing the world through this lens directly challenges foundational assumptions about individual agents constituting society and the economy through their choices. It points to the reality that we can be separate and connected at the same time and that both identities and sets of experiences can and should receive equal weight.
3. *Grounding in care, rather than command and control, encourages horizontal forms of human connection to cocreate systems.* The processes that Washington and Hawai'i have undergone to develop new economic futures frameworks were deliberately relational and inclusive. Through multiple rounds of consultation, representative committees, and community assemblies, there have been multiple pathways for direct input and cocreation. These approaches in Hawai'i and Washington point to the need for sharing power through more inclusive forms of cocreation and cogovernance.[46]
4. *A relational lens opens a broader conceptualization of value and wealth and necessitates new economic measures.* In our current system, care is understood as a service, and the value of that service is grossly misplaced. In a system that uses price as its signal of value and centers productivity, the only way we have succeeded in assigning a high monetary value to care is when it involves advanced credentials. The challenge becomes to develop a "relational economics" that can capture the value of the relationship itself, beyond the service provided within that relationship. Political philosopher Adrien Pabst and economist Roberto Scazzieri argue that "relationships matter more than transactions," considering intergenerational bonds as "more prima-

ry than contract."[47] Today we fail to value many different forms of human grouping, as well as communities of humans and other-than-human beings. Expanding our understanding of value can help shift us out of a lens of commodification and scarcity and usher in genuine wealth through quality relationships and, as Gonsalves and Kapczynski argue, having the time to do what we care about.

Ai-Jen Poo, the United States' leading apostle of care, argued a decade ago that the U.S. "elder boom" offers an opportunity to "reorganize society so that in all phases of life we can count on love, connection, and care."[48] The articulation of a worldview of care can help guide the cultural and policy shifts as well as the transformative economic proposals necessary to make this reorganization happen. While the economy is by definition a system of social connection, in which we engage in production and exchange with one another, market fundamentalism has elevated individualism and competition as the defining characteristics of our human social relations at the expense of care and connection. An economic paradigm that is structurally dependent on the commodification of value fails to facilitate the time and resources to cultivate and engage in authentic connection.

In practice, economic and social policy designed through a lens of care would look very different. This essay does not articulate a comprehensive policy agenda based on a worldview of care; rather, drawing on the conception of human nature and the practical examples we present here, we suggest some concrete policies and outline some of the broader design principles and directional characteristics of policies rooted in a worldview of care.

- *Assume that every worker will be a caregiver and care receiver at some point in their life.* Seeing all human beings in the context of their relational identities (parent, spouse, child, sibling, relative, friend) as well as their individual identities, and given the care needs of all human beings at some point in their lives, it is reasonable to assume that all workers will need various kinds of support in both time and money for caregiving.
- *Provide targeted human and material supports for families with children under five years of age, those engaged in long-term care for people with disabilities and chronic illness, and for seniors who live alone.* Families with children under five face enormous stresses on their money and their time, during a period when strong, secure relationships are essential for the well-being and development of children. We can explore the use of subsidies that provide stability and predictability for those families and that also grow their ability, together with vulnerable seniors, to seek and extend care through their connections.[49]

- *Formally recognize varying forms of commitments to caring relationships.* Policies can support healthy and strong connections in ways that strengthen our capacities for giving and receiving care. There is much room to grow and ritualize forms of connection in groups that expand beyond biological family. As Gopnik has argued, we could and should institute new forms of commitment ceremonies and embrace legal status to formally mark and uphold such intimate connections.[50]
- *Design and deliver policies through relational processes.* Hawai'i and Washington engaged in robust relational processes, prioritizing participation and public engagement, and creating opportunities to grow in trust and connection through shared events, commissions, and community assemblies.[51] The importance of participation and engaging lived experience is growing as a principle for policy design and delivery. The U.S. federal government is in the process of developing a framework for participation, and more work is needed in this realm.[52]
- *Align public funding and technical assistance to prioritize participation and cocreation.* Hawai'i, Washington, and other places developing transformative economic proposals have benefitted from flexible funding assistance that catalyzed multistakeholder coalitions and long-term visioning to inform COVID-19 recovery efforts.[53] Policymakers should draw upon learnings from the impacts of such programs to shape future federal funding and technical assistance. We see evidence of that happening with the design of a recent competition implemented by the Economic Development Administration, but the overall level of resourcing has declined.[54]
- *Think and act for long-term community and ecological well-being through care.* Examples in this essay underscore the need for economic relief that serves immediate needs, while also pointing to a bigger transformative vision of how current and future generations can care for themselves and one another. We see this as connected to the argument made by Gonsalves and Kapczynski in their essay that "A political economy and politics oriented to care would require its own theory of value," and requires new legal and institutional innovations.[55] Policies to enhance economic security are not sufficient on their own, but can help create the conditions to work toward long-term structural transformations.
- *Adopt indicators that align with transformative visions and goals for the economy.* New indicators of progress can be tools to promote broader systems change through setting goals, framing issues, creating common terms, and shifting venues.[56] We see this in the vital conditions framework, as well as initiatives developed by Washington and Hawai'i: vital conditions incorporate the concept of "multisolving indicators," inviting policy "recommenda-

tions in which a change grounded in one vital condition strengthens five or more vital conditions."[57] A worldview of care also elevates the importance of more robust measures such as a national housing loss rate, and those that help us understand Americans' relational lives, embeddedness in communities, and access to time to care and spend on what feels important.[58]

- *Design working lives aligned to social and ecological well-being, and offer time and the ability to use time in ways that are meaningful*. Examples in this essay point to the need not only for jobs to offer financial security and predictable and stable working lives, but also to align to the needs of a society in transition. This includes both the "how" and "what" of our working lives. For example, the AAEF policy playbook proposes "green workforce" jobs and support for regenerative systems and businesses (through which we give as much or more than we take), particularly in the areas of conservation, agriculture, and tourism.[59] A lens of care also invites consideration of how we design working lives with flexible time to contribute to volunteerism and other nonmonetized ways of connecting with and providing for one another.

There is an ache today for something better, for ways of living full lives rooted in what matters to us. From our perspective, this ache points to something quite profound: a longing to experience care and connection more fully with one another, the places we call home, and our planet. We are swimming and often sinking in an economic system that has failed to ascribe value to so much of what helps us flourish.

This essay lifts up the vitality of care and connection in human development, and explores alternative economics in practice. However, these emergent efforts lack a coherent framework that would support a shift to durable economic systems change. A worldview of care that emerges from a richer conception of human nature encompassing our individual and relational dimensions is one possible framing to help move us toward an economics that fully embraces the caring relationships that hold our lives together.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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ENDNOTES

[1] Tim Jackson, "An Economy That Works," Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity, December 19, 2016, https://cusp.ac.uk/themes/aetw/tj-growing_prosperity.

[2] Hilary Cottam, *Welfare 5.0: Why We Need a Social Revolution and How to Make It Happen* (UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, 2020), 24. See also Hilary Cottam, *A Radical New Vision for Social Care* (The Health Foundation, 2021).

[3] In his essay in this issue, Zachary Ugolnik reflects on how various religious traditions open up the possibility of care as a relationship not just between the giver and receiver, but nested within other relationships, such as with gods and spirits. This expansive conceptualization of care unsticks us from an entrenched mythology of human nature that has overemphasized the individual at the expense of care and connection with one another, as well as with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose. Zachary Ugolnik, "Divine Care: Care as Religious Practice," *Dædalus* 154 (1) (Winter 2025): 150–165, https://www.amacad.org/daedalus/divine-care-care-religious-practice.

[4] Anne-Marie Slaughter and Hilary Cottam, "We Need a New Economic Category," *The Atlantic*, September 3, 2021, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/new-economy-caregiving/620160; and Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Care Is a Relationship," *Dædalus* 152 (1) (Winter 2023): 71, https://www.amacad.org/publication/daedalus/care-relationship.

[5] Hilary Cottam participated in the workshops that led to this volume. In one of the discussions, she made the point that instead of seeing care as either a service or a relationship, it can be seen as both, and also in a third incarnation as a kind of longing. We have embraced the dual approach.

[6] Care also has a very different meaning: a worrying responsibility, obligation, or burden. Think of "carefree," Shakespeare's "raveled sleeve of care" in *Macbeth*, act 2, sc. 2, line 49, or the phrase in countless songs and poems "take my cares away."

[7] We are grateful to Gregg Gonsalves and Amy Kapczynski for the addition of "concern for their well-being," a formulation they attribute to economist Nancy Folbre. Gregg Gonsalves and Amy Kapczynski, "The Social Life of Care," *Dædalus* 154 (1) (Winter 2025): 224–239, https://www.amacad.org/daedalus/social-life-care.

[8] See Maisha T. Winn and Nim Tottenham, "Looking Back to Look Forward: Leveraging Historical Models for Future-Oriented Caregiving," *Dædalus* 154 (1) (Winter 2025): 70–81, https://www.amacad.org/daedalus/looking-back-look-forward-leveraging-historical

-models-future-oriented-caregiving; and Bridget L. Callaghan and Nim Tottenham, "The Neuro-Environmental Loop of Plasticity: A Cross-Species Analysis of Parental Effects on Emotion Circuitry Development Following Typical and Adverse Caregiving," *Neuropsychopharmacology* 41 (1) (2016): 163–176, https://doi.org/10.1038/npp.2015.204.

[9] Elizabeth Fetterolf, Andrew Elder, Margaret Levi, and Ranak B. Trivedi, "Technology & the Dynamics of Care for Older People," *Dædalus* 154 (1) (Winter 2025): 127, https://www.amacad.org/daedalus/technology-dynamics-care-older-people.

[10] Ashley J. Thomas, Christina M. Steele, Alison Gopnik, and Rebecca R. Saxe, "How Do Infants Experience Caregiving?" *Dædalus* 154 (1) (Winter 2025): 16, https://www.amacad.org/daedalus/how-do-infants-experience-caregiving.

[11] Winn and Tottenham observe, "the protection afforded by the caregiver is bedrock upon which children feel free to take risks and explore their environments." Winn and Tottenham, "Looking Back to Look Forward," 75. With regard to eldercare, Thomas, Steele, Gopnik, and Saxe point out the ways in which carers will decide to privilege the goals of the person being cared for, even when the carer does not agree with those goals. Thomas, Steele, Gopnik, and Saxe, "How Do Infants Experience Caregiving?"

[12] Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* (Henry Holt, 2014), 140.

[13] Ibid., 248.

[14] Winn and Tottenham, "Looking Back to Look Forward," 74.

[15] Anne Case and Angus Deaton, *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism* (Princeton University Press, 2020); and Morgan Chalfant, "A Bipartisan Pair Aims to Solve America's Happiness Problem," Semafor, April 23, 2024, https://www.semafor.com/article/04/22/2024/a-bipartisan-pair-aims-to-solve-americas-happiness-problem. See also Gallup, "Gallup Happiness Report," https://www.gallup.com/analytics/349487/world-happiness-report.aspx (accessed May 1, 2024); and Vivek H. Murthy, *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community* (Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, 2023).

[16] Allison Pugh, *The Last Human Job: The Work of Connecting in a Disconnected World* (Princeton University Press, 2024).

[17] Ibid., 13. Pugh's quote comes from Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary, "The Need to Belong," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. Daniel Todd Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey (McGraw-Hill, 1995), 497–529.

[18] Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (4) (1943): 370–396.

[19] Hilary Cottam, "Revolution 5.0: A Social Manifesto," December 10, 2019, 3, https://www.hilarycottam.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Social-Revolution-5.0-_dec19.pdf. For the joint provenance of the concept, see Cottam, *A Radical New Vision of Social Care*, footnote 20.

[20] Alison Gopnik, "Caregiving in Philosophy, Biology & Political Economy," *Dædalus* 152 (1) (Winter 2023): 59, https://www.amacad.org/publication/daedalus/caregiving-philosophy-biology-political-economy.

[21] Gonsalves and Kapczynski, "The Social Life of Care," 225.

[22] Gopnik, "Caregiving in Philosophy, Biology & Political Economy," 59.

[23] Slaughter and Cottam, "We Need a New Economic Category." For a definition and discussion of connective labor, see Pugh, *The Last Human Job*.

[24] Mia Birdsong, *How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community* (Hachette Books, 2020), 19.

[25] Gonsalves and Kapczynski, "The Social Life of Care," 225.

[26] Ibid., drawing on the work of Nancy Fraser.

[27] David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Melville House, 2011).

[28] While this essay does a deep dive on two place-based examples, there are a number in practice. See, for example, Alaska Just Transition, https://www.justtransitionak.org (accessed December 5, 2024); Reimagine Appalachia, https://reimagineappalachia.org (accessed December 5, 2024); Vermont Prosperity Project, https://www.vtprosperityproject.com (accessed December 5, 2024); and Wellbeing Economy Alliance California, https://weallcalifornia.org (accessed December 5, 2024), among others.

[29] This network consists primarily of national governments, although there is an emerging network of local hubs around the world and emerging in the United States. See Wellbeing Economy Alliance, "Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo)," https://weall.org/wego (accessed December 5, 2024); Wellbeing Economy Alliance, "Local Hubs," https://weall.org/hubs (accessed December 5, 2024); and Scottish Government, "Wellbeing Economy Governments (WEGo)," https://www.gov.scot/groups/wellbeing-economy-governments-wego (accessed January 15, 2024).

[30] For the Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience, see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience: The People & Places Thriving Approach," https://health.gov/our-work/national-health-initiatives/equitable-long-term-recovery-and-resilience (accessed January 15, 2024). The Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being is an evolution of the social determinants of health framework that has had meaningful influence in policy circles since its emergence in the early 2000s.

[31] Elizabeth Garlow, Austin Clemens, and Tony Guidotti, "What Are We Making Policy For? A Focused Effort in Measuring Wellbeing," New America, December 6, 2022, https://www.newamerica.org/new-practice-lab/blog/what-are-we-making-policy-for.

[32] The coalition included People's Economy Lab, Front and Centered, the Statewide Poverty Action Network and State Budget and Policy Center. The quotation is from Deric Gruen, "New Economy Washington: A Path Forward," November 6, 2019, https://frontandcentered.org/new-phase-1 (accessed January 15, 2024).

[33] See Climate Justice Alliance, "Just Transition Framework," https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition (accessed January 15, 2024).

[34] Just Futures, "Cornerstones of Collaborative Governance for a Just & Equitable Future," (Front and Centered, People's Economy Lab, and Statewide Poverty Action Network, 2023), 14, https://mcusercontent.com/48c2ade4b36927ca8b5eef71d/files/52a0fb52-d8d5-18cb-62b9-b4e4477675f1/Just_Futures_Co_Governance_Framework_final_version.pdf.

[35] Ibid., 11.

[36] *ʻĀina* refers to "care for the land" and *Aloha* refers to "love, peace, compassion and mutual respect"; these are references to Native Hawaiian culture and values as guiding stars for reimagining Hawaiʻi's social and economic fabric. ʻĀina Aloha Economic Futures, https://www.ainaalohafutures.com (accessed January 15, 2024).

[37] This group included Amy Kalili, Davis Price, Ikaika Hussey, Joseph Lapilio, Kalani Kaʻanāʻanā, Kamana Beamer, Kēhaunani Abad, Keoni Lee, Lanakila Mangauil, Mahina Paishon-Duarte, Nāʻālehu Anthony, Noe Noe Wong-Wilson, Ryan Gonzalez, and Ulalia Woodside.

[38] Quoting Dr. Kamana Beamer, "'Āina Aloha Economic Futures: A Vision for Hawai'i's Economy Grounded in 'Ike Kūpuna," *Ka Wai Ola*, January 1, 2021, https://kawaiola.news/hookahuawaiwai/ina-aloha-economic-futures-a-vision-for-hawaiis-economy-grounded-in-ike-kpuna.

[39] For the playbook, see 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures Policy Playbook, "Growing a Stronger Hawai'i," https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GJdVPM84fA0x9UBGpii0UjBgvEiV4INr2ES5FXmRpjk/edit (accessed January 15, 2024). For the self-assessment tool, see 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures, "Assessment Tool for Policies, Projects and Programs," https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ibnzR_ytvHVBTXnTcTjA2u7NbnYD74FczXu2WY_7bEI/edit#gid=0 (accessed January 15, 2024).

[40] 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures, "Assessment Tool for Policies, Projects and Programs," 7.

[41] 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures, "'Āina Aloha Economic Futures Declaration," https://www.ainaalohafutures.com/declaration (accessed January 15, 2024).

[42] Fetterolf, Elder, Levi, and Trivedi, "Technology & the Dynamics of Care for Older People," 120.

[43] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Parents," August 28, 2024, https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/08/28/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-mental-health-well-being-parents.html.

[44] Ian Corbin and Joe Waters, "What the Surgeon General Missed about America's Loneliness Epidemic," *Newsweek*, May 16, 2023.

[45] Margaret Levi has critiqued the idea's pairing of selfish motivation and rational action, which have given rise to a cornucopia of theories and models that no longer prove useful. Instead, she has advocated for an acknowledgment of the ways human beings are "enmeshed in social connections that inform their thinking and actions." Margaret Levi, "2014: What Scientific Idea is Ready for Retirement?" Edge, https://www.edge.org/response-detail/25297 (accessed January 15, 2024).

[46] These processes intersect in interesting ways with Wendy Bowles and Samuel S. Carlin's argument that care is fundamental to reshaping democratic participation through strengthening social bonds, moving us out of a harmful market-state simplex, which entrenches us further in market fundamentalism and the state as an extension of the market. Samuel S. Carlin and Wendy Bowles, "Foundations of an Expanded Community of Fate," *Dædalus* 152 (1) (Winter 2023): 39.

[47] Adrian Pabst and Roberto Scazzieri, *The Constitution of Political Economy: Polity, Society and the Commonweal* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 148.

[48] Ai-Jen Poo with Ariane Conrad, *The Age of Dignity: Preparing for the Elder Boom in a Changing America* (The New Press, 2015), 40.

[49] New America's New Practice Lab found in qualitative interviews with low-income families with young children that there is a notable "desire to help other community members, family, and even casual acquaintances," whether it's with childcare or various needs, which is often coupled with feeling overtaxed because of a lack of sufficient time

and resources. Sarah Gilliland, Erica Meade, and Jessica Weeden, "Family Thriving: How Social Connection Can Promote Greater Connection," https://www.newamerica.org/new-practice-lab/briefs/family-thriving-how-social-policy-can-promote-greater-connection (accessed April 30, 2024).

[50] Gopnik, "Caregiving in Philosophy, Biology & Political Economy," 66.

[51] Jenna Bednar argues that this kind of collaboration depends on trust, which in turn depends on feeling cared for. Jenna Bednar, "Governance for Human Social Flourishing," *Dædalus* 152 (1) (Winter 2023): 40–56, https://www.amacad.org/publication/daedalus/governance-human-social-flourishing.

[52] U.S. Federal Register, "Methods and Leading Practices for Advancing Public Participation and Community Engagement with the Federal Government," https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/20/2024-05882/methods-and-leading-practices-for-advancing-public-participation-and-community-engagement-with-the (accessed May 1, 2024).

[53] For example, funding provided through the American Rescue Plan Act, the Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Regional Challenge, and emergency rental assistance.

[54] For instance, the Economic Development Administration launched the Recompete Pilot Program to provide funding in distressed communities. The program has been designed based on learnings from the Build Back Better Regional Challenge grants, incorporating feedback from former grantees, such as removing the requirement for matching funds. U.S. Department of Commerce, "Recompete Pilot Program," https://www.eda.gov/careers/recompete-pilot-program (accessed April 30, 2024).

[55] Gonsalves and Kapczynski, "The Social Life of Care," 234.

[56] Christopher Nelson, Anita Chandra, and Carolyn Miller, "Can Measures Change the World?" *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 16 (2018): 43–47.

[57] Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, *Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience for Social, Behavioral, and Community Health* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2022), 41, https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/ELTRR-Report_220127a_ColorCorrected_2.pdf.

[58] For information about the housing loss rate, see Yuliya Panfil, "America Needs a National Housing Loss Rate," Federation of American Scientists, February 22, 2024, https://fas.org/publication/america-needs-a-national-housing-loss-rate. Indicators around the health of civil society and community cohesion, such as the Social Capital Atlas from Raj Chetty and colleagues and the Mapping the Modern Agora Project by Hahrie Han, Milan de Vries, and Jae Yeon Kim are a step in the right direction but still only represent part of the picture. See Raj Chetty, Matthew O. Jackson, Theresa Kuchler, et al., "Social Capital and Economic Mobility," *Nature* 608 (7921) (2022): 108–121; Opportunity Insights Social Capital Atlas, https://socialcapital.org (accessed April 30, 2024); Milan de Vries, Jae Yeon Kim, and Hahrie Han, "The Unequal Landscape of Civic Opportunity in America," *Nature Human Behavior* 8 (2024): 256–263; and Hahrie Han, Milan de Vries, and Jae Yeon Kim, "Mapping the Modern Agora," Johns Hopkins SNF Agora Institute, https://snfagora.jhu.edu/project/mapping-the-modern-agora (accessed April 30, 2024).

[59] ʻĀina Aloha Economic Futures Policy Playbook, "Growing a Stronger Hawaiʻi."