Privileged Irresponsibility in *Harvard Business Review*:
a Posthumanist Discourse Analysis of Care, Managerialism and Inequality

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Abstract

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Care is essential for life; we all depend upon care from others. However, the rise of bureaucratic organizations founded on managerialist values of rationality and efficiency has contributed to the sidelining of care within organizations, so that it is unseen and undervalued in our workplaces despite being fundamental to human and more-than-human flourishing. This thesis focuses on care as an element of everyday work, rather than care as a core service (such as nursing). It questions whether privileged irresponsibility (Tronto, 1993, 2013) – the ability of those who have privilege to deny that they receive care – is contributing to economic inequality in the workplace.

Viewing care through a posthumanist lens, this study embraces radical interconnectedness and a conceptualization of care as an element of immanent relationality. A model of nested onto-epistemologies is proposed, with discursive and humanist realms situated within a wider, unbounded posthumanist landscape. Care is seen as partially obscured within the discursive/humanist realm, but as an unconstrained affective process of relational and material interweaving in the posthuman realm. Braidotti's (2019) conceptualization of power as both *potestas* (restriction) and *potentia* (empowerment) is applied to examine this situation.

The onto-epistemological landscape supports a discursive, critical approach to a study of texts drawn from 100 years of *Harvard Business Review* (HBR). This "bridge" journal is recognized as central to Western, capitalist management thought, yielding traces of managerialist discourses as well as examples of care within organizations. The study uses selected HBR articles to examine what managerialist discourses are reproduced, where care manifests and is valued (or not) in organizational life, how managerialist discourses help produce privileged irresponsibility, and how the recognition of care relates to the perpetuation of inequality by organizations.

This study offers several contributions. It identifies ways that care appears within organizational life and illustrates how managerialist discourses disrupt the provision and recognition of care. It applies Tronto's (1993, 2013) concept of privileged irresponsibility to management and organization studies, using this concept to answer the call from Amis et al. (2020) for further investigation into the mechanisms of systemic reproduction of inequality within organizations. It suggests a link between the experience of the managerialist workplace and the "deskilling" of care and relationality in society. Finally, it offers the concept of "nested onto-epistemologies" as a way to reexamine humanist, constructivist concepts through a posthumanist lens.

September, 2024

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It is an entirely odd thing to write a dissertation about relationships, interdependence, connectedness, and care, while sitting endless hours in solitary confinement at a computer, separate from everything and everyone. The need, and desire, to care for others kept interrupting this work, and this work required others to provide me with care that I often had no way to return. In that way, this was not an easy journey.

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Finally, to Joan Tronto, Peter Frost, and all those who have pushed forward the idea that care is far too important to be stuck at home, ignored or demeaned: thank you. I hope this work helps further the cause, by promoting care as a fundamental life force, an expression of our connectedness in a lively world full of potential. Now more than ever, we need to unleash care in the world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In this thesis, I will argue that the way we recognize care within organizational life contributes to inequality in our society, damaging our relationships with each other and even our ecosystem, to our detriment. I show how care manifests in historical organizations, examine how privilege and power affect care and those who give and receive it, and question whether we are losing – in our public work lives, at least – our skill for care. Although there are many organizations which explicitly produce care (hospitals, personal chef or chauffeuring services, childcare centres, etc.), this inquiry is aimed at organizational labour which might not be typically seen to be care, or even "work," at all. In other words, the focus is not on explicit paid care work, such as nursing. Rather, my interest is in the everyday work to "maintain, continue and repair our 'world' so we can live in it as well as possible" (Tronto, 1993, p. 103).

Arriving at this point entailed a journey, which is where I will start.

1.1 What's wrong with organizational life?

The genesis for this research began more than 20 years ago, when I was working in social marketing, a discipline that aims to change social behaviour rather than sell a product; for example, encouraging people to stop smoking. One of the tenets of social marketing that fascinated me was that people tend to *believe* in whatever they *do* (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011), so if, for example, you could run a campaign that enticed people to display a lawn sign promoting recycling, they'd be more likely to actually recycle – and to promote it to their friends.

This made me consider the impact of the behavioural experiences that shape most of our lives everyday, particularly those of us who go to work daily inside mainstream, bureaucratic managerialist organizations. Within such organizations, we live within hierarchical structures;

we follow instructions from our immediate superior, who follows instructions from theirs. The scope of our responsibilities is often limited to a specific area; although we might engage with others, we are measured on (or responsible for) only those tasks within our own "span of control," and there is a built-in understanding that liability for those things outside our reach is "limited," as corporate structure defines. We measure the value of decisions on a "bottom line" ethic that favours self-interest based on increasing revenues or decreasing expenses, and that measures those concepts in dollars. And when we go to work, we conform to the expectations and values of the organization, intentionally subordinating our individual priorities and values as part of the deal for the anticipated exchange of receiving money.

I wondered: if this is what we *do* for a standard 40 hours each week – about a third (or more) of our waking hours – what does it lead us to *believe*? Do we fail to recognize responsibility towards things not explicitly assigned to us? Do we measure all costs and benefits in dollars? Do we privilege money because we had to subjugate our "whole self" in order to gain that money from the organization? Do we define ourselves as divided and grouped by jurisdictions: is this why we talk about "people" separate from "nature"? And whose responsibility, in that case, is "nature"? Have we become an unsustainable society because caring for our life support system is hard to measure in dollars and isn't in our job description?

In short: does the experience of our modern workplace *prevent* us from achieving a sustainable society?

Through my doctoral studies, I sought to find a place to hang this question, from looking at how companies affect the social capital of their employees' communities, to examining how scientific management affects the public school system. Finally, I began to study care ethics, an ethical framework that might help identify ways in which we have restricted, moulded, and absented parts of ourselves in order to fit into organizations and become what they require. Care ethics holds up the "whole person," the relational self, the one I think we need to rediscover. Care ethics also springs from a feminist viewpoint traditionally estranged from the public life of the organization (Tronto, 1993), offering an avenue for fruitful alternative analysis.

At this point, however, I struggled somewhat. As I will explore in this work, the concept of care has long been sidelined in organizational life: it is associated with home and the "soft" private world, with needs rather than strength (Tronto, 1993). "Who cares about care?" I found myself wondering. If care has been sidelined as too soft for the business world, how is an argument that "we *ought* to care" going to make any difference? Then history delivered a new point of relevance, and academic foundation, for my queries.

After decades of struggle to address racism and inequality, the killing of George Floyd at the hands of police in the spring of 2020 set off a fresh wave of questions about these persistent systemic problems. This brought to my attention a paper titled "The organizational reproduction of inequality" (Amis, Mair, & Munir, 2020). Amis et al. (2020) offer findings from an extensive literature survey, a comprehensive effort to reassess the role that organizations play in perpetuating economic inequality in society, to show how and why such inequalities persist, and perpetuate in "hid[ing] new, oppressive power relations privileging the credentialled elite" (Amis et al, 2020, p. 204). Using an institutional lens, the authors build an argument based on myths of efficiency, meritocracy and globalization, and human resource management and organizational practices that result in entrenched mechanisms of inequality. Given the article's locus within the walls of organizations, and its relevance to broader questions urgently confronting society, the paper offered, as a journalist would say, a "hook" for my work, something more material than the altruism rationale I had been struggling with.

Through this thesis, I examine the role of care within organizational life, using care ethics to critically investigate the relationships and power structures we manage with, and are managed by. In particular, I apply a concept called "privileged irresponsibility" developed by feminist political theorist Joan Tronto (1993), which explains how our failure to value care perpetuates the systemic marginalization of women and people of colour. Privileged irresponsibility therefore offers a direct link to the question of organizational inequality raised by Amis et al. (2020). Until a dozen years ago, care ethics had been little mentioned in management and organizational studies (Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011)[1], and privileged irresponsibility, almost not at all. Now the findings and call to action of Amis et al. (2020) indicate a broader rationale for studying care in organizational life. It is not simply a humanitarian appeal for better relationships, or a system-serving query into how to "satisfy" or "engage" employees for improved productivity (my previous fear in conducting this research). As demonstrated by Amis et al. (2020), it is clear that organizations are sites of inequality that contribute to the larger challenges we face in building a just society. Trying to understand the mechanisms within this problem, to build on their work, galvanizes my purpose. Who should care about care? The answer, this thesis argues, is anyone committed to redressing the inequality rife in our world.

[1] A more recent spate of work has started to open investigation of care ethics in a variety of management-related areas, such as financial management and governance (Adhariani, Sciulli, & Clift, 2017), creative industries (Alacovska & Bissonnette, 2021), crisis management (Branicki, 2020), value creation (Parsons et al., 2021), leadership (Johansson & Edwards, 2021; Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019), employee engagement in sustainability-related behaviours (Carmeli, Brammer, Gomes, & Tarba, 2017) and social enterprise (André & Pache, 2016), among others.

1.2 Organizational Malaise: The Context

In this section, I provide a brief history of organizational life that emerged from industrialization and the rise of large corporations, dividing private from public life, changing the nature of work, and reshaping social relationships.

1.2.1 The Rise of Organizational Life

The social impacts of industrialized corporate capitalism have been well-documented (see, for example, Edgell, 2006; Jacoby, 2004; Jacques, 1996). The growth of ever-larger manufacturing facilities, urbanization of workers, division and deskilling of labour and the development of the modern corporation with its layers of white-collar workers have shaped and reshaped society since the late nineteenth century. Through the development of large-scale manufacturing came practices, structures and mores – the institution of bureaucracy and the discipline of management – that entered organizational life well beyond business, from churches and schools to community organizations and even family life. Although James Burnham's famous mid-century prediction that this would lead to a new form of society fell short of the mark (1942; Genoe McLaren, 2011), the managerial form of organization was the matter-of-fact standard by the 1980s when a management textbook commented, "[t]he corporation's managerial expertise is admired and copied by other institutions" (Frederick, Davis & Post, 1988, p. 26). Today, such a sentence would likely not even be written; management *is* organization.

Before industrialization, the word "employee" did not exist (Jacques, 1996). The household was "the productive unit in which family and non-family members lived and worked together, pooling resources, and producing food and goods for their own consumption" (Edgell, 2006, p. 10). Economic and political activities were located in households and kin relations

(Harding, 2009, p. 410). Workers tended to take on paid employment only for short periods during the agricultural off-season. A "job" referred to a finite batch of work, not a permanent waged position; being a paid "hireling for life" was considered disreputable (Jacques, 1996, p. 48). Companies were small and personal, the management "class" did not yet exist, and business was deeply embedded in (and less influential than) the larger daily life of the community.

This changed rapidly as organizations grew in scale through the might of industrialized mass production technology. With the end of "family capitalism" (Kanter, 1977, p. 18), increasing corporate mergers and the rise of absentee capital investors, owners who had once worked side by side with workers became distant from production, and a professionalized management cadre took their place. To support the increasing capacity of industrial machinery this new management established administrative structures, with layers of hierarchy, chains of command, functional departments, and reporting systems. Hourly wages replaced output-based "job" payment; inspired by Frederick Taylor (1911), managers implemented systems that standardized work tasks and processes.

Production in the household was replaced by products from the factory, with ready-to-use clothing and food and a variety of new consumer goods available to wage-earners whose hours were now spent "at work." The new workplace established individualized (not family) incomes, regimented times of work and non-work, gendered division of labour, and the separation of work from home. Industrial capitalism created a "dominant conception of work in which real work was equated with full-time employment for pay outside the home by adult males recruited on the basis of impersonal norms," leading to the devaluation of other kinds of work (i.e. voluntary, female, or performed in the home) (Edgell, 2006, p. 26). Social science viewed this transformation as a natural evolution, with economic and political activity, men's work and loyalty, and "all of the institutions of society except the family" shifting to the modern, public sphere (Harding, 2009, p. 410).

The new economic and social reality of "work life" inevitably shaped the interactions held by people inside it. Efforts to control and direct workers developed from early roots in administrative "personnel management," through the 1950s "human relations management" movement, to "organizational behaviour" concepts based on theories drawn from psychology (Itani, 2017). A "view of employees as organisational assets or human resources emerged" (Fitzgerald & Mills, 2012, p. 14). With roots influenced by early 20th-century concepts of eugenics and natural superiority, management practice and theory legitimized structures of power; "it became accepted that it is the normal state of society for some to have the power to develop others… to shape the character of others" (Jacques, 1996, pp. 132, 123). This permitted typologizing of workers, standardized subordination of roles and individuals, and led to new social identities based on job title (and salary) rather than community status. Companies commanded a wider scope of relationship with "their" workers, and workers entered continuous employment attachments to their companies (Jacques, 1996).

So, we arrive at an established concept of organizational structure and "work life" that, despite being relatively new in human experience overall, is accepted today as the predominant social contract between "employees" and "employers," and those who manage or are managed. It is the ubiquitous structure of today's society:

> We are born in organizations, educated by organizations, and most of us spend much of our lives working for organizations. We spend much of our leisure time paying, playing, and praying in organizations. Most of us will die in an organization, and when the time

> comes for burial, the largest organization of all – the state – must grant official permission. (Etzioni, 1964, p. 1)

Organizations structure our lives everywhere. They, in turn, are structured by bureaucracy:

> No major occupation or profession in our society has escaped the process of bureaucratization. They are all – from assembly line workers to physicians – specialized, standardized, certified, arranged in a hierarchy, and coordinated by higher authorities. Moreover, bureaucracy is never simply a technical system of organization. It is also always a system of power, privilege and domination." (Jackall, 1988, p. 10)

Organizations loom so large in our imagination that we talk about them in human terms, for example, "my company wants me to move" or "I'm going to ask my company for a raise." Despite being a system constructed by humans, however, bureaucracy lacks emotion and (obviously) offers no human relationship. Weber (1958) says bureaucracy is passionless, unromantic and inhuman; its virtue is to eliminate from business "love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation" (quoted in Kanter, 1977, p. 22). Furthermore, bureaucracy moulds the individuals who work within it:

> Bureaucratic work shapes people's consciousness in decisive ways... it brings them into daily proximity with and subordination to authority, creating in the process upward-looking stances that have decisive social and psychological consequences... bureaucratic work causes people to bracket, while at work, the moralities that they might hold outside the workplace or that they might adhere to privately and to follow instead the prevailing morality of their particular organizational situation. (Jackall, 1988, pp. 5-6)

This paints a bleak landscape for care, with its relational ethic of connection and meeting needs. It's likely that most of today's workers experience a deficit in care, or even a perversion of care, in the substantial part of their lives that they spend "at work" within organizations, and this experience shapes their consciousness and behaviour. Yet it also aligns with a historical view of where care has become located (or misplaced) in modern society, to which we now turn.

1.2.2 The Industrial Separation and Gendering of Private and Public Life

With industrialization came the advent of paid work outside the home, which created a shift in social life. Although early factories initially preferred women workers, due to their "presumed docility, dexterity and, above all perhaps, cheapness" (Edgell, 2006, p. 21), this became perceived as a threat to male authority in the home and raised questions about who would care for children (Edgell, 2006, p. 22). In the UK, a series of developments – union restrictions on women, laws limiting child labour and promoting better wages for male workers, employer policies disallowing married women from jobs – conspired to significantly exclude women from the paid workforce (Edgell, 2006, p. 23). By the end of the 19th century in the UK, the model of work was characterized by the male breadwinner and the female homemaker; once industrial capitalism was established, the dominant conception of "work" was understood to be "undertaken outside the home (i.e., industrial), for pay (i.e., capitalist), by adult males on a full-time and uninterrupted basis (i.e. patriarchal), and… allocated individually with reference to impersonal universalistic criteria (i.e., modern)" (Edgell, 2006, p. 24). Work that fit this model was prioritized over other types of work, such as unpaid housework.

Although women traditionally produced goods within the home both for family use and also for sale outside the home, the new model of work narrowed the definition of women's role in society. “As production became separated from the household… [t]he family became a more private sphere,” says Tronto (1993, p. 34). She details how the shift of production outside the home created a need to “contain” women in a new way, by associating them with the private and domestic, and excluding them from public function. As capitalism developed, men became active in businesses that connected them to the “impersonal, extralocal dynamic of the market [… and a] radical division between the spheres of action and of consciousness of middle-class men and women emerged” (Smith, 2005, p. 14). By the mid-nineteenth century, the world outside the home was increasingly populated by organizations of an “immense variety […] scientific, religious, cultural, political, and economic. Yet they were, with a few notable exceptions, founded and run by men” (Davidoff, 2003, p. 16). Women’s domain was firmly in the home, engaged in domestic work not seen or valued by the market. This isolation was self-perpetuating; as noted by Bryson (1992), “the domestic division of labour militates against equality in public life” (p. 175).

The enclosure of the home, and women within the home, also caused the assignment of feelings and emotion as the domain of women. Tronto (1993) rejects this association as a function of historic development rather than essential:

> According to Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, 18th century men exhibited the senses of connection, moral sensibilities, attachment to others and to community that are often [today] attributed to women. This historical fact undermines the notion that some biological, psychological, or universal cultural connection links women to moral sentiments. (p. 57)

The separation of work from home, private from public, and men from women also contributed to the gendering of emotions. In the public realm, depersonalized “justice ethics” and universalized, rule-based morality took the forefront, forming the basis of most of the institutions prevalent in our society today. Contained in the home, women, and the work to which they were primarily relegated – caregiving – became associated with "natural" sentiment as an antidote to the "vanity, corruption and self-interest" of the increasingly complex, rules-based, impersonal and masculine world (Tronto, 1993, pp. 50-57). This brings us to the question of care.

1.2.3 Misplaced Care

Care is defined by Joan Tronto[2] (1993) as

> a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web." (p. 103, italics in original)

Care is an essential element of being human: to be enmeshed in a web of relationships, to derive and provide support for life. Sustainability authors Ehrenfeld and Hoffman (2013) say care "reflects a consciousness of our interconnectedness with the world (the web of life) and the historic recognition that well-being depends on acting to keep these relationships in a healthy state" (p. 84). Another calls care "the ongoing concern for the well-being and the constructive development of the one caring, the one or ones cared for, and the relationship" (Hawk, 2011, p. 4). Further definitions and theoretical conceptualizations will be dealt with later, but all generally have in common the ideas that care is central to life, embedded in relationships, and ubiquitous in human dealings (whether recognized or not).

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[2] with Berenice Fisher (Tronto, 1993, p. 103)

However, since the 18th century, care has been largely relegated to the private domain of the home rather than the public domain of work and society, following the industrial economic shift discussed earlier. (The exception is care that has been packaged and produced into a monetized service, such as care homes, personal shopping services, child care centres, etc.) Therefore, *care* has not played a significant role in industrial development, the emergence of professional management practice, the formalizing of markets, or the conceptualization of organizational life. As Puka (2011) facetiously comments, “Caring is a highly personal, intimate, and familial notion, not designed for the often contentious, rough-and-tumble world of business sharks and barracudas” (p. 176).

Relegating care to the home meant it also became associated with those stationed there; “the cultural designation of women as carers” is still prevalent in society (Edgell, 2006, pp. 173-174). By contrast, men became increasingly associated with reason (Ruel, in press), and the world beyond the home. In the public realm of work, feeling and emotion were suppressed. This was true both for employees, “[i]ndividual sense-making, belief, and feeling [became] irrelevant as long as they led to correct practice” (Jacques, 1996, p. 81), and for managers, “the managerial ethic of self-control imposes solemn rules for self-abnegation” (Jackall, 1988, p. 48). Moreover, the association of care with femininity and the home gave it negative currency in the structured, rational, professionalized workplace. Those who require care came to be seen as helpless or needy (Tronto, 1993, p. 120). By contrast, those who didn’t need care, or who could push “lowly” care work to subordinates, appeared more masculine, powerful and competent. This isolation of care from the workplace, and the ability/tendency of economic privilege to allow denial of the need for care form the basis for my exploration of inequality mechanisms within organizational life.

1.3 Managerialism and Inequality: The Position of Care

At the heart of my thesis is a triangulation between the inequality work of Amis et al. (2020), the labour process analysis of Harry Braverman (1974), and the work of care theorist Joan Tronto (1993, 2013). Braverman (1974) described how the efficiency movement concentrated labour process knowledge in the hands of management, leaving workers progressively deskilled. I argue that this also had an effect on care in the workplace, causing some aspects of care to become unvalued as "invisible labour." This connects to Tronto's (1993) concept of privileged irresponsibility, where those who have privilege can afford to deny that they need or receive care, even when they do, perpetuating their privilege – this is made easier when the work has been rendered "invisible". Finally, I connect this to the inequality work done by Amis et al. (2020), who identify organizational practices and "myths" that contribute to the reproduction of economic inequality in organizations. This triangulation is fully explored in Chapter 2. Here, I provide an introduction to the key concepts that support it.

1.3.1 The Reproduction of Organizational Inequality

The effort by academics to understand inequality within organizations is not new. It was in fact the multitude of disparate research efforts in this regard that attracted the attention of Amis et al. (2020). Noticing that research into inequality has been siloed according to types of practices, types of organizations, or disciplines, their goal was to integrate findings in order to assess the relationship between organizations and inequality. Thus, the authors examined 232 articles, 76 books and 14 government and institutional reports published in the fields of management, organization studies, geology, social psychology, economics, epidemiology, gender studies, cultural studies, race studies, and geography. They offer their work as a platform from which to build further inquiries into the nature of organizational inequality (a call to which this thesis responds).

Despite rising economic inequality in general, the authors say, *organizations* usually evade scrutiny: they are viewed as “rational and neutral,” and “organizations, and the people who work within them, remain largely invisible” (Amis et al., 2020, p. 1) Since organizations bestow significant economic and social opportunities and status that stretch beyond their boundaries, the authors’ goal was to reassess this assumed neutrality, and to discover whether organizational processes contribute to the larger problem of systemic inequality in society (Amis et al., 2020, p. 1). Through their literature review, they found convincingly that “organizations are sites where inequality is produced and amplified” (p. 24), and where the reproduction of inequality is “systemic rather than accidental” (p.16). They compile five organizational practices where inequality is produced and reproduced; these are detailed in Chapter 4 as they provide structure to my methodological approach.

Amis et al. (2020) also found that despite evidence to the contrary, many believe the system functions justly, leading them to seek underlying beliefs that “allow things to carry on unquestioned” (p.16). They identify three such institutional myths – “widely but not necessarily consciously held ideals that are collectively rationalized and largely unchallenged” (p. 2) – that bind the organizational practices into an established operating pattern. These are efficiency, meritocracy, and positive globalization. As I explore in Chapter 2, efficiency is also closely linked with the rationality of bureaucracy, and as such, has implications for the sidelining and elimination of “messy” human faculties, such as emotion – and by association, care. Meritocracy, the belief that individuals advance based on their ability and performance rather than family, gender or class, has become embedded in organizational life, with "merit-based" performance reviews and compensation systems, for example. This myth is so well embedded that even those who are harmed by inequality still tend to believe the system is inherently meritocratic (Amis et al., 2020, p.19). As I explore in Chapter 2, however, a system based on merit would, by definition, reward only ability and performance that is *visible*, while care work within organizations is often rendered invisible. The concepts of efficiency and meritocracy also help structure my discursive methodological approach, in Chapter 4.

1.3.2 Efficiency and the Labour Process

Efficiency – the drive to eliminate waste of any type from industrial production processes – became a central element of management practice in the early 20th century. As developed into "scientific" practice by Frederick Taylor (1911), it entailed management analysis of every movement required in a specific work task, to determine the "one best way" to execute the work with the least expenditure of time, effort, and material. Once this best way was determined, workers were to follow exacting instructions outlined by their supervisors. This not only standardized work tools, schedules, and processes, but also created a clear division between those who planned the work, and those who executed it.

In his analysis, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Braverman (1974) argued that this separation of work conception from execution concentrated knowledge about the labour process in the hands of managers. The exacting detail collected in time-and-motion studies, he said, created a management monopoly over work knowledge, mirrored by the absence of such knowledge amongst workers (p. 119). Taking this point one step further, one can posit a corollary: that the institution and practice of management as it has developed over the past century includes a self-definitional belief that management knows all there is to know about the work it oversees.

The conceptualization of management as "scientific" built on, and reinforced, the perception of the workplace as rational rather than emotional, based on universalized rules rather than relational and contextual values. Despite the reality that workplaces are full of human emotion (Fineman, 2000), bureaucratic practices aim to exclude or suppress the emotional lives of those who work within them (Ferguson, 1984) and place value on those who succeed in doing so (Jackall, 1988). This means, arguably, that activities deemed rational and efficient are visible within management practice, while activities that don't fit the mould may appear peripheral, inefficient and intrusive. If they are not recognized as valid workplace activity, efforts requiring emotional and relational skills may thus be rendered "invisible" to management: unknown, unmanaged, and therefore unvalued.

1.3.3 Care Ethics and Privileged Irresponsibility

Care ethics emerged as a distinct moral theory beginning with the work of feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan and philosopher Nel Noddings in the 1980s. Gilligan (1977, 1982) rejected the work by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) – commonly accepted at the time – that proposed a six-stage cognitive-developmental theory of moral development, because she saw that women consistently did not score as well as men on the Kohlberg scale. She traced this difference to women's focus on relationship maintenance and the well-being of others, as compared to the values of autonomy and formal rights that topped Kohlberg's moral hierarchy. In exposing the gender bias in Kohlberg's work, whose data was drawn entirely from all-male students from Harvard, Gilligan went on to articulate her "ethic of care," a moral stance differing from one grounded in fairness/justice: “This conception of morality as concerned with the activity of care centres moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules” (Gilligan, 1982, p. 19). Noddings (1984) developed the concept more fully as an ethic focused on relationships and interrelatedness. Held (2006) explored the differences between justice ethics and care ethics, helping to clarify the central attributes of an ethic of care, explored in Chapter 2. After 40 years of discussion, care ethics has arrived at a position of respect, diverse application and relative consensus; while it is not expected to eclipse or replace justice or rights-based approaches, it has gained acceptance as a legitimate normative ethical theory and an important framework for many moral considerations.

One of the leading contributors to the development of care ethics is Joan Tronto, who argues for its inclusion in political life, rejecting theoretical limitations of care as dyadic, private and essentially feminine (Tronto, 1987, 1993), and arguing for its application to a much wider set of concerns in the world (Tronto, 2013). Tronto’s ethic of care is composed of five interconnected phases, each with an associated moral element, detailed in Chapter 2. This study draws significantly on Tronto’s work for two reasons. First, her definition of care and specific phases of care / moral elements provide a framework by which care-related organizational activities and organizational discourse can be evaluated. Second, her concept of privileged irresponsibility, a care-based rationale to explain systemic marginalization, provides a compelling link between the study of care in organizations and the search for how organizations reproduce inequality. Says Tronto, “One of the great benefits or privileges that comes from being in a position of superiority in a hierarchical system is that one need not consider one’s role or responsibility in maintaining that system. Thus, such systems come to rely upon the peculiar ignorance of the beneficiaries of the system" (White & Tronto, 2004, p. 442). Exploring how this dynamic may be fostered within the walls of the organization is central to this thesis.

1.4 Research Questions

In this dissertation I explore and answer four questions. The first seeks to establish the context of HBR and its enrollment in a managerialist vision of work and the workplace:

1. *What managerialist discourses does HBR reproduce?*

The second question, in two parts, allows me to explore Tronto's definition of care as a practice that is aimed at maintaining, continuing, or repairing our world. Given that organizations become worlds unto themselves that are bent on self- "maintaining and continuing"; given such care-leaning management trends as employee "engagement" and "wellness"; and given the generally social nature of life within organizations, the question is not whether care exists at all, but rather where it is found, who provides it and who receives it, whether it is offered freely or demanded, and by whom.

2.(a) Where does care manifest within organizational life and work?

2.(b) What types of care are recognized or valued vs. types of care that are not?

The third question is focused on privileged irresponsibility, the ability to expect and receive care without needing to recognize it, due to privilege (Tronto, 1993). Such an inquiry must discern where care is provided, even commanded, but simultaneously denigrated or denied. Furthermore, the impact of this denial on the care-provider must be examined. This question draws on literature about *invisible work* (Daniels, 1987), which is the concept of disadvantaged and/or unrecognized labour "that is economically devalued through cultural, legal and/or spatial dynamics" (Hatton, 2017) The exploration of this connection offers insight into what might be accomplished by centring an ethic of care within organizational life.

3. How do managerialist discourses help produce privileged irresponsibility (lack of recognition for care) in organizational life?

The final question builds on the previous questions and answers, and specifically responds to the call by Amis et al. (2020) to help explicate how the inequality-producing practices in organizations function, by examining whether care – and its denial – may be a factor.

(RQ4) How does the manifestation and recognition of care within organizations relate to the perpetuation of (economic) inequality by organizations?

1.5 Methodology

Ontologically, I identify with a posthumanist stance, as I am moved by the ecological imperative, in these challenging times, to decentre the human and reject structural anthropocentrism (Braidotti, Bozalek, Shefer, & Zembylas, 2018), to embrace "radical interdependence" rather than "ontologies of separation" (Escobar & Maffei, 2022), and to agree that "relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality" (Wilson, 2008). Starting from this point provides an unapologetic footing for care, given its relational nature and focus on meeting tangible needs, which aligns well with embodied and embedded relationality, within a "thick and dynamic web of interconnections" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 45). To situate the socially constructed world of discourse from a posthumanist ontology, I construct a nested onto-epistemological lens, following Barad (2008) and understanding that "language is fundamental to our embodied enaction, our bringing forth a world, as humans" (Wolfe (2010, p. xxv). I draw on posthumanist concepts of power, *potestas* (restrictive force) and *potentia* (empowerment)

(Braidotti, 2019), and discourse analysis concepts from Phillips and Hardy (2002) and Hardy (2022) to employ a discursive, critical approach for my analysis.

The texts and images for this discourse analysis were drawn from *Harvard Business Review* (HBR), a hybrid scholarly journal and practitioner trade magazine which prides itself on presenting the leading edge of management research, education and trends; HBR is effectively at the centre of (Western, capitalist) managerialist discourse (Anonymous, 2000; Kirby, 2012). Drawing from my literature on inequality, care, and labour process theory, I constructed a selection process that allowed me to source from 100 years of HBR 140 articles that yielded elements of managerial discourse, care, and privileged irresponsibility. Using Atlas.ti software as a basic tool to manage the coding process, I read articles deeply, seeking indications of care, managerialism or inequality. After reading and coding the articles twice, I pulled thick data sets by code to review and seek patterns, combining data sets in iterative ways to seek diverse insights.

Reflexively, I recognize that embracing a critical investigation is to challenge social phenomena without taking them for granted. To underline my reflexivity, throughout my dissertation I share vignettes based on observations from my organizational experiences at more than 15 jobs ranging from a fish plant to a bank. These are stories that have driven my curiosity about care in organizations and how relationships within organizations seem to operate with different rules than relationships in the rest of life. The stories are included to add an element of autoethnography and plausibility, as well as life and colour, and to evoke readers' similar workplaces experiences, with the belief that writing differently can enhance management learning (Gilmore, Harding, Helin, & Pullen, 2019). While I do not directly dissect these stories for the purpose of my analysis, I believe they help illuminate the real-life enigmas we face about the way organizational life directs and permits us to behave, and the questions we should ask as a result.

1.6 Contributions

Generally, this dissertation builds on efforts to bring care ethics into organizational studies (see, for example, Fotaki, Islam, & Antoni, 2020a; Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011; Jacques, 1993; Liedtka, 1996; Noddings, 2015; Smith & McKie, 2009). Specific contributions of this work are that it:

1. Identifies ways that care manifests in organizational life, which allows the examination of how posthumanist power differentials affect the provision and perception of care. I also examine how managerialist discourses influence the way care is provided, received, and understood. This responds to the research call by Fotaki, Islam, and Antoni (2020b) to trace how care manifests in organizational practices and contexts.
2. Introduces and applies Joan Tronto's (1993, 2013, 2015) concept of privileged irresponsibility to management and organization studies. I use the concept to examine how the systems of hierarchical materialist power and managerial discourse within organizations may oppress and subjugate some people's needs and their opportunities, which helps maintain inequities in organizational life.
3. Explores the relationship between efficiency and the marginalization of care via privileged irresponsibility, which can marginalize the care-giver along with the care. The study also examines how managerialism contributes to some work being framed as having merit while other work is not seen. This responds to the research calls by Amis

et al. (2020) to build on their work related to the organizational reproduction of inequality.

4. Suggests a link between the experience of the managerialist workplace and the "deskilling of care" in society, a broad loss of the relationality and mutuality that is fundamental to human flourishing and ecological survival.
5. Offers the concept of "nested onto-epistemologies" to permit the examination of discourse from a posthumanist lens. This idea also offers an approach to understanding how relational concepts, such as care, might be viewed and understood differently from different realms within the nested landscapes.

1.7 Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters, including this introduction. In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the main argument, historical framing, and theoretical and methodological framework for the study, as well as my contributions.

In Chapter 2, I review relevant literature, including care ethics, and its connections to inequality through the concepts of emotion, emotional labour, invisible labour, Braverman's labour process theory, and privileged irresponsibility. I then draw in the origins of managerialism and discuss the "organizational myths" of efficiency and meritocracy to help consider how these have affected relationships within organizations.

In Chapter 3, I discuss my posthuman theoretical lens, and the nested onto-epistemological landscape against which I situate various views of care, and my discursive, critical methodological approach.

In Chapter 4, I explain my research process. I provide a background of the *Harvard Business Review* (HBR), the source of texts for my study, and a rationale for its use. I explain my approach to the texts, including selection, coding, and analysis, and discuss some limitations of critical discourse analysis.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present my findings, drawn from the *Harvard Business Review* texts. In Chapter 5, I explore how core elements of managerialism are presented, developed and reinforced in this journal that acts as a cornerstone of management thinking and education. This chapter answers my first research question.

Chapter 6 explores where care – based on the definition I am applying – appears in the pages of HBR, and how it is represented, whether it is recognized and valued or not. This answers my second research question.

In Chapter 7, I discuss privileged irresponsibility and present the various ways that it can be seen in the organizational life presented in HBR. I examine how the treatment of care, and experience of privileged irresponsibility within organizational life may be contributing to the reproduction of inequality. This answers my third research and fourth research questions.

In Chapter 8, I return to my posthumanism lens to discuss how it may offer the best view of care. I discuss limitations to this study, potential future avenues for research, and offer concluding observations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Vignette: The imposition of care

The project coordinator, one of my direct reports, asked to speak to me in my office. She had just been called for an emergency obstetrical appointment; tests showed her pregnancy might be ectopic, a serious and perhaps untreatable situation. She dissolved into tears as the possibility of losing her pregnancy dawned on her. I knelt beside her, put my hand on her arm, let her cry. I told her we would arrange any support she needed. Over and over, she said she was sorry for crying. I assured her it was okay (normal!).

The situation turned out to be fine; her pregnancy continued. She brought me a gift. She was grateful for the support I had shown, but mostly deeply embarrassed and apologetic for the emotion she had failed to conceal and the moment of care she had exacted from me. She clearly felt such behaviour was not professional and should not have been foisted upon a "superior."

2.1 Introduction

As the 20th century saw the rise of bureaucratic industrialization, interpersonal relations at work became subject to the same pressures for efficiency that were applied in organizations' engineering and operational divisions (Hochschild, 1983; Itani, 2017; Jackall, 1988). As the vignette above illustrates, this has resulted in a professionalized, managerial workplace where personal inefficiencies – such as being overcome by emotion or requiring care – are felt to be out of place and inappropriate.

In this chapter, I explore the literature related to central concepts used in my dissertation, which help set the context of the vignette above. I first explore definitions of care, as particularly as these have emerged from the 40-year old field of care ethics. I then present key elements from care ethics, which help to position how care manifests, how it is seen, and how it is valued. I then draw from literatures that provide concepts that are relevant to my thesis: emotional labour, invisible labour, efficiency and Braverman's labour process theory. This establishes the mechanisms I will use in investigating managerialist discourses in management texts presented in later chapters. Finally, I introduce two separate but related concepts: the organizational myths of *efficiency* and *meritocracy,* which are mechanisms that perpetuate the production of economic inequality in organizations (Amis, Mair, & Munir, 2020); and, *privileged irresponsibility,* which directly connects the treatment of care to inequality (Tronto, 1993, 2013).

To position this study within the literature, I note that ideas about care ethics have been expanded and strengthened through application in disciplines as diverse as political theory (Engster, 2004), geography (McEwan & Goodman, 2010), nursing (Vanlaere & Gastmans, 2007), marriage and family studies (Coltrane, 2000), education (Goldstein, 1998; Zembylas, Bozalek, & Shefer, 2014), international relations (Robinson, 1997), and others. The growing interest prompted comment from Noddings (2013) in the update to her 1984 text:

> In the first couple of decades of discussion on the subject, it was often assumed that care ethics could be usefully applied in families and small communities but that we must turn to a liberal theory of justice to address moral questions in institutional and international affairs. Now, there is good reason to argue that care ethics can be employed at every level of human activity. Noddings (2013, p. 206)

However, care ethics has not been widely applied in business and management-related scholarship. Two publications have helped change this situation: *Applying Care Ethics to Business* (Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011b) and *Business Ethics and Care in Organizations* (Fotaki, Islam, & Antoni, 2020a). Nevertheless, as Hamington (2019) noted, "care ethics has achieved some attention among business ethics scholars, [but] it is still not a common concept or way of thinking for business professionals" (p. 91). In this chapter, I explore some of the background about why this may be the case.

2.2 Defining Care

In this section, I introduce the definition of care that I use centrally in this thesis, and clarify the type of care work which is my focus. I then explore critiques and additional definitions of care, in order to establish that much of the work done in organizations can be considered to be care.

2.2.1. Joan Tronto's Definition of Care

Although definitions of care are the subject of ongoing discussion (Fotaki, Islam, & Antoni, 2020b), I rely centrally on the definition by Tronto[1] (1993) as it offers tangible components well-suited to this study. Tronto's (1993) definition says that care is:

> "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web." (p. 103)

Tronto (2015) acknowledges that the definition is very broad; she says care shows up everywhere in our lives (Tronto, 2015, p. 3). The standard "so that we can live in the world as well as possible" draws a picture of human flourishing while permitting context and creativity to determine the details. Activity is centered in her care definitions while a notion of both physical

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[1] With co-author Berenice Fisher (p. 103).

and mental/spiritual wellness is described ("our bodies" and "our selves"). An ethic of sustainability is embedded, both by specific mention of the environment, but also by envisioning future well-being via a "life-sustaining web." Tronto (1993) abstains from providing direction about how to ensure society is focused on care; as a democratic political theorist, she requires that such decisions be made democratically, although she does offer ideas about how to rethink responsibilities and become a "care-foremost citizen" (Tronto, 1993, p. 28-35).

Since care is based in practice and action, Tronto (1993, 2013) developed a framework presenting five[2] phases of care along with the moral element most relevant at each phase. Viewing care through this framework of actions offers one way to consider it as an active element of organizational work. Tronto's (1993, 2013) phases of care are:

- *Caring about*: noticing unmet needs and recognizing a requirement for care; this requires *attentiveness*, a suspension of one's self-interest.
- *Caring for*: a person or group takes on the burden of ensuring the needs are met; *responsibility* is the main moral quality of this phase.
- *Care-giving*: is the actual work of providing caring; it requires *competence*.
- *Care-receiving*: responding to the care that is given by the caregiver; the response might come from the care-receiver or from other individuals or observations. This allows assessment of the care provided as well as identifying new needs that might arise. The moral element of this phase is *responsiveness*.
- *Caring with*: Tronto added this phase to further her exploration of care and democracy. This phase requires that meeting needs is consistent with democratic ideals. *Trust, respect*, and *solidarity* are moral elements here.

[2] The first four were published in 1993, the fifth added in 2013.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Tronto (2013) also identifies a potential dark side to the concept of care, that it can "function discursively to obscure injustices" (p. 24). She gives the example of British colonialism in India being presented not as exploitation, but as an opportunity to improve the lives of Indigenous Indians.

2.2.2 Care Within Organizations

There are many organizations that provide care as their primary, or additional product: care homes, day care organizations, educational facilities, even lawn care and food delivery services. Indeed, the commercialization of care is a steadily growing business (see for example Hochschild, 2012). This thesis, however, does not focus on this type of explicit care as a commercial service. Rather, my focus is on care embedded within other organizational work; following Tronto's (1993, 2013) definition above, I am interested in care work that helps "maintain, continue and repair" our *organizational* world so that we can "live in [*our organizations*] as well as possible." It is my belief that although this work is both needed and provided, it is often – if not always – little seen and undervalued.

In some cases, this work is aimed at caring for the organization itself, such as behaviour calibrated to provide the best impression possible at a meeting with external clients, ensuring that the organizational "brand" is well represented. In other cases, it is work that might be deemed "organizational citizenship," that is, taking care of the needs of other employees in a way not specifically mandated in one's job description. Finally, I theorize that there is care work embedded within hierarchical relationships, where those in subordinate positions anticipate needs and manage situations and activities to ensure "smooth sailing" for those "above" them. Sometimes this is clearly understood. For example, a 1961 article entitled *That Girl in the Office* made it clear that a secretary might need to be "a housekeeping girl" or might need to reach "the office before he does mornings" to fling open the windows and air it out (Knight, 1961). At other times, care tasks are not specifically defined in the role, but may be expected or commanded, and/or penalized in their absence. One must look carefully to find examples of care tasks in the organization, however. As Tronto (2005) notes, because care has been historically defined as separate from the public realm, "work that is left within the public realm is never called 'care'" (p. 142).

2.2.3 Definitions of Care: Critique and Debate

Tronto's (1993) definition of care has been criticized as being too broad. Held (2006), for example, says it could include "vast amounts of economic activity," losing the distinctive features of caring labour, and not requiring a sensitivity to the needs of the cared-for that theorists often specify (p. 32). Despite her criticism, Held too envisions care as an activity embedded throughout human life: "…caring relations extend well beyond the sorts of caring that takes place in families and among friends, or even in the care institutions of the welfare state, to the *social ties that bind groups together*, to the bonds on which political and *social institutions* can be built, and even to the global concerns that citizens of the world can share" (p. 31, emphasis added).

In comparison, a much narrower definition comes from Bubeck (1995):

> Caring for is the meeting of the needs of one person by another person, where face-to-face interaction between carer and cared-for is a crucial element of the overall activity and where the need is of such a nature that it cannot possibly be met by the person in need herself. (p. 129)

Bubeck (1995) would include as care the action of cooking a meal for a small child, but not the action of a wife cooking a meal for her husband when he could have cooked the meal for himself. The former is care, the latter is a service. She would define as care only actions that respond to specific basic human needs which make us dependent on others. She does note that advanced social division of labour and specialization in our society means there are things we cannot produce for ourselves; however she says the interdependency that is created by this diversification is socially caused, not "humanly necessary", and since, in theory at least, able-bodied adults could all cook our own meals or fix our own washing machines, the meeting of needs such as these is not care. Therefore, a baker who provides the bread that a frail elderly person (unable to cook) eats is not providing care, unless that baker produces a special loaf specifically tailored to that person's needs, for that person's use (Bubeck, 1995, p. 131). Although Bubeck (1995) says care does not have to be unpaid, she generally disqualifies any activity where the provider does not directly know the recipient of care and their particular needs. In fact, she eschews defining specific activities as care, saying the definition depends on the function of the activity, and whether it meets a certain type of need (in other words, the understanding of care is contextual).

Bubeck (1995) critiques Tronto's definition of care for not specifically mentioning needs, only that activity is done so that we can "live as well as possible" (although Tronto, 1993, does discuss that care involves "taking the concerns and needs of the other as the basis for action" and "taking the other's needs as the starting point for what must be done", p. 104). On the other hand, Bubeck's (1995) strong focus on needs while not requiring an emotional bond between carer and cared-for is contested by Held (2006):

> [Bubeck] seems to think that care is almost entirely constituted by the objective fact of needs being met, rather than by the attitude or ideal with which the carer is acting. Her conception is then open to the objection that as long as the deception is successful,

> someone going through the motions of caring for a child while wishing the child dead is engaged in care of as much moral worth as that of a carer who intentionally and with affection seeks what is best for the child. For me, this objection is fatal. [...] A world in which the motive of care is goodwill rather than ill will [...] is a better world.[...] An important aspect of care is how it *expresses* our attitudes and relationships. (pp. 32-33, emphasis original)

This question – whether caring is a virtue, focused on "inner traits, dispositions, and motivations of the caring person" or a practice, focused on "a person's external actions and their consequences" divides care theorists (Engster, 2007, p. 21). Indeed, elements of activity, disposition, intention, intimacy and outcome are all parts of ongoing discussion and debate amongst those analyzing care and care ethics (see for example, overviews in Fotaki et al., 2020, Held, 2006, Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011, Introduction).

In this thesis, I do not engage with the detailed edges of this argument, that is, trying to define exactly what activities, or motives, constitute care. I am more focused on a larger conceptualization of care, which stems from my posthumanist ontology, outlined in Chapter 3. Care to me is a broad, open and inclusive affect-action; to provide a home-cooked meal for someone who technically was fully capable of doing it themselves is still a generous act, a gift, (perhaps) an expression of love, perhaps an acknowledgement of reciprocity, a gesture of meaning well. In any case, it entails relationship, and that is its fundamental: "interdependency as the ontological state in which humans and countless other beings unavoidably live" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 4).

In our task-divided and specialized world, we are perhaps more dependent on each other than we have ever been in history. In theory, I could be able to fix my own furnace, but in reality

I am not able to fix my own furnace, not within the constraints of the organizational and specialized world in which most of us in industrialized societies live and work (i.e., having limited and specialized training that makes me highly competent in some contexts and completely unqualified in others, such as home heating repair). And particularly within hierarchical organizations, we have organized work in order to isolate certain activities from each other in the name of efficiency. Therefore, although a plant supervisor may generally understand the operation of each of the machines in the plant, the highly computerized nature of manufacturing today may mean that she needs the specialized training of people on her team. In other types of workplaces, a person in a subordinate role, despite having many skills of their own, may not be able to access permissions, instructions, or finances required to complete a task, and needs a supervisor to provide those.

Certainly, my examples stray from the idea of intimate caring that originated in early care ethics, drawn from imagery of maternal care and nurture, and again, these “needs” do not represent those that are “humanly necessary” in Bubeck’s view. So I agree with Fotaki et al. (2020b) that although “what it means to be caring in organizations does not call for an easy answer” (p. 4). But continuing with them, I agree that “care is an essential aspect of how we experience work in organizations.... *we exist through our connections to others*” (p. 11, emphasis added). Hamington (2019) says “care theory is based on the notion that humans are fundamentally relational, existing in a dynamic web of associations” (p. 92), which certainly could include the web of work interactions that occur daily within organizations. He also says caring occurs in every business, whether it is fostered by the company or not: “Individuals will care for one another even under oppressive circumstances” (Hamington, 2011, p. 255). Freeman and Liedtka (1991) say the corporation is a place in which “both individual human beings and human communities engage in caring activities that are aimed at mutual support and unparalleled human achievement" (p.96); Smith and McKie (2009) argue that care is "ever-present" in the workplace: "workplace social relations are imbued with care; however, this is not typically termed or recognized as such" (Section 1.3). And Tronto states that care "is found in the household, in services and goods sold in the market, and in the workings of bureaucratic organizations in contemporary life" (Tronto, 2018, p. 143).

Clearly, I'm not the first to propose the identification of care within the organizational world. Although I will raise a critique of "care instrumentalized," which I believe underlies many human resources policies, there are some companies that appear to have centred true care at the heart of their cultures[3]. Meanwhile, the discussion of care within organizations and the application of care ethics to organizational life – beyond just those organizations whose central product is care – is on the rise (see, for example, Fotaki et al., 2020a; Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011a). Therefore, I have not attempted to identify specific actions or tasks that can be called care, but rather I aim to examine the interactions, context, relationships, choices and values within organizations through the lens of care ethics.

An example of this thinking can be found in a chapter titled "Taking care of business: Caring in competitive corporate structures." Puka (2011) works to translate care ethics into business practice in this chapter. Although he offers some specific tactical examples in a case study, he primarily describes cultivating an *attitude* of care when approaching situations and relationships that would typically occur in business. Here, for example, is his presentation of care's main features, prescribed as a set of "do" and "don't" practices for the workplace:

[3] An interesting company, for example, is Barry-Wehmiller Companies, whose CEO Bob Chapman published *Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring For Your People Like Family***.** (Chapman & Sisodia, 2015)

> *DOs*: Taking a relational (not separated) orientation toward others, showing attentiveness (listening, observing), […] showing understanding and compassion-toward-need or concerns, sharing positives and aspirations, helping, supporting, nurturing or empowering, reaching accommodation[…].
>
> *DONT'S* [sic]: Coming into a situation set on one's position beforehand, pre-judging and being judgmental, dismissive, personally aloof, and over-assertive—being strongly interventionist and unilaterally so (imposing one's will, one's outlook). (Puka, 2011, p. 183)

To sum up, organizations are sites of extensive collaboration to produce outcomes beyond what any one individual could produce alone. This is accomplished through a web of relationships that repeatedly identify needs, whether those of an individual, team, or the organization itself, and take action to meet them. The activity helps maintain, continue, and repair the organizational world in order to "live as well as possible," whether that entails a self-actualizing work experience or simply gaining a paycheque that will feed one's family. (Care theory, says Liedtka (1996) "suits well the realities of corporate life, which is often about that which is required, rather than that which is chosen" p. 182.) Establishing that care occurs within organizational life opens the path, later, for analyzing how it is perceived and valued within managerialist discourses.

2.3 Care Ethics

The discussion of *what is care,* explored above, has its roots in care ethics, which developed over the past 40 years from an initial feminist rejection of a moral development scale created by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). Gilligan (1977, 1982) found that his work – developed from data from male university students but applied universally – did not capture the thinking of women subjects, who consistently scored lower than men on moral development using the Kohlberg scale. Gilligan explored the ethical reasoning of female subjects, and her book, *In a Different Voice* (1982), was the first to use the term “ethic of care.”

Gilligan (1982) says an ethic of justice rests on the premise of equality – that everyone should be treated the same – while an ethic of care rests on the premise of nonviolence – that no one should be hurt. Such a construction of an ethic of care understands “the origins of aggression in the failure of connection” (p. 173), recognizing the importance of relationships, context, and social interaction. Noddings (2015) puts it succinctly: “It is generally recognized that justice is a rights-based ethic and care is needs-based” (p. 72).

Ruddick (1980) helped shape care ethics by examining the cognitive capacities, metaphysical attitudes and conceptions of virtue that arise from the thinking work of mothers (Ruddick, 2009, p. 305). Noddings (1984) built on Gilligan’s care theories, conceiving of care as circles of relationships centred on the one caring, then emanating from close loved ones to friends and colleagues and to the world beyond, where one may move in and out of levels of relationship over time. Importantly, Noddings differentiated “caring about” from “caring for,” saying that “caring about” is inadequate unless it is accompanied by the “concrete, specific, and responsible action of caring for that results in enhancing the well-being of the other” (Hawk, 2011, p. 8). Virginia Held (2006) solidified the concepts of an ethic of care, exploring the contradictions between justice ethics and care ethics. Michael Slote (2007) clarified ideas of empathic caring, and continued to develop the framing of the ethic of care.

One of the most significant contributions to care ethics (Olthuis, Kohlen, & Heier, 2014) came from Joan Tronto (1993, 1995, 1998, 2005, 2013, 2015, 2018), a political theorist, who argues for the centralization of care in democracy, both to benefit citizens and to ensure the care of democracy itself. She further grounded the moral and historic aspects of an ethic of care, and built on Noddings' concepts of *caring about* and *caring for* to articulate the five-stage framework included above. Tronto's clarity about the substance, complexity and embeddedness of care in the broad sweep of human relations has helped subsequent theorists envision care in pragmatic and tangible terms, and has provided researchers a framework that can be applied as a building block of institutions and practice (e.g. Bozalek, 2011; Sevenhuijsen, Bozalek, Gouws, & Minnaar-McDonald, 2003), rather than leaving care marginalized as a secondary emotive quality.

2.3.1 Central Attributes of an Ethic of Care

As theorists have developed the understanding of care, certain attributes have emerged as consistent features of an ethic based on care. Drawing in part on overviews by Held (2006) and Hawk (2011), the following are generally recognized as central elements:

Focused on Relationship. Care ethics "assumes the primacy of relationship instead of assuming the ultimate ideal of independent and separated autonomy" (Hawk, 2011, p. 14). Held (2006) discusses the extremes of "selfish individual" versus "humanity" around which moral discourses are organized, saying an ethics of care instead focuses on the space between them:

> Persons in caring relations are acting for self-and-other together. Their characteristic stance is neither egoistic nor altruistic; these are the options in a conflictual situation, but the well-being of a caring relation involves the cooperative well-being of those in the relation and the *well-being of the relation itself.* (Held, 2006, p. 12, emphasis added)

Understood In Context. In comparison to justice-based ethics, with its universalized concepts of equality and fairness, care ethics confronts moral decisions based on the particulars of the situation, the specifics of who is affected and their needs. For example, Noddings (2013) decries approaching moral matters in a “mathematical way”: “Many persons who live moral lives do not approach moral problems formally […] The process of moral decision making that is founded on caring requires a process of concretization rather than one of abstraction” (p. 8). Held says, “Cost-benefit analysis is a good example of a form of utilitarian calculation that purports to provide clear answers to questions about what we ought to do, but from the point of view of moral understanding, its answers are notoriously dubious” (p. 20). Understanding that care is contextual means also that it is culturally defined and will vary between cultures.

Defined By Needs. An ethic of care is grounded in understanding, then meeting, the needs of others. This can include self-care (one is not expected to subordinate one’s own needs for care). Waerness (1984) defines different types of care based on types of needs. “Personal service” meets needs the recipient could have handled by themselves (e.g., doing laundry for your able-bodied partner), while caregiving or necessary care meets the needs of those unable to help themselves (e.g., feeding a person who is bedridden, taking care of an infant) (p. 189). These types of needs structure power imbalances; those with privilege are able to hire or compel others to take care of their needs (personal service), indicating that their own needs take precedence over the needs of the caregivers. Those requiring necessary care are dependent (e.g., children, the elderly, those injured or impaired) and have less power than those who provide care to them. The imbalance of needs, and the reality that all needs may never be met, can create messiness and conflict. It also means that care is “deeply political” (Tronto, 2015, p. 9).

Action-oriented. Meeting needs requires work. Caring is a practice (Tronto, 1998); an ethic of care “always leads to some concrete, empathically constructive act or actions” (Hawk, 2011, p. 14). As outlined above, Tronto defines five phases of care. Although some phases seem less physically demanding, Tronto (2015) makes it clear that even the first phase – "caring about" – requires activity:

> […] discerning a need is actually a complicated task. The baby is crying: Does it need a bottle? Simply to be held? Most examples are much more complex. The people "on the other side of the tracks" are poor: why? Such questions invite complex thinking. (Tronto, 2015, p. 5)

Moreover, Tronto eschews theories that focus on care primarily as a virtue, because they do not centralize relationship and the active meeting of needs, but rather "the perfection of the virtuous individual" (2013, p. 36).

Valuing Emotion / Engaging the Whole Person. An ethic of care is not limited to the cognitive rationality of other ethical frameworks; it draws on affective, intuitive, empathetic and imaginative capabilities and competencies such as listening, articulation, observation, questioning and responsiveness (Hawk, 2011). Tronto (drawing on Ruddick, 1995b) refers to this as "practical rationality" (1993, p. 109). However, while emotional competence is necessary, Held notes that this does not mean "raw emotion" is appropriate; feelings must be educated. She notes that "even the helpful emotions can become misguided or worse – as when excessive empathy with others leads to a wrongful degree of self-denial or when benevolent concern crosses over into controlling domination" (2006, p. 11). This, she says, is why an ethics of care is required, not just care itself. What seems evident is that an ethic that requires contextualization, discernment through relationship, and an evaluation of specific needs requires a full scope of wits, both emotional and cognitive: a "whole person."

Open to All Genders. While the ethics of care originally developed out of feminist critique based in the "different voice" of women (Gilligan, 1982), the thinking work of mothering (Ruddick, 1995b), and the "feminine view" (Noddings, 1984), Tronto (1993) deconstructed the association of sentiment and care with the private realm of home and women as an artifact of historical development (see Chapter 1), rather than an essential "biological, psychological, or universal cultural connection [that] links women to moral sentiments" (p. 57). Although the ethics of care continues to be strongly underpinned by the feminist views and women's experience that gave rise to it, it is now understood, indeed considered necessary, that not only women can engage with and uphold its concepts[4] (which also serves to de-essentialize the "masculine" gendering of the public realm). As Hawk (2011) notes, "Men have the same potential to take an ethic of care perspective as women, although the socialization process into male stereotypes may make it more problematic for them" (p. 14). Care ethics has been used in research for, and engaging, transgender/nonbinary communities, see for example Risk and Garlough (2022), Owis (2024) and Crane (2014).

Conceptualizing Persons as Relational. Held (2006) says the ethics of care sees persons as relational and interdependent, morally and epistemologically. Autonomy exists, but it lies in the ability to form new relations, not to stand isolated – "impoverished" – as the "unencumbered abstract rational self" central to liberal political and moral theories (p. 14). That our identity is defined by our relationships brings us to posthuman ontology of relation explored in Chapter 3. For those considering the intersections between care ethics and sustainability /environmentalism, conceptualizing people as "embedded and encumbered" (p. 15), given our complete dependence on a healthy environment, seems self-evident.

[4] An example of this is found in the updated title of Nel Noddings' important book on care ethics. The 1984 title, "Caring: A *Feminine* Approach to Ethics and Moral Education" (emphasis added) was republished in 2013 as "Caring: A *Relational* Approach."

A Comprehensive Ethical Framework. As care ethics has arrived at a position of respect, increasing clarity and diverse application, it is also important to clarify that most care ethicists do not expect care ethics to entirely eclipse or replace the use of justice or rights-based concepts, although questions of how much weight and priority should be given to various approaches are unresolved. As an example of the discussion, Held (2006) suggests that care and justice should be kept distinct, offering this comparison:

> An ethic of justice focuses on questions of fairness, equality, individual rights, abstract principles, and the consistent application of them. An ethic of care focuses on attentiveness, trust, responsiveness to need, narrative nuance, and cultivating caring relations. Whereas an ethic of justice seeks a fair solution between competing individual interests and rights, an ethic of care sees the interests of carers and cared-for as importantly intertwined rather than as simply competing. Whereas justice protects equality and freedom, care fosters social bonds and cooperation. (p. 15)

Although Held suggests that care ethics and justice ethics should be used in specific delineated domains, she also notes their complementarity: “Equitable caring is not necessarily better caring, it is fairer caring. And humane justice is not necessarily better justice, it is more caring justice” (p. 16). Meanwhile Ruddick (1995a) suggests the two not be separate, that “justice is always seen in tandem with care” (p. 217). Slote (1999) argues that justice can be subsumed under caring, which can be the basis for all morality (p. 25). Tronto (1993) simply sees an imperative to place our central focus on care:

> This injunction to care is not meant to serve as a total account of morality. It is not meant to overthrow such moral precepts as do not lie, do not break promises, avoid harm to others. Keeping to all of those other moral precepts, though, still leaves an account of

> morality incomplete because it ignores the central role of caring in human life. (Tronto, 1993, p. 126)

This concludes my review of care and care ethics. I turn next to the question of emotion in care, and emotion in organizations, which together help indicate why care is not always recognized in organizational settings.

2.4 How Care Disappears: Emotion, Emotional Labour, Invisible Labour

While the actions of care can be performed without emotional engagement, its deeply relational nature often means it carries emotional overtones. For example, Tronto (1993) says the first phase of care ("caring about") requires attentiveness: empathy, listening, inquiry and patience, plus perhaps the ability to manage one's own emotional responses to the situation at hand. Arriving at this attentive state, she says, means overcoming self-centredness and its potential for ignorance (failure of attentiveness), whether willful or established by habit. All of this implies an emotional grounding. Noddings (2013) says caring requires "feeling with"; a receptive mode she calls *engrossment*. "I do not 'put myself in the other's shoes'" through objective analysis, she says. "On the contrary, I set aside my temptation to analyze […]; I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality" (p. 30). She describes this affective-receptive state as a feeling mode, "in the world of relation, having stepped out of the instrumental world," and a state in which "we are allowing ourselves to be transformed" (p. 34). Meanwhile, Held (2006) says in contrast to rationalist approaches to morality, the ethics of care "values emotion rather than rejects it" (p. 10); she says emotions such as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness are needed to help determine what is morally best to do.

Beyond the theorists, popular culture certainly equates care with emotion. Search online for "images of care" and you get people looking meaningfully and warmly at each other, hands touching hands, hands touching a face, arms around shoulders. Relationality – the foundation of care – is commonly understood to be imbued with emotional value. However, as we will see in the next section, this puts care at odds with the modern organizational workplace, which is constructed in many instances as objective, mechanistic, and deterministic.

2.4.1 Emotion in Organizations

In this section, I establish how the modern workplace has been constructed to be rational and unemotional. The managerialist suppression of emotion is an element in understanding how care itself is suppressed within organizations.

Along with women, domestic work, and the life of the family, emotion was increasingly sidelined to the private world as industrialized society separated production from the home, creating separately gendered realms for each. Through the 18th and 19th centuries, "sentiment" became identified as an essentially home-based, feminine characteristic (Tronto, 1993, pp. 54-55), leaving the "masculine" public realm to embody and promote rationality. For example, the emerging field of economics embraced the principle that "every agent is actuated only by self-interest" (Edgeworth, 1881, p. 16 quoted in Sen, 1977, p. 317), removing from its analyses more relational concepts such as sympathy, commitment, and altruism (Sen, 1977). Such trends supported a rational conceptualization of public affairs, business, and organizational life.

As industrial capitalism developed, this rational conceptualization was operationalized by the efficiency imperative of scientific management (Taylor, 1911); structured by the prevalence of hierarchical bureaucracy, which "places emotion in ontological opposition to reason" (Ward & McMurray, 2016, p. 37); and given political standing by neoliberalism, in which the archetypal subject is the "entrepreneurial individual whose only relationship to other people is competitive self-enhancement" (The Care Collective, 2020, p. 4). In her feminist analysis of bureaucracy, Ferguson (1984) describes a “sterile public space” (p. 51) where needs for intimacy and connectedness are not provided for; on the contrary, bureaucracy aims to exclude an individual’s emotional life:

> The entire training of human beings subjected to bureaucratic life is (1) not to attach affect directly to any person, (2) to attach affect only to their own functions, successfully performed according to system standards, and (3) to attach affect only to the exercise of power. (Hummel, 1977, quoted in Ferguson, 1984, p. 56)

It is a chilling vision of a place where most people spend the better portion of their lives.

Fortunately, humans defy such rationalism. Despite bureaucracy’s goal of rational efficiency, humans are not so easily contained, and life within organizations is – as anyone knows who works in one – much richer and messier than such constructions of ‘what an organization is’:

> As emotional arenas, organizations bond and divide their members. Workaday frustrations and passions – boredom, envy, fear, love, anger, guilt, infatuation, embarrassment, nostalgia, anxiety – are deeply woven into the way roles are enacted and learned, power is exercised, trust is held, commitment formed and decisions made. Emotions are not simply excisable from these, and many other, organizational processes; they both characterize and inform them. (Fineman, 2000, p. 1)

The contradiction of life charged with emotion occurring in a setting where emotion is suppressed created a rich vein tapped by researchers. Elton Mayo’s work in the 1930s was an early example: “for the first time, emphasis was placed in management on the role of emotions, the instincts of human association, and the desire to be in good standing with one’s fellow man [sic]” (Itani, 2017, p. 107). However, as Itani (2017) notes, the human relations model that emerged still aimed for managerial objectivity: "science remained the solution to the problem" (p.107).

As human resources management (HRM) research continued to develop, workplaces were primarily depicted as rational environments that did not include "humane and subjective" aspects (Itani, 2017, p. 131); emotion was portrayed as negative. For example, in a typical academic article from the 1960s, management was depicted as presenting "rational, factual, constructive" offers to union leaders whose (unworthy) ideas were portrayed as based on "emotions," "out-dated traditions" and "resistance" (Itani, 2017, p. 123). HRM thinking progressed through phases of "soft" (more humanistic) and "hard" (more calculative) approaches (Itani, 2017; Jacoby, 2004), but increasing bottom-line pressure on HR practitioners during the 1980s and 1990s forced them to focus their efforts away from "soft-hearted" practices, as if "years of research on the psychological and social complexities of managing employees had never occurred" (Jacoby, 2004, p. 217).

In the mid-90s, emotions at work were often characterized as "disruptive, illogical, biased and weak," a deviation from "what is seen as sensible and intelligent" (Putnam & Mumby, 1993, p. 36). More recent researchers commented similarly: "... emotions, feelings, and the impact of the heart are expected to remain in the background. Isn't this what bureaucracy is all about?" (Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler, 2010, p. 72). Brotheridge and Lee (2008) note that emotions are "the substance of managerial work"; yet emotionality in managers continues to be perceived as "a weakness and an inability to control oneself" (p. 110).

Feminine gender adds to the burden; a survey of management textbooks from 1950-2012 (Williams & Mills, 2019) found that, across the decades, discussion of women negatively highlighted their tendency to display emotions (e.g., "outbursts", taking criticism personally, easily provoked to anger), or their requirement for emotional input (e.g., reassurance, encouragement, being told when their work is good). Either way, their perceived emotionality contributed to the positioning of women as a management "problem" (Williams & Mills, 2019). Life outside textbooks reflects the same; a study of women in leadership in Australia schools found "[i]n daily life rationality is seen to be a virtue and revered while emotionality is seen to be an encumbrance and reviled" (Sachs & Blackmore, 1998, para. 11). If care is perceived as an action that is compelled by and/or rich in emotion, it would be painted with the same brush as emotion in general – that is, not appropriate for the workplace.

The thesis research done by McGowan (2002) offers an interesting insight into this emotion-constrained landscape inhabited by managers. She interviewed people who worked as managers, and who, in their private lives, were deeply involved in taking care of elders. Most of them told her that they spoke very little at work about the caring labour they were doing outside their jobs. Some even went to some lengths to hide it from bosses and subordinates alike, even if they freely discussed it with friends and family or attended eldercare support groups. McGowan (2002) notes that this follows organizational discourses that silence activities in the private sphere from appearance in the workplace (p. 5) and prescribe "traditional and gendered" expectations for managerial behaviour (p. 109), in particular that managers must cultivate an image of strength, not weakness (p. 113). Says McGowan (2002), "Managers help to keep organizations emotionally tidy – they do not allow themselves to fall apart; they serve as an emotional sponge, absorbing untidy and difficult emotions in order to help the organization maintain the patina of rationality and non-emotionality" (p. 120).

Interestingly, although managers suppressed most information about their eldercare duties, one of McGowan's interviewees ("Tony") explained that he would occasionally share selected news, about upbeat activities such as birthday parties and family visits. He explained, "one of the things that keeps [my staff] functioning […] is the fact that they believe that you can walk on water […] they see the fact that we are in eldercare as being […] very heroic […] exemplary" (McGowan, 2002, p. 112). Clearly, care here is partitioned: the "heroic" productive care that aligns with managerial strength and competence is permitted, while the emotionality of "caregiving, family issues, aging, personal difficulty and suffering" (McGowan, 2002, p. 114) is suppressed. Tony is effective at keeping things "emotionally tidy," but the authenticity of showing and sharing one's full emotional life is constrained. So too is the depth of relationship that can blossom when someone presents frailty or need: in presenting heroism to his staff, Tony locks out their opportunity to offer empathy or support to him during a difficult personal time. (One manager comments that managers must present as "slightly less human" than their subordinates, McGowan, 2002, p. 119.) Also interestingly, many managers interviewed by McGowan were not easily able to explain *why* they suppressed information about their eldercare duties; the display of dispassionate managerial strength was a discursive expectation they had absorbed and replicated without question.

While earlier inquiries into emotion focused largely on either employee stress or satisfaction (Briner, 1999), research into emotion within organizational life began to swell since Arlie Hochschild's (1983) conceptualization of emotional labour (discussed below), the advancement of the concept of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), and the development of myriad avenues of inquiry such as toxic workplaces (Frost, 2003, 2004), compassion organizing (Dutton, Worline, Frost, & Lilius, 2006), and emotion in institution theory (Voronov & Vince, 2012).

However, who benefits from such work is sometimes questioned, making it clear that the instrumentalization of the worker is never entirely absent from bureaucratic practice. As a noted emotion researcher comments,

> [O]ur attempts to transform can often contribute to things remaining the same; our efforts to facilitate change may well inhibit it; and our strategies to empower individuals may contribute to the establishment of forms of compliance and control. It is important to be aware that there is always a tension between the radical potential of HRD [human resource development] to make change happen and the political purpose behind the use of HRD in organizations, which may have to do with control. (Vince, 2014, p. 410)

Popular practitioner literature bears out the continued instrumental application of emotion research, with titles such as *Capitalizing on Kindness* (Tillquist, 2008) and *Manage Your Emotional Culture* (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016) are typically on offer.

Companies have received the message. Barsade and O'Neill (2016) describe a financial company that collects daily emotion data from employees to learn "what makes them feel a sense of belonging and excitement at work" (p.58); other companies include emotions in management principles. The authors note that emotional culture influences satisfaction, burnout, financial performance and absenteeism; in order to "deliberately manage" it they recommend attention to everything from appropriate facial expressions and body language, to appropriate office décor. While it is easy to agree that a workplace exuding joy, compassion, and fun is likely to be more agreeable and productive than the opposite, it's also clear that the line between altruism and instrumentalism is fuzzy. Less frequently do researchers comment that emotion research is important simply because it could help leaders "be better prepared to participate in ethical and humane relationships" (Fineman, 2000, p. 75).

We arrive now at an understanding that emotion is seen as present in organizations – lively, active and important – but problematic. The study of emotion in organizations is pulled between two purposes: to make the organization more human, and to increase the control necessary for efficient organizational process. I turn now to the literatures of invisible labour and emotional labour.

2.4.2 Invisible Labour, Emotional Labour

The literatures of emotional labour and invisible labour, while not directly related to care, offer several concepts that are useful in my exploration of how care is situated and perceived within managerialist discourses.

In her discussion of unpaid, or "invisible" labour, Daniels (1987) explores how women in business are expected to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills while men are not, yet notes that, since such skills are considered "natural" in women, they are therefore not seen as significant, "even when what they accomplish is appreciated" (p. 410). In a study of nurses, Jacques (1993) identifies how only "visible" work (e.g., feeding a patient) is counted, while activities such as "rapport talk" that establishes a relationship with a patient, are invisible; caring and connecting activities are necessary to the functioning of organizational life but they "occur outside the organizational definition of "real" work" (p. 8).

Hatton (2017) defined invisible labour as labour that is economically devalued and surveyed invisible labour literature to identify what mechanisms produce invisibility. Of particular interest here is the "sociocultural mechanism of invisibility […] when labour is devalued by virtue of hegemonic cultural ideologies (of gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, age and more)" (p. 337). This can be related to "naturalization of skill," in which women's skills and abilities are constructed not as a product of their hard work and expertise but as their natural way of being (such as women being "good" at care). Invisible labour can also result from required but hidden body labour, such as needing to cultivate a certain appearance (e.g., a corporate image), perform emotional labour, or adopt a particular identity (e.g., hide a foreign accent) (p. 338-340).

The concept of emotional labour was developed first by Hochschild (1983). She demonstrated that the performance of emotion – whether positive, warm and inviting (flight attendants), or negative and fear-inducing (bill collectors) – could be harnessed as part of a job role. To perform consistently, workers had to curb their own feelings in order to present the proper emotional display. This could entail risk for the employee: "[m]aintaining a difference between feeling and feigning over the long run leads to strain […] when conditions estrange us from our face, they sometimes estrange us from feeling as well" (p. 90). Useful for my study of care, Hochschild (1983) also mentions "the emotion work of enhancing the status and well-being of others," which she says, like housework, "does not quite count as labour but is nevertheless crucial to getting other things done" (p. 167). As we will see in the discussion of privileged irresponsibility below, these mechanisms of invisibility can be doubly powerful because some work, expected but undervalued, can, by dint of its devaluation, render its worker more invisible too.

2.5 Efficiency and Control: Labour Divided and Phases of Care

I have presented how care ethics emerged in the later 20th century as a response and counterpoint to masculinized structures of ethical thought, bringing forward the "feminine" concept of ethical behaviour grounded in meeting needs, connectedness, relationship and community. Care entails both affective capabilities and capability for action to ensure needs are met. I have also surveyed literature about emotion in organizations, noting how organizations continue to favour rationality, often viewing emotion as an impediment to their efforts to effect control for the purpose of efficiency and profit. The emotional labour literature demonstrates that this can impose on workers the need to shape and/or mask emotions. This labour can become invisible – economically devalued despite being necessary.

Care work does exist within organizational life. The question then is to understand how bureaucratic imperatives for emotional control affect the nature and perception of that care, and the people who provide it. To examine this, I will follow two threads: Braverman's (1974) analysis of the labour process under capitalism, and in the subsequent section, the work of Amis et al. (2020), who identify efficiency and meritocracy as two organizational myths that contribute to economic inequality.

2.5.1 Braverman's Labour Process Analysis

Efficiency is perhaps one of the most celebrated and maligned aspects of twentieth century managerial thought and practice, depending on one's viewpoint. The concept of efficiency in management was central to Frederick Taylor, who railed against "wastes of human effort" (1911, preface), promising both increased salaries and increased profits through his "scientific" management system of tightly defined tasks and firm managerial control. The idea caught on rapidly in the early 20th century, gaining adoption not just in factories but across organizational life ranging from schools to the household (see for example Callahan, 1962 and Frederick, 1926). Taylor's (1911) ideas about management have been recognized as among the most influential over the past century (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2011); surveys of management scholars consistently rank Taylor as the most influential person in management and business history (Wren, 2011, p. 18). Meanwhile, the concept and practice of efficiency has been called everything from a "craze" (Nelson, 1980, p. 175) to a "cult" (Stein, 2002).

Although Taylor himself advocated high wages for workers and the elimination of physical strain from work (Drucker, 2002, pp. 351-352), his system became associated with the loss of holistic skillsets and the depersonalization of the workplace. This was largely due to two prescriptions: the division of complex processes into individual work tasks, which could be standardized and performed repetitively with minimal training; and managerial control of the labour process, with managers defining all tasks and maintaining responsibility for the work overall. In his critique, Braverman (1974) noted that the separation of work *conception* from *execution* concentrated knowledge about the labour process in the hands of management, creating a management monopoly over knowledge, while workers held none. The point is that today's management practice descended from an early assumption that *management knows everything* about what a worker must do in order to complete their work. In Braverman's (1974) words, "The production units operate like a hand, watched, corrected, and controlled by a distant brain" (p. 125).

What happens, however, if that brain is incapable, by its own self-imposed rationality bias, of comprehending certain aspects of work? That is, elements that require emotional competence, relationship, and contextualization? That do not present themselves in measurable and standardizable tasks? Work such as *care*? In such a case, I theorize that care becomes split: its "action" aspect may be assessed and assigned to workers who will perform it, but the relational and affective aspects may become invisible: uncomprehended, and therefore unvalued.

Notably, one of the main critiques of Braverman's (1974) work is his failure to examine how patriarchy overlooks the social dimension of work, either through devaluing work done by women simply because it is done by women, or by undervaluing emotional, social and caring skills on the grounds that women gain these without formal training or workplace experience

(Edgell, 2006). However, this deficiency simply locates Braverman as a product of his time, and reinforces the idea that the push to efficiency – whether celebrated or critiqued – led management to focus on easily-quantified and tangible areas of labour. Invisible to the time-motion analyst, and also to Braverman, was the effort a clerical worker may have expended in disarming the ire of an angry boss, in receiving all co-workers with a friendly smile, or in arriving early to fling open the windows to air out the office. The separation of work conception from execution presupposes that *all work is visible and can be quantified*.

2.5.2 Phases of (In)Visible Care

How might this affect the work of care? Care stems from needs. If "needs" can be clearly defined in terms of organizational goals, such as a need for more staff to handle a surge in business or a need to repair broken office furniture, it's easy to imagine care represented in the "stages of management" (plan, organize, lead, control) listed in most introductory business texts (see, for example, Ebert, Griffin, Dracopolous, & Starke, 2020, p. 115; Griffin, 2010, pp. 180-183). This is true even where "needs" are less tangible, such as a need to stimulate a company's "emotional culture" by codifying it in company mission statements and handing out an annual "Have Fun" award (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016). Because of their standardization and pan-organizational application, both of these cases shift into the realm of visibility, following management strategies (the brain) to determine what those in the organization (the hands) should do. While they may still constitute care, they are made visible by the bureaucratic privileging that comes with efficiency: their goal is to improve financial performance through employee productivity, reduced turnover, wellness, and other measures related to cutting the cost of production. This is not the type of care that I believe becomes lost in the organization. To consider what care gets lost, I return to Tronto's (1993, 2015) phases of care: caring about, caring for, caregiving, and care receiving,[5] as presented in Section 2.1. In each phase, we can see that some of care's elements might not be visible in the context of managerial efficiency.

Caring About. Earlier I discussed Nodding's (2013) concept of engrossment in the process of perceiving another's care needs; it seems unlikely this activity would make the time-and-motion analysis list. Similarly, Tronto's (1993) related moral element in this phase, attentiveness, is usually attuned in managerial thought to ensuring employees are maintained at the most productive (profitable) level within constraint. For example, does a disabled employee have needs for accommodation, does an employee falling behind on work need help (training/motivation/backup) to keep up. This is care instrumentalized; although attentiveness may be present, it may be selective in which needs it identifies (there are too many stories of an apparently sympathetic boss calling an employee at home after an accident and too-quickly demonstrating their main purpose: to find out when the return to work date will be).

Caring For. The second phase, *caring for*, is relatively visible in managerial terms, since its moral element is responsibility, and delegation of responsibility is a primary raison d'être of bureaucracy. (Of course, care needs that were not visible in the first place may entail responsibilities that have been invisibly assumed.)

Care-giving. However, the third, *care-giving*, (moral element: competence) is fraught with issues of invisibility, particularly for women. Says Daniels (1987), activities of nurturing, comforting, encouraging or facilitating interaction are considered to be "natural" proclivities for women, rather than learned, skilled or required:

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[5] Tronto added a fifth phase, *caring with,* as she explored issues of care across democratic society. Given my purpose of considering care on a more local, intra-organizational level, I do not include it here.

> The aspect of these activities most difficult for everyone to conceptualize as work involves the warm and caring aspects of the construction and maintenance of interpersonal relations. In the commonsense view, these activities occur spontaneously. They are informal and unregulated – outside of bureaucratic rules and obligations. (Daniels, 1987, p. 409)

In other words, invisible. And yet, most would agree such activities improve the workplace, by any measure. Activities involved in *care-giving* will particularly inform our consideration of privileged irresponsibility and inequality, below.

Care-receiving. Care-receivings (moral element: responsiveness) is likewise an interesting phase, fraught not only with invisibility but also expectations of bureaucratic rationality. Here, a care-receiver must notice and acknowledge care in order to provide feedback; this allows the care-provider to determine effectiveness, adjust care if necessary, and determine what is needed next. To be *responsive* requires awareness; if the labour of care-giving has been rendered invisible, the participation required of care-receiving is unachievable, and the process of care is incomplete. Arguably, this places a higher burden on the care-giver, who must determine the success of care in the absence of recognition or feedback. And there is another challenge inherent in this phase of care. To receive care means one *has a need;* being *responsive* means acknowledging this fact. Says Tronto (1993):

> […] when we conceive of ourselves as autonomous, independent adults, it is very difficult to recognize that we are also needy. Part of the reason that we prefer to ignore routine forms of care as care is to preserve the image of ourselves as not-needy. Because neediness is perceived as a threat to autonomy, those who have more needs than us appear to be less autonomous, and hence less powerful and less capable. The result is that

> one way in which we socially construct those who need care is to think of them as pitiful because they require help. (p. 120)

Appearing needy is the antithesis of the in-control, rational competence that emotional display rules dictate in organizational life. Neediness is associated with emotion. Emotion is “disruptive, illogical, biased and weak” (Putnam & Mumby, 1993, p. 36); emotionality is “a weakness and an inability to control oneself” (Brotheridge & Lee, 2008, p. 110). This constructs a situation where a manager might be able to perceive subordinates as having needs, but denies that he or she needs anything. I explore this more fully in Section 5.3.3, “Rationality.”

The invisibility and silencing of emotional/care-related labour not only leads to a less holistic “sterile public space” (Ferguson, 1984, p. 51) within organizations. It can also lead to marginalization and inequality. I will assess the denial of care and its impact on inequality by expanding Tronto’s concept of “privileged irresponsibility” into the realm of organizations. In part, this will come through applying the mechanisms identified above, and also, by considering the systemic nature of inequality within organizations, next.

2.6 Organizational Myths and Organizational Inequality

In their study of organizational inequality, Amis et al. (2020) asked: *What* are the organizational practices that reinforce inequality? *How* do these practices reproduce inequality? *Why* are these dynamics of reproduction so persistent and prevalent? Through synthesizing more than 300 studies of inequality, the authors identified five organizational practices where inequality is produced and reproduced: hiring, promotion, role allocation, compensation, and organizational structuring – the *what* and *how* of their questions. These are described in Chapter 3, where they play a role in my research process. As for *why* organizational inequality is prevalent and persistent, Amis et al. (2020) identified what they call *institutional myths*, “widely but not necessarily consciously held ideals that are collectively rationalized and largely unchallenged" (p. 2). Despite finding that the reproduction of inequality in organizations is systemic, the research also found that workers believe outcomes are fair and just. Seeking to understand this contradiction, Amis et al. (2020) identified the "myths" of efficiency, meritocracy, and positive globalization, which "allow things to carry on unquestioned" (p.16). The myths of efficiency and meritocracy are particularly relevant for this study of care in organizations, so that is where I tighten my focus.

2.6.1 The Myth of Efficiency

Although early 20th century efficiency efforts did produce remarkable gains in productivity, Amis et al. (2020) say the ongoing myth of efficiency "refers to the false premise that adoption of efficiency-enhancing practices is what leads to organizational success," because efficiency "makes an organization more competitive and being competitive brings superior performance and victory" (Amis et al., 2020, p. 17). Therefore, organizational practices such as structures which concentrate coordination and control, promotional strategies and task allocation which privilege the unencumbered worker, high CEO salaries, and the tendency to hire people similar to oneself are all accepted as rational practices based on competition and optimization, even when research points otherwise (Amis et al. 2020, p. 17). This myth, the authors note, does not work in isolation, but is "buttressed by other myths" including meritocracy (Amis et al., 2020, p. 18).

2.6.2 The Myth of Meritocracy

Until the late 19th century, most opportunity and advancement was based on heredity and patronage, and early concepts of meritocracy were disturbingly linked to eugenics and individuals' "natural" capacity (Amis et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the current concept of meritocracy, the belief that individuals advance based on their ability and performance (which also smacks of efficiency) rather than family, gender or class, has taken deep hold in organizational life, with "merit-based" performance reviews and compensation systems, for example. Amis et al. (2020) note that this myth is so well embedded that it is believed both by those who benefit from inequality and those who do not (p.19). However, empirical studies have found that workplace inequality can persist even when policies aimed at rewarding merit are introduced, such as merit-based pay or promotion (Amis et al., 2020).

The myth of meritocracy is supported both by the myth of efficiency (people with the best skills, when advanced, will help maintain the best productivity across the organization), and by the myth of the American dream, which "through the example of the occasional "rags-to-riches" success story reinforces and replicates the ideal that anybody can be successful if they have talent and/or work hard enough" (Amis et al., 2020, p. 19). As we have discussed earlier, of course, this requires that the work being done is both seen, and valued. This circles us back to care.

2.7 The Irresponsibility of Privilege

All people need care; it is a reality of human life. While we can manage with less constant care from others after our infancy and childhood (and before our later years), most of us routinely benefit from receiving care: a partner who cooks or cleans, a co-worker who brings coffee or treats, an office space that is kept clean by people who vacuum and mop every night, a friend who listens, a taxi driver, restaurant worker, dry cleaner, daycare provider, and so on.

Tronto's (1993) says to live well in the world, we must respond to the care we are given; this is her fourth phase, *receiving care*. This engagement serves to ensure that ongoing needs are met. It also creates mutual acknowledgement, reciprocity, gratitude, and the recognition of a relational bond. However, as we have seen, there are situations in which care is denied. It may be delivered but not acknowledged, performed but only partially recognized, expected but invisible.

In some cases, the receipt of care is denied because the care-receiver is in a position of privilege and can afford to ignore the support that has been given. Tronto calls this "privileged irresponsibility" (1993, 2013, 2015); it is the situation "where those receiving caring services for their needs do not acknowledge that they are dependent on these services in order to live well in the world" (Zembylas et al., 2014, p. 205). In organizational settings, where being needy (having needs) may be perceived as weakness, where a show of strength is expected in order to portray managerial competence, where emotional expression is seen as divergent and emotional labour can be rendered invisible, it is easy to imagine that the provision of care could go without being seen or acknowledged. In organizational settings, those "higher up" the hierarchy would hold such privilege, as would the organization itself, given its typical position of power in the employment contract.

Tronto (1993) introduced her concept of privileged irresponsibility in 1990[6] and refined it across the scope of her work. It supports her analysis of how the marginalization and fragmentation of care serves to maintain the position of the relatively powerful, even if this is not a deliberate effort by those in power (Tronto, 1993, p. 111). The elements of marginalization she identified include: the gendering, racializing and classing of care; that is, "cleaning-up" jobs are held disproportionately by women and people of colour while management jobs are held disproportionately by white men. There is also privilege inherent when those who pay for others to provide care are liberated to do "more important" work, subordinating their care-providers'

[6] Tronto (1993) notes the term was introduced in a speech entitled "Chilly Racists."

needs to their own. Finally, care can be marginalized by conceiving of it as a private concern, to be provided in the household, and by perceiving care-receivers as relatively helpless (Tronto, 1993, pp. 111-120).

2.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed literature related to care and care ethics, to define these concepts and their tenets, and what we know of these concepts. The literature related to emotion within organizations helps to establish how managerialist settings respond to affective behaviour (which can be an aspect of care). A brief look at emotional labour and invisible labour offer additional insights about how some work is valued while some is not seen. Braverman's (1974) theory about how the efficiency movement separated the work "brain" from "hands" also suggests how some work can be discounted because it is not easily quantified. The study by Amis et al. (2020) on inequality in organizations provided key organizational practices and "myths" which will inform my discourse analysis approach. Finally, I presented Tronto's (1993) concept of privileged irresponsibility, which links the recognition of care with inequality.

In the next chapter, I present my posthumanist theoretical footings, and my methodological approach.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Lens

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline my posthumanist stance and how it underpins this study, positioning various elements that are relevant to considerations of care and posthuman relationality. I explain how my nested onto-epistemological lens can be used to situate a constructivist discourse methodology within a posthuman ontology, and in addition, how this yields a richer theoretical conceptualization of care.

3.2 Theoretical Lens: Posthumanism

3.2.1 Rejecting the Ontology of Separation

Posthumanism is a theoretical stance which "questions the preeminence of and historical exclusions produced through the category of the human" (Niccolini & Ringrose, 2019, np). Human exceptionalism, the "ideal of 'Man' as the allegedly universal measure of all things," lies at the core of Western/European philosophical thought (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 32). This "philosophical anthropocentrism" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 8) helped Enlightenment thinkers challenge religious authority and fueled social and political changes such as the French Revolution, first-wave feminism and the anti-slavery movement (Fox & Alldred, 2020, p. 122). However, anthropocentric thinking also produced a variety of dualities, including "the separation between humans and non-humans, humans and nature, between them and us, the West and the rest, the developed and the underdeveloped, subject and object, reason and emotion, theory and practice, the secular and the sacred" (Escobar & Maffei, 2022, p. 40). There are difficulties with this "ontology of separation" as we now face a "multifaceted crisis of climate, energy, biodiversity, inequality, poverty and meaning” (Escobar & Maffei, 2022, pp. 39, 40), and are pushing the “limit condition of the human” (Banerji & Paranjape, 2016, p. 2). Plumwood (2002) says the view of human life as self-enclosed has resulted in a weakened sense of ecological reality: “Human-centeredness promotes various damaging forms of epistemic remoteness, for by walling ourselves off from nature in order to exploit it, we also lose certain abilities to situate ourselves as part of it” (p. 98). Meanwhile, dualistic thinking causes additional problems, since it works to privilege one half of a binary over another, establishing “the premises and cognitive armoury for patriarchy, colonialism, homophobia and class or caste systems, the scapegoating of ‘foreigners’ and the anthropocentrism that underpins activities from industrialised farming to global environmental policy” (Fox & Alldred, 2018, p. 316).

This has led to interest in an “ontological turn” in social sciences, say Pendleton-Jullian and Brown (2023): “In an era of entangled, multidimensional, multiscalar, everything-is-connected planetary problems, our Enlightenment (and post-Enlightenment) worldview is not good enough” (p. 265). They criticize contemporary efforts to frame the challenges we face with ideas such as “the Anthropocene” or “Capitalocene”, saying not only do these frames perpetuate a humancentric view, but they imply that human reasoning plus science can solve our problems. “A scientific mindset that carves nature at its joints has gotten us into our current messes,” they note. “It will not get us out of them” (Pendleton-Jullian & Brown, 2023, p. 266). A critical step in adopting a posthuman viewpoint, then, is to decentre the human both ontologically and epistemologically. As I will explain later, I believe this provides an excellent footing for a study about care. First, however, a look at some relevant elements for this discussion.

3.2.2 Radical Interconnectedness

> *You know what's cool? You have some atoms that were once part of a star in your body right now. And some atoms that were once part of an asteroid or a comet. […]*
> *You see, every atom in your body has a story to tell.[…] You are part of that story too. You are using those atoms to do amazing things right now. To think and feel and dream and create. To be yourself.*
>
> – Response by Silk Road to the question on Quora.com: "Am I made out of an atom that was once part of a dinosaur and Jules César?" (TheScienceSpace, 2023)

I believe we are radically interconnected, that we exist *because of* this interconnection, not in spite of it. As the post on Quora.com explains, we share atoms with bodies from across the cosmos, and from the length of biological history on Earth. With every breath, we exchange molecules with green life forms who use our waste carbon dioxide to produce food and provide their waste oxygen back to nourish us. We ignore this interconnectedness – as Western cultures largely have over the past three or four centuries – at our peril. Meanwhile, we also have individuality: the brief period of time when our life force pulls together "our" collection of atoms, and manifests the consciousness that allows us to engage in discussions such as these about the nature of being. As the post says, we use our atoms to think and feel and dream and create. At the same time, if we fail to eat or breathe, the current collection of matter that we subjectify as "me" or "you" will soon recompose to another form.

Although human physical materiality would seem to provide a self-evident connection to all other material entities (living and non-), humanities scholarship has perpetuated the humanist disconnect between human *Bios*, the life of humans organized in society, and nature *Zoe*, the life of all living beings (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 10). Postmodern and postructuralist scholars have critiqued the binary inherent in this disconnect; the "need to interrogate the nature/culture division and the entire conceptual apparatus that rests upon it" has become a "truism for cultural criticism" (Kirby, 2008, p. 215). However, these critiques themselves have fallen under examination. Kirby (2008) says critique tends to take for granted the essence of natural "components," so that "nature is deemed to be thought-less, and political interventions into Cartesian logic are much more likely to preserve this assumption by expanding the category "culture" to include whatever it is defined against" (p. 217). This was emblematic of a larger "linguistic turn" in recent decades in critical theory overall (Hekman, 2008) that resulted in a predominance of constructivist theorizing at the expense of material considerations. In management and organization studies (MOS), Davies and Riach (2018) say the discursive turn in the 1980s placed focus on the symbolic aspects of organization rather than material (p. 133). Barad (2008) laments that a preoccupation with linguistic, semiotic, interpretive and cultural avenues of inquiry, while important (p. 120), gave "language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve" (p. 121). Within feminist theorizing, Alaimo (2008) says the neglect of material by poststructuralist and postmodern feminism was an unfortunate byproduct: "an accelerated "flight from nature" [was] fueled by rigid commitments to social constructionism and the determination to rout out all vestiges of essentialism" (p. 237). In short, much social theorizing, including that within MOS, has generally privileged linguistic/discursive approaches over those that embrace the material nature of life.

Human exceptionalism, and the nature/culture divide, are evident in mainstream Western science as well, or at least in the ways we tell its stories in popular media. Since we rely heavily on language to share knowledge, and since we are largely ignorant about non-human languages, it seems (in Western cultures) that knowledge is perceived almost exclusively as a human domain. For this reason, we react with disbelief, even paternalistic condescension, when we "discover" that other species communicate, learn, share information, and have knowledge – *without* the use of human-based language. For example, the discovery that trees share resources, communicate about threats, and work collaboratively to ensure mutual well-being (S. Simard, 2021; S. W. Simard, 2018) has been met with derision from fellow scientists who are "offended by any suggestion of the possibility of intelligence or sentience attached to trees" (Banks, 2021). Similarly, scientists whose work demonstrates that some plants manipulate specific animals to protect themselves from specific predators (Schlanger, 2024) are hesitant to "drape human notions of intelligence and consciousness onto them" (Donaldson, 2024). Human exceptionalism seems prevalent when a (Western) news story about how crows can count describes that they do it "like toddlers do" (Andrew, 2024) and when another, in describing how researchers have just learned that elephants call each other by name, says they "may be the first non-human animals" to do so, as if they had just arrived at this long-awaited stage rather than having just caught the attention of a human researcher.

Non-Western and Indigenous ontologies more commonly embrace an interconnected, non-dual perspective; for example, Wilson (2008) says, "the shared aspect of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology is relationality (relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality)" (p.7). This means the "classic distinction" between nature and culture cannot easily be applied (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 469), and provides insight for theorists not just to question or reject old dualities, but to move in new directions altogether (Braidotti, 2019a; Pendleton-Jullian & Brown, 2023). Says Haraway (2008), "We must find another relationship to nature besides reification, possession, appropriation and nostalgia. […] all the partners in the potent conversations that constitute nature must find a new ground for making meanings together" (p. 158). Similarly, say critical management scholars Prasad, Prasad, Mills and Helms Mills (2015), "the contestation over knowledge is likely to be one of the most significant debates of the rapidly changing world of the 21st century" (p. 4), urging their field to commit to "the project of plural knowledges" (p. 7). These rumblings for change, from multiple directions and concerns, have helped spur theorizing in areas such as new materialism and material feminism (e.g., Coole & Frost, 2010; Fox & Alldred, 2015, 2018; Grosz, 2008), sociomateriality (e.g., Davies & Riach, 2018), posthumanism, critical posthumanism, and feminist posthumanism (e.g., Banerji & Paranjape, 2016; Braidotti, 2019b; Braidotti, Bozalek, Shefer, & Zembylas, 2018; Haraway, 2004; Niccolini & Ringrose, 2019; Ulmer, 2017) relational agential realism (e.g., Barad, 2008; Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012), and more.

I will pause here to review my points thus far. Western Enlightenment thought promotes human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism, which results in dualistic thinking considered to be an aggravating factor in ongoing environmental and social injustices. One such dualism is the nature/culture divide, which was exacerbated by a turn in sociological thinking (including within MOS) toward linguistic/discursive approaches at the expense of considering the materialist fundamentals of life. This thinking separates us from full understanding of our embedded and embodied materiality (Braidotti, 2019a), and also limits our awareness of, and openness to, knowledges that do not fit a Western-culture, human-language based form. Recent years have seen increasing calls for new approaches amidst questions of how ontologies and epistemologies support or hinder our ability to comprehend, let alone address, our global challenges.

3.2.3 Elements of Posthumanism

Posthumanism is one of the reactions to these calls. Although its early roots may be discerned in early post-war cybernetics discussions, or Foulcauldian musing about the end of man, it generally started to appear in the social sciences in the 1990s (Wolfe, 2010, p. xii). Braidotti (2016) explains it as a convergence of anti-humanism (the critique of the universal humanist ideal of "Man" as representing all humans) and anti-anthropocentrism (humans at the top of a species hierarchy) (p. 13); it is materialist, monist, and feminist (Braidotti, 2019b). Some of the concepts associated with posthumanism that are germane to my work are materialism, relationality/interdependence, subjectivity/agency, and power, as follows:

Materialism, Materiality. Posthuman materialism is in part a rejection of humanist abstraction, of the idea that "the human" is achieved "by escaping or repressing not just its animal origins in nature, the biological, and the evolutionary, but more generally by transcending the bonds of materiality and embodiment altogether" (Wolfe, 2010, p. xv). Recognizing human corporeality embeds the human as part of all non-human life (Braidotti's *"zoe,"* 2019a), and reminds researchers that although bodies can be understood symbolically, they are also subject to material processes such as illness, injury and death (Davies & Riach, 2018). The point is not just the materiality of humans, however. As discoveries in sub-atomic physics, and chaos and complexity theories have unveiled matter as "far more complex, unstable, fragile, and interactive" than was earlier believed (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 14), materialism has influenced posthumanist ideas of vitalism, flux and uncertainty. Because matter is no longer perceived as inert, there is a sense of constant "becoming" rather than "being," with "subjectivities being constituted as open series of capacities or potencies that emerge hazardously and ambiguously within a multitude of organic and social processes" (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 10). Similarly, developments in biology and technology have prompted new conceptualizations of organisms as "open, complex systems with porous boundaries" (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 15). The liveliness of matter disturbs the ideas that agents are exclusively human, and that humans have the "right or ability to master nature" (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 10).

Relationality/Interdependence. Says Braidotti (2019a): "An immanent, posthuman project assumes that all matter or substance is one and immanent to itself. This means that the posthuman subject asserts the material totality of and interconnection with all living things" (p. 47). This corresponds with my sense of "radical interconnection," explained earlier. It means "there is nothing beyond environment, and nothing (for instance, humans and their diverse cultures) excluded from it" (Fox & Alldred, 2020, p. 123). It also means – as I said earlier – that we exist *through* relationship: "Existence is not an individual affair […] Individuals do not pre-exist their interaction; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating" (Barad, 2007, p. ix, in Davies & Riach, 2018, p. 136). The concept of *entanglement* is related, and goes beyond describing that lives/material/relations can be interconnected. Entanglement is used to describe interconnectedness between concepts such as "facts and values", ethics, ontology, and epistemology (Karen Barad in Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 15), and the territories of "material and discursive, natural and cultural, biological and textual" (Alaimo, 2008, p. 248). Pendleton-Jullian and Brown (2023) say such thinking helps reverse our reductionist tendency to "separate the uninterrupted flow of all that exists into supposedly self-contained spheres such as 'the economy,' 'society,' 'politics,' 'culture,' and 'the individual' each with a science devoted to extracting its secrets" […] The concept of entanglement provides a window through which to *re-see* the world" (p. 266, emphasis original). Discourse itself, then, is produced as an entangled interaction between material and metaphysical existence, connectedness, and relationship.

Subjectivity/Agency. As may already be evident, posthumanism rejects humanist Enlightenment subjectivity which assumes "a white Western heterosexual rational economic man as a normative subject and position[s] those who deviate from this position as other" (Braidotti et al., 2018, p. 6) – it is easy to understand what the posthuman subject is *not*. Definitions of what posthuman subjectivity *is* are more challenging: in comprehending relationality with *zoe*, material, technological, discursive, social and all other fields, the "becoming-subjects" (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 33) of posthumanism can seem hard to pin down. An oft-used concept is that of "assemblages," a characterization of "constantly shifting connectivities between heterogeneous material-semiotic forces and entities" which can include "social meanings, emotions, objects, places, and technologies," which themselves continually shift and recompose (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, in Gibson et al., 2021, p. 3). Assemblages are fluid and relational, and can be human, non-human, and both/all together. They serve to decentre the autonomous subject so that interactions between entities can be analyzed without privileging one over the other (Gibson et al., 2021, p. 3)

As I will explain below, my project is to embrace the ontological relationality of posthumanism while examining interactions in the human socially-constructed realm, and so I envision this multi-scalar posthuman subject as both radically interconnected and also individually constructed within the discursive social realm. This corresponds roughly with Braidotti (2019a):

> Posthuman subjects establish relations on at least three levels: to one's self, to others and to the world. The world can be defined as a complex set of environmental, social and

> affective ecologies. […] Neither unitary, nor autonomous, subjects are embodied and embedded, relational and affective collaborative entities, activated by relational ethics. (pp. 45-46).

Concepts of posthumanist agency are similarly emergent and amorphous, with human agency, for example, described broadly as a subset of the "liveliness and affectivity of all matter" (Bennett, 2010, in Fox & Alldred, 2020, pp. 122-123). Coole and Frost (2010) say an emphasis on corporeality "dislocates agency as the property of a discrete, self-knowing subject," while also recognizing that the body/material may communicate viscerally so that judgments do not always pass through conscious awareness (p. 20). Some new materialist research discards the concept of agency altogether in favour of "affect," a change of state or capacities that may be physical, psychological, emotional or social: "Social inquiry must remake its vocabulary to reflect this shift from agency to affect, and adapt its methods to attend to affective flows and the capacities they produce (Fox & Alldred, 2015, pp. 401-402). I will return to the idea of affect in my discussion of care below.

Power. Postmodernist ideas of power and resistance are refracted through the lens of posthumanism, given its "flat" (monist, non-hierarchical) ontology and no reliance on any higher power (e.g., God, fate, systems, structures) (Fox & Alldred, 2018, pp. 317-318). Braidotti (2002) describes two aspects of power: "Power is negative (potestas) in that it prohibits and constrains. It is also positive (potentia) in that it empowers and enables" (Braidotti, 2002, p. 21, in Lundström, 2021, p. 349). Potentia, or empowerment, is "capable of increasing our relational capacity," while potestas, or restrictive force, may appear as "protocols of institutional control," (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 50 and 222), or defined as "entrapment" (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 33). Lundström (2021) says theorist John Holloway (2010) describes similar elements as *power-to* and *power-over*: "Power, in the first place, is simply that: can-ness, capacity-to-do, the ability to do things. Doing implies power, power-to-do." But in a capitalist society, Holloway continues, "power-to now becomes 'power-over', a relation of power over others" (Holloway, 2010, pp. 28-29, in Lundström, 2021, p. 349).

Power is considered to be local, transient and fluctuating, and therefore is not perceived as manifesting on citizens in larger forces such as "patriarchy" or "hegemonic masculinity" (Fox & Alldred, 2018, p. 323). This would appear to offer a challenge to my study of the "larger forces" of managerial discourse (e.g., efficiency, meritocracy) and their apparent effects on care and inequality. However, power relations that are *consistent and repeated* can have a more lasting effect. Fox and Alldred (2018) say, "The apparent regularities or continuities in power discerned by sociologists (for instance, patriarchal power of one gender over another, or the dominance of market models of social interaction in contemporary society) will depend upon *continued replication* of these specific forces or affects" (p. 323, emphasis added). It is this consistent replication – or "micropolitical patterning" – that creates the perception of overarching structures or underlying mechanisms such as patriarchy or capitalism. Without consistent replication, they note, power "may quickly evaporate when affects in an assemblage alter" (Fox & Alldred, 2018, p. 323).

This posthumanist description is not incongruous with definitions of discourse that describe an interrelated set of texts and "the *practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being"* (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3, emphasis added), that are "*saturated with power relations"* because they constrain and enable what is considered normal, what may be said and done (Hardy, 2022, p. 3, emphasis added). While the posthuman description simply speaks of "forces," "affects," or "patternings" and the latter is specifically about texts and their dissemination, the idea of *consistent reproduction/repetitions of interactions and understandings that produce power relations* can be seen in both.

Despite the congruence, I note that there is a more hopeful bent to the posthuman conceptualization of "continuities" versus "discourses," at least in considerations where these are considered to have power over people's lives. The posthuman idea of power's flux, transience, and precarity gives some sense that power structures could crack, shift or change, if the context and "assemblage" reposition. I will draw on this conceptualization of power as I analyze discursive elements in *Harvard Business Review's* texts.

3.2.4 Section Summary

In this section, I have explained my posthumanist inclination and some basic tenets of a posthumanism perspective. Despite this ontological footing in this study, I focus my inquiry within the human social context, specifically within organizations, using discourse analysis – a humanist, constructivist methodology. In the next section, I resolve this apparent incompatibility by composing these elements as "nested onto-epistemologies." I then explain how this multi-layered lens is an appropriate approach for studying care. First, to help illustrate my approach, I will start with a brief anecdote from my background as an environmental campaigner.

3.3 Nested Onto-epistemological Realms

3.3.1 Nested Realms: An Illustration from the Environmental Movement

Early "sustainable development" activism promoted a so-called "three-legged stool" of sustainability – that is, a diagram articulating that the three areas of environment, community and economy must work together to achieve balance, or sustainability (sometimes called "People, Planet, Profit"). See Figure 3.1. The "stool" image was meant to underscore that all three "legs" were needed to support sustainability, but more often the image was presented as overlapping circles (at right).

Figure 3.1

Three-Legged Stool Sustainability Images

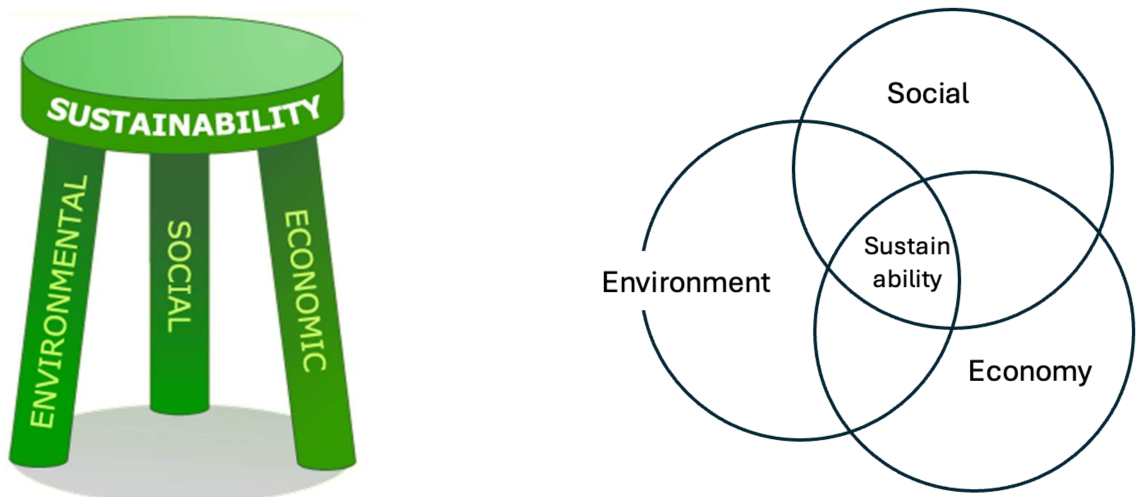

Image by Brady Hummel https://nexuspointblog.wordpress.com/2016/02/01/social-sustainability-the-shorter-leg/

Some years later, this much-used image was redrawn with the domains nested; See Figure 3.2.[1] The new schematic aimed to illustrate that the three "legs" are not equally important and mutually interdependent, as implied by the stool image, nor only partially imbricated, as in the flattened presentation. Nesting the domains communicates relationality and dependence – there is no economy without a functioning society, and there is no human society (or economy) without the environment – but it also demonstrates the subordinate position of human activity in relation to the environment.

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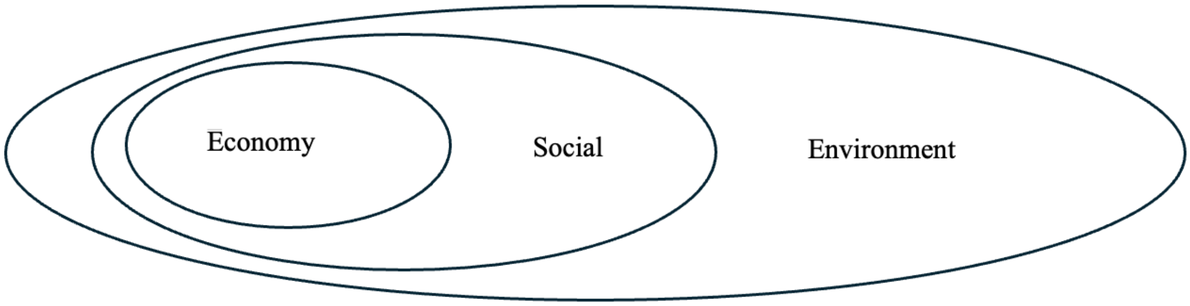
[1] One of many examples of discussion about these comparative diagrams can be found at https://umaine.edu/sustainability/what-is-sustainability/.

Figure 3.2

Economy, Social, Environment as Nested Domains



This illustration eliminated the false equivalency of the previous diagrams: the environment exists without the human, but the opposite is not true. The representation also locates the human fully *within* the environment, rather than separate from it. The new model was more effective at communicating the priority and imperative of environmental protection for human and business flourishing, with comments such as "There is no business to be done on a dead planet"[2] starting to hit home. I will return to this concept of nested domains as I propose a conceptual shift in how we consider sociological paradigms (or at least clarify my own stance towards locating discourse in a posthumanist ontology).

3.3.2 Discourse Analysis… and Posthumanism?

Traditionally, it has been argued that constructivist and realist paradigms are mutually exclusive (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Simply by engaging with such terminology, however, we are operating within the realm of human-mediated experience and knowledge, regardless of

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[2] David Brower, quoted at https://www.patagonia.ca/stories/solutions-series-part-4-solutions-in-business/story-17959.html, retrieved June 5, 2024.

paradigm. A posthumanist stance recognizes a vaster scale of operation, relationship and interaction than this, based on what Braidotti (2019a) calls "multi-scalar relationality" (p. 46):

> Posthuman subjectivity is a transversal alliance that nowadays involves non-human agents. This means that the posthuman subject relates at the same time to the Earth – land, water, plants animals, bacteria – and to technological agents – plastic, wires, cells, codes, algorithms. This transversal range reflects and sustains the posthuman convergence, so that the frame and scope of epistemological and ethical subjectivity is enlarged along the lines of posthumanist and post-anthropocentric relations and the multiple perspectives that inhabit them. (Braidotti, 2019, p.46)

This suggests that there is no external observational point, as explained by Barad (2008): "'We are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather, we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity" (p.146). Because of this, she says, "Practices of knowing and being are not isolatable, but rather, they are mutually implicated. We do not obtain knowledge by standing outside of the world; we know because "we" are of the world" (Barad, 2008, p. 147). Barad (2008) uses the concept of *onto-epistem-ology* (p. 147) to capture this idea, and elsewhere, with the inclusion of values, "ethico-epistem-ontology" or "ethico-onto-epistemology" (Juelskjær & Schwennesen, 2012).

The challenge then is to locate within this "transversal range" our very human proclivity for language and symbolic abstraction, for the sociological analysis of discourse that this engenders and the subject it produces. It's worth noting that semiotic and social flows are considered alongside material flows within assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 22, in Hekman, 2008, p. 100). As an example, Davies and Riach (2018) describe sociomaterial research in MOS that focuses on assemblages of employees, organizational routines and technology (p. 136), so while human linguistic interchanges are not centred, they are not dismissed.

Posthumanist theorist Braidotti (2019a) positions the human subject as just one of multiple forces that create "distributed agency," cautioning that these cannot be reduced to "social conventions of language and interpretation" (p. 134). And yet, says Hekman (2008), it is important not to ignore language, but instead to develop theory that draws together language, materiality and technology: "Language *does* construct our reality. What we are discovering now, however, is that this is not the end of the story" (Hekman, 2008, p. 92, emphasis original). Coole and Frost (2010) say embracing new materialism does not mean entirely discarding social constructivism: "society is simultaneously materially real and socially constructed […] the challenge here is to give materiality its due while recognizing its plural dimensions and its complex, contingent modes of appearing." Wolfe (2010) says that "language is fundamental to our embodied enaction, our bringing forth a world, as humans" and posthumanism forces us to place this within the context of other beings' ways without losing sight of human knowing, observing and describing" (p. xxv).

The point here is that a posthuman ontology does not contraindicate the analysis of human language and discourse, as long as ideas of human exceptionalism are expunged and that, following Barad (2008), we understand humans are part of the world, not outside it. However, there is "ongoing debate about the ability of research based on a discursive approach to address issues of materiality and posthuman agency" (Hardy, 2022, p. 154). This includes: identifying whether the entanglement of material and discursive is considered empirical or ontological; recognizing that relying on textual sources alone makes it difficult to escape a humanist focus; finding language to discuss material and discursive realms within a relational ontology without reinforcing a divide between them; and recognizing the shifts in methodology that flow from understanding the researcher as embedded and entangled in the research relations themselves (Hardy, 2022, pp. 155-156). I recognize these as areas of debate and exploration, and perhaps as potential limitations, although I don't aspire to address them directly. I do, however, offer my observation, based on my study of care, that discourse might be viewed as an intervening, even restraining, element (potestas) between the social world it constructs and the relational and material world from which all human activity (potentia) springs. Discourse analysis, then, may help not only to interpret the human-constructed landscape *within* the social world, but also to understand how discourses may engender blind spots *between* the social and material realities of human existence.

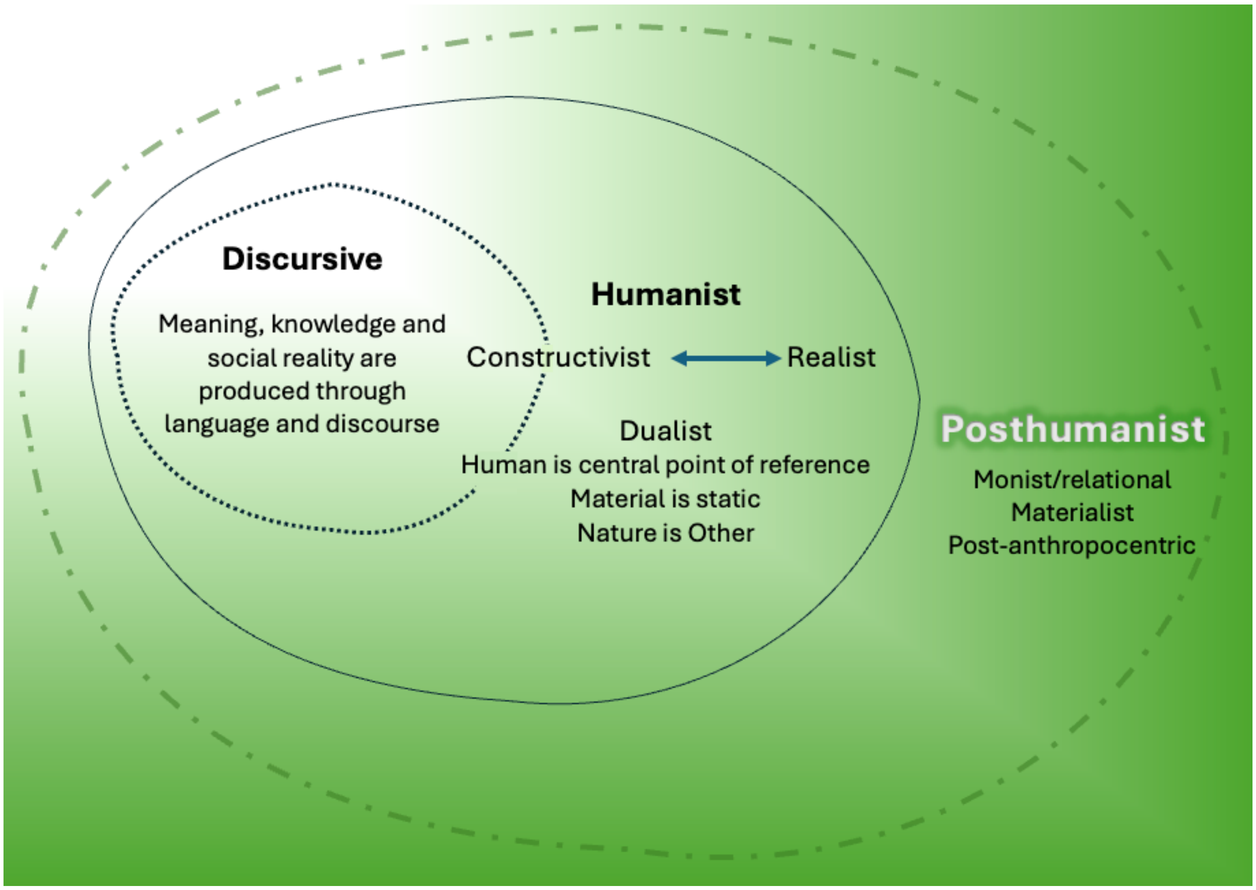
3.3.3 Nested Onto-epistemologies and the Location of Care

This brings me back to my earlier anecdote, with human social and economic realms nested within "the environment." I turn now to a similar representation of nested onto-epistemology, and its implications for care.

In Figure 3.3, I recognize the socially-constructed world as one element within a relational ontology much larger and more complex than that which is recognized from an anthropocentric viewpoint. This positioning declines the idea that constructivist and realist viewpoints are mutually exclusive, recognizing instead that they are both imbricated elements within the limited arena of humanist perception. The discursive realm is a subset, composed of the social world produced by language and structured by discourse. This is a uniquely human landscape that – if you are human – often registers more clearly and substantially than the material world, despite

Figure 3.3

Onto-Epistemological Landscapes



the ontologically fundamental position of the latter. The discursive realm is portrayed with a dotted line, recognizing that the ways in which we compile knowledge may shift and combine between purely constructivist/discursive understandings and those formed by realist/positivistic science. Both sides of the constructivist-realist spectrum spring from a humanist paradigm, and both are relayed through constructed language and discourses, even when these strive to be (and believe themselves to be) objective. Recognizing both as isolated together within an epistemological field that is anthropocentric (therefore, a solid boundary) helps us begin to comprehend that which is beyond, including relational ontology, nonhuman knowledges, and the material out of which all of the rest is built.[3] The broad posthumanist comprehension is drawn with an incomplete boundary against a larger field, in recognition that there are realms of knowing and being we may not now, or ever, be able to access. Discourse analysis, then, allows us to focus on the socially-constructed knowledge and reality that is often most "real" to human-language-based humans, but we must acknowledge that this landscape is constrained and incomplete, by dint of it being socially-constructed. Discourse analysis is both relevant for examining the human social world, and deficient for comprehending that which lies beyond.

My topic is care, how it is viewed and valued within organizations. Discourse analysis permits me to examine how care is perceived, discussed and constructed *within* the social construct of organizational life. Meanwhile, my posthumanist nested onto-epistemological perspective provides insight into how the true nature of care may outstrip the scope of organizational discourse. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 demonstrate how care, situated against nested onto-epistemologies, may be occluded from full visibility when comprehended discursively.

Care is fundamentally relational. It is about meeting the needs of others through affective and material means. Because of this, care stems from, and connects us to, a broad ontological realm of materiality and interdependence, the realm of Tronto's (1993), "complex, life-sustaining web" (p. 103). Says Carstens (2020):

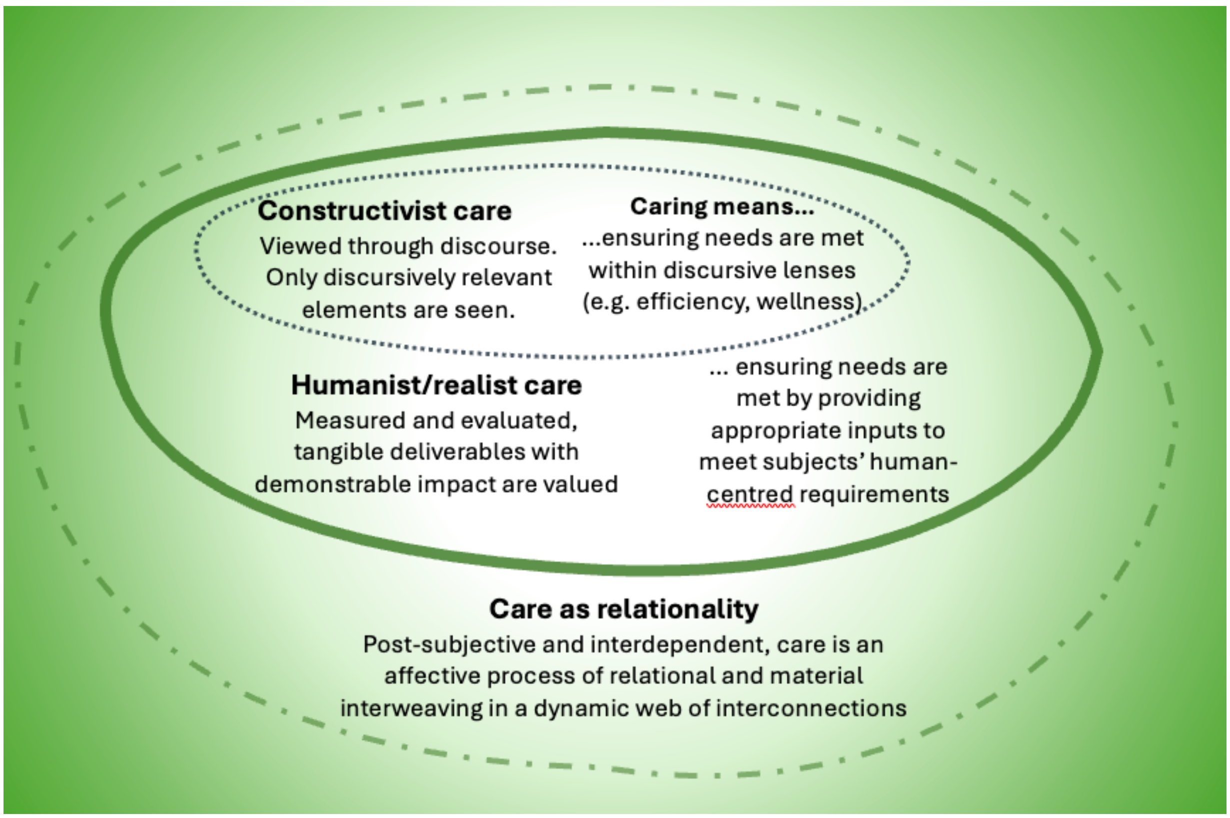
> Seen from the perspective of a posthuman ethics of immanence, care is about restoring "the connections between materiality and ideality" as well as between humans and other forms

[3] There is room to consider whether some portion of the discourse field in Figure 3.3 should fall *outside* the humanist realm, recognizing that some discourse *analysis* takes an expressly anti-humanist approach. It must also be noted that the framing offered here is a Western critique of Western epistemology; that is, critiquing human discourse based on an assumption that it is fundamentally anthropocentric presumes a particular linguistic worldview. A limitation of this work is that it does not examine non-Western worldviews, for example, Indigenous, that might provide a *non*-anthropocentric form of discourse.

of life that "Cartesian (and Platonic) dualism" has kept so thoroughly apart (Grosz, 2017, p. 55). Care, seen from a posthuman standpoint, is about acknowledging more than human

Figure 3.4

Understandings of Care Within Onto-Epistemological Landscapes



entanglements and relationalities. […] [A] posthuman ethics of care asks that we situate ourselves as thoroughly interwoven with a more-than-human world. (Carstens, 2020, p. 79)

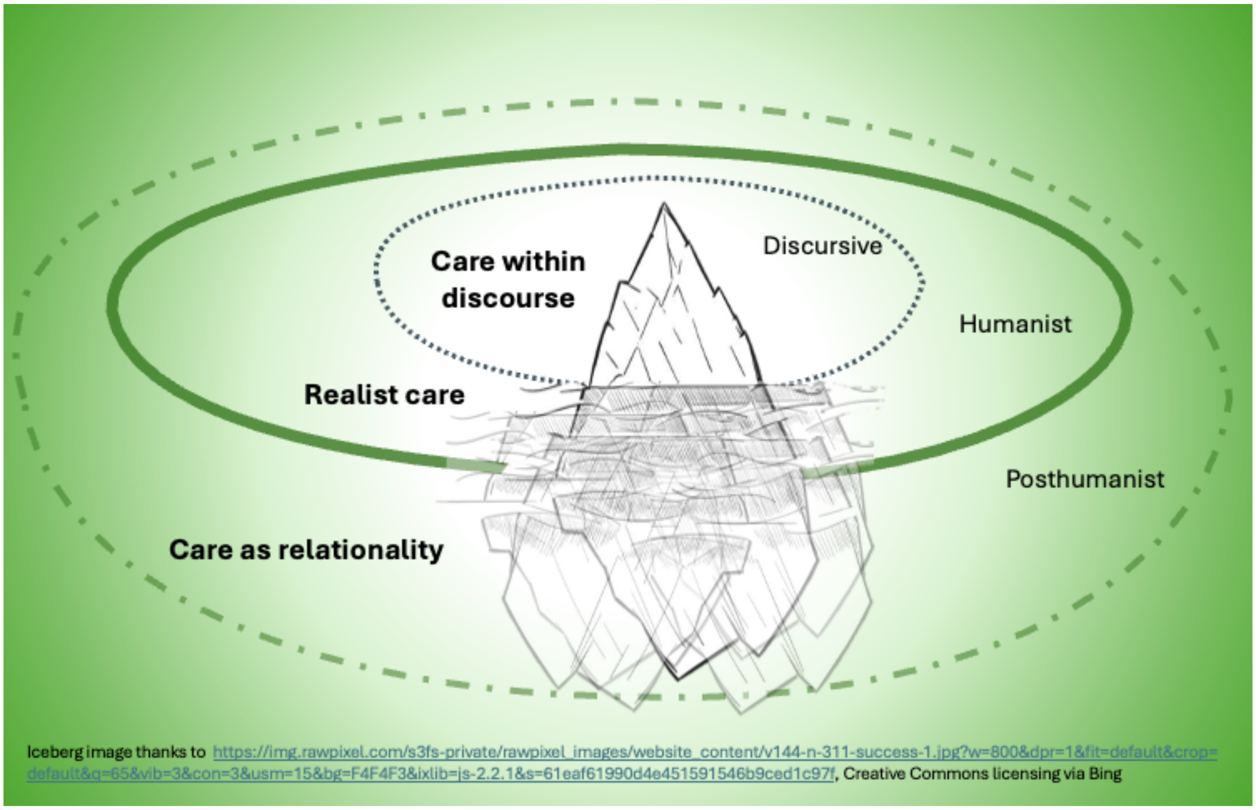
Figure 3.4 places this posthuman view of care into my concept of nested onto-epistemological landscapes. In the posthuman realm, as described by Carstens (2020) above, care is relationality, a process of relational and material interweaving in a dynamic web of interconnection. Understanding that care is fundamentally about meeting needs, I see care as the flow of material and other resources between assemblages, such that the fabric of the whole is maintained. Within a humanist "ontology of separation" (Escobar & Maffei, 2022), we would not use the word "care" when we see a bear eat a salmon (The salmon died! The bear killed it!), but we might understand that the larger vibrant material/ecosystem is served by the nutrient flow from ocean to forest that the salmon and bear together perform.

We humans are not accustomed to thinking of ourselves in this radically embedded way; there is little of what we consider "I" in such equations. And it is not easy to think of every daily interaction on such planetary terms; anyone who has stood on a mountain peak or a great plain and perceived their insignificance within the vastness of the natural material world knows that it is hard to square that limitless interconnection with the human social world of paying rent, cooking dinner for hungry kids, and doing the laundry. Social and linguistically-oriented as we are, we put epistemological boundaries around the quotidian aspects of our world in order to cope.

And yet I posit that *care* as we socio-humanly comprehend it – bandaging someone's injury, helping edit a colleague's presentation, putting the food in front of the kids – is part of the larger flow of resources from where they are to where they are needed (from the ocean to the forest). We don't see this as part of a broader material landscape (the "liveliness of matter," Bennett, 2010, in Fox & Aldred 2020, pp. 122) because of the way we socially constitute and centre ourselves and our human world. Yet, "[i]nterdependency is not a contract, nor a moral ideal, it is a *condition*," (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 70, emphasis original). Therefore, as Figure 3.5 suggests using an iceberg metaphor, much of what constitutes care may lie "below the surface" of discourse.

Figure 3.5

Limited Visibility of Care Within Different Onto-Epistemological Levels



I suggest that posthumanist care-as-relationality inhabits a realm Alaimo (2008) calls transcorporeality: "the time-space where human corporeality, in all its material fleshi-ness, is inseparable from "nature" or "environment" (p. 238), where Haraway (1997) describes nature and culture as "inextricably coterminous in all bodies" (Haraway, 1997, in Fox & Alldred, 2020, p. 122). Care in a posthuman sense can be seen as "the relational power of the world to reconfigure itself, to negotiate, to think, to engage, to respond" (Rogowska-Stangret, 2020, p. 23). Care may operate through us at levels beyond our humanist concepts of self-knowing and agency; care may flow from our deep embeddedness in the material, the ability of bodies to communicate viscerally and non-consciously (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 20), where "if I am weakened, this other, which is part of me, may remain strong" (Noddings, 2013, p. 33).

Care may help define us:

> We are relational beings, defined by the capacity to affect and be affected. Posthuman subjectivity starts with the acknowledgement that what defines us as an autonomous capacity is not rationality, nor our cerebral faculty alone, but rather the autonomy of affect as a virtual force that gets actualized through relational bonds. […] The capacity to affect and be affected is not to be confused with individualized emotions […] This relational process supports a thick and dynamic web of interconnections by removing the obstacles of individualism." (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 45)

Understanding care on a posthuman level helps us unpack phrases such as "the violence that results from exclusion" (Tronto, 2020, p. 157). Exclusion – born of a dualistic view that produces an "Other" – is a forced rift in interconnectedness, an imposed block in the sociomaterial flow of relationship. It is a break in the larger whole, and thus is violent towards right relationship and monistic entanglement. Such a rift runs counter to the idea of maintaining and repairing the world so we "may live in it as well as possible" – Tronto's original definition of care (1993, p. 103).

In this thesis, I will use discourse analysis to consider care as we see and comprehend it within our human, discursive, organizational realm. Yet it is the larger, immanent, entangled, embedded and radically interconnected sense of care that I understand as the true sense of the word. This is an important distinction, since we are surrounded, in our society, by multiple, sometimes trite, meanings of care. As an example, along the way in working on this thesis, a reader queried me about a feeling of romanticism they perceived from my discussion of care, a sense that some time before industrialization, life was good simply because "everyone just cared for each other." I do not intend to leave this impression. Care is not always easy, and since not all needs can be met, it can be fraught with political tensions (Tronto, 1993, 2013). Human life has always included violence, selfishness, and the ability to deny care; this was true before Cartesian thinking and multinational corporations too.

We do live at a time, however, when multiple crises confront both *bios* and *zoe* on this planet, fueled by attitudes and actions fanned by notions of economic rationalism, human exceptionalism, colonialism, racism, and anthropocentrism. The managerialist discourses I examine are the within-organization manifestation of the same ideas. Care is not a romantic notion about everyone being nice to each other, even if that Hallmark-ified view is what we perceive within the individualized and constrained social construct of neoliberal organizations (the tip of the iceberg). Rather, posthuman care as described above is a core element of an ontology of interconnection. While this ontology is still alive and well in some human societies, particularly Indigenous, we are experiencing its atrophy and collapse in Western societies. Say Escobar and Maffei (2022):

> [I]f globalization has been the process of dismantling or destroying everything that is communal and collective in order to create individuals that conceive of themselves as individuals in competitive markets and so forth, today, to heal and care for the web of life requires us to restore some degree of communal existence, so there is a need to recommunalise social life, to reconnect with one another, humans and non-humans. (p. 47)

I see care – what we do to maintain, continue, and repair our bodies, our selves, and our environment in an interwoven, complex, life-sustaining web (Tronto, 1993) – as an ethic and practice that supports this "communalizing" of life, which has been slowly lost in centuries of industrialization, Enlightenment, colonization and capitalism. My argument is for its validation as an antidote to the ravages and inequalities that arise when we deny our fundamental interconnectedness. (And it's great when people are nice to each other too.)

In this chapter I have outlined my theoretical approach, using nested onto-epistemologies to situate discourse analysis within a posthumanist lens. In the next chapter, I turn to my methodological approach.

Chapter 4: Research Design

Vignette: No script for care

The staff news reporter at the broadcasting corporation was upset and belligerent. Recently, the radio newsroom had gone through multiple changes to budgets, technology, union representation and organizational structure; change felt constant and debilitating. But this was the last straw: over the weekend a casual employee had moved his chair, leaving a broken one at his desk.

The staff reporter raged to the senior editor about disrespect and irresponsibility. He raged on the phone to facilities staff who told him to bring the chair to the shop to be fixed. He refused: "not my job." He upended a trash can and used it as a seat. He unwound recording tape and built a web across his cubicle entrance. He hung a prominent "No Trespassing" sign. He fumed and glowered. For more than a week he worked sitting on the trash can behind the barricade, a pillar of seething resentment in the very centre of the newsroom.

No manager intervened. No one spoke to him about the situation, asked if he was okay, or helped other staff, confused and unsettled, figure out how to respond. There was simply no language for this. It fell outside the scripts of normal ("productive") newsroom stress and chaos, organizational practice and protocol, collegial concern and comment. With no organizational discourse to explain adult tantrums related to loss of status, space, control and respect, it was as if the incident didn't happen – notwithstanding a man visibly sitting on a trash can, hurt, frustrated, isolated and toxic. The situation simply was not there.

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present my discursive methodological approach (Hardy, 2022). I explain my use of *Harvard Business Review* (HBR) as a source of research texts, and how I selected a sample of texts based on my literature review. I then outline my research process, and offer some comments about reflexivity.

4.2 A Discursive, Critical Approach

To paraphrase Hekman (2008, p. 92), although our world is comprised of much more than language, language does construct our human, social reality. As a reporter, I often witnessed this, as (for example) a politician might promote "the potential of new opportunities" when a fish plant was closing, framing those who were fearfully losing their jobs as non-entrepreneurial and dependent by contrast. Interest in language's socially constitutive effect created a "linguistic turn" in organization studies in the late-20th century, raising new ways to study "related issues of power, knowledge, and meaning" (Phillips & Oswick, 2012, p. 8). This has developed into a variety of research approaches that generally fall under the umbrella of organizational discourse analysis (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2018).

The word "discourse" has multiple and sometimes confusing meanings (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). I am following the understandings offered by Hardy (2022, p. 3): "Organizational discourse refers to texts and practices that bring organizationally related phenomena into being (Grant et al., 2004), including the identities that populate them, the knowledge that informs them, and the power relations that permeate them"; and by Alvesson and Karreman (2000, p. 1126), that discourse is "the shaping of social reality through language."

Discourses stabilize what appears to be normal, what people accept as "just the way things are" (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2018, p. 84) and "what can be said" (Jacques, 1996, p. 19). In the case of my colleague in the vignette above, discourse can also *prevent* things from being said, or recognized. Foucault (1980) called this effect the "regime of truth": the methods by which one can distinguish true from false statements, the ways by which they are sanctioned, the techniques and procedures that are validated in acquiring truth, and the status accorded those who can say what is true (Foucault, 1980, p.131 in Hardy & Clegg, 2006, Power and resistance section para. 2).

As a result, discourses act as a "powerful ordering force" within organizations (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1127). They hold disciplinary power by creating subject positions that limit how an individual is known and how they can act, who has a voice and who has none (Hardy, 2022, p. 4). As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) put it: "Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations […] through the ways in which they represent things and position people" (quoted in Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 6).

Despite this power (or because of it), discourses and their influence can effectively be invisible. Dominant discourses are often considered to be common sense, science or wisdom; "[they] are unquestioningly accepted by the majority of people situated within the discursive field" (McLaren & Helms Mills, 2010, p. 410). This seems particularly true of the "organizational myths" – efficiency, meritocracy and positive globalization – identified by Amis et al. (2020), which are accepted without question as business truths. In his discussion of Foucault, Hall (2001) explains how discourse produces the objects of knowledge:

> It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. […] a discourse 'rules in' certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write, or conduct oneself, so also, by definition, it 'rules out,' limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it. (Hall, 2001, p. 72)

The ability of dominant discourses to "rule in" or "rule out" a topic, or a knowledge, is central to my study of how and where care is seen within organizations. I have been curious about the way that similar *needs* (requirement for care), and similar *actions* (caregiving), are interpreted differently when they play out within, as opposed to outside of, organizational life. As Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1993) notes, "There is a system of relations in place in modern organizations in which many features are interlocked and mutually reinforcing" (p. xvii); the idea that we expect to behave "professionally" or "follow protocol" while at work is a surprise to no one. While most employees I believe would consider this to be relatively benign ("I'm hired for a certain role and I do what's needed for that job"), I believe we have lost awareness of the extent to which organizational, managerialist discourses have reshaped the nature of our relationships, and in so doing, are reshaping ourselves. Say Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015), "institutionalized discourses prevail over human agency" (p. 230), so people must conform before they can participate, or speak. Because I am seeking to unearth something that is performed but not seen (or spoken of), my study is not perhaps so much an analysis *of* discourse so much as an analysis peering *through* discourse. Nevertheless, it is the power of discourse to produce – and constrain, colour, and shape – our social world that offers me a pathway to understanding where and how to locate care.

Taking a critical approach to discursive study within organizations means prioritizing the analysis of power. There are multiple approaches to constructivist critical discourse analysis (CDA) with different practices and emphases; what they share is an interest in demystifying ideologies and power, and understanding injustice and change, through the investigation of written, spoken or visual semiotic data (Wodak, 2014, pp. 302-303). In analyzing discursive power, many CDA approaches draw on the work of Michel Foucault, who rejected the idea of power as an economic resource that can be held or used, describing it instead as pervasive throughout all social relations (Lovell, 2011). While discourse transmits and produces power, it also exposes power, making resistance possible; this means power and resistance are always inextricably intertwined (Hardy, 2022, p. 5).

Given my posthumanist lens, I am not drawing on a specifically Foulcauldian conceptualization of power in this study, nor adopting a specific established CDA approach. I am drawing instead on Braidotti's (2019a) description of power as *potentia* (empowerment) and *potestas* (restrictive force), or *power-to* and *power-over* (described in Chapter 3), to identify where organizational discourses empower or restrict "relational capacity" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 50). Since *potestas* – also defined as "protocols of institutional control" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 50) –aligns with Foucauldian power, one could equate *potentia* with the concept of resistance. However, I view the idea of relational capacity, a force that increases relational capacity, as more appropriately aligned with an ethic and practice of care, that is, to live well in the world in a life-sustaining web (Tronto, 1993). *Potentia* offers a proactive vision, "power-to," rather than being defined in response to the manifestation of power by another. It is aligned with emerging fields of posthumanist, sociomaterial fields of study (e.g., New Materialisms, Environmental Humanities) that "recognize a world where power not only works through social normalizing but acts with and from biology, organisms, cells, genetic makeup – "a politics of matter" (Papadopolous, 2014)" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 137).

Posthuman approaches acknowledge their heredity from postmodern and poststructuralist ideas (Braidotti, 2019a, 2019b), and I am utilizing the idea of (humanist, linguistic) discourse drawn from these roots. Since I present an analysis of power-through-language, my study is both critical and discursive; however, I also acknowledge my departure from (and respect for) established forms of critical discourse analysis by not using the term CDA in this case. Braidotti (2019b) explains that while the field of Foucauldian-inspired biopolitical scholarship shed new light on power relations in advanced capitalism, "it stopped short of embracing the affirmative aspects of the posthuman turn" (p. 33). I hope my study of care may step in that affirmative direction.

Before turning to the specific steps of my discursive study, the next section discusses my choice of texts, and their source, *Harvard Business Review.*

4.3 Harvard Business Review: A Source of Managerialist Texts

Discourse analysis is based on the fundamental unit of *texts*, or expression that has been inscribed into some sort of physical medium and is therefore accessible to others (Hardy, 2022, p. 6). A text can be any type of symbolic expression, including written texts, spoken words, pictures, artifacts (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 4), practices, interviews, and forms of embodiment (Hardy, 2022, p. 6). This study focuses on texts (articles plus some images) published in HBR over time, due to its position as a leading management journal. In this section, I first provide some background about the publication, then describe how HBR's *texts* can be considered representative of (or even foundational to) a larger managerialist *discourse*.

4.3.1 Background of HBR

Launched in 1922, HBR was initiated by the dean of the Harvard Business School as a hybrid scholarly journal and trade magazine, translating academic research into relevant material for working managers. Although circulation was relatively modest during the journal's early years, it grew 500% during the post-war boom, and tripled again from 1965-1985, reaching 340,000 paid subscribers in 2019, along with 18 million social media followers, 4 million monthly podcast downloads, and 7 million unique web visitors each month ("Harvard Business Review's paid circulation climbs to 340,000, the highest in its 97-year history," 2019). The magazine is published in English and nine international versions.

As a "bridge" journal between researchers and practitioners, HBR presents its content as scientific and evidence-based. However, it can be lacking in critical insight and strongly ideologically constrained, says Spector (2006), who examined HBR issues from the Cold War period for evidence of political ideology. Nevertheless, its stature as an ongoing leader of business discourse is nearly unparalleled. In January 2000, *The Economist* called it "a publication which almost singlehandedly defines the agenda for management debate" (Anonymous, 2000), and in 2012 a retrospective article in its own pages referred to HBR as both an "agenda-setting institution" and a magazine that "has earned the authority not only to teach business leaders how to do things right but also *to define the right things to do*" (Kirby, 2012, p. 84, emphasis added).

After a 1980s editorial shift towards a more engaging and popular magazine format, and a post-2000 embrace of web publication, it's fair to say that HBR's advice is intended to reach beyond just business managers, and perhaps beyond just business as well. As its website states, "Intelligent business readers turn to us for answers to the questions they face every day, and for the guidance and debate that will have a profound impact on their lives – both personally and professionally" ("Harvard Business Review: For Booksellers/Retailers," 2022). Its level of influence, coupled with its arguably insular and hubristic self-conceptualization, means HBR offers an excellent source for critically examining the mainstream of management discourse in any contemporary period of the past 100 years.

4.3.2 HBR: From Texts to Discourse

Discourse analysis focuses on collections of texts to identify discourses. Hardy (2022, p. 6) describes factors that contribute to progressive development of discourses: the texts "travel" from local to global; multiple actors reinscribe the material in new texts and practices; texts are widely distributed and consumed; and meanings stabilize over time as they connect to a larger network. Considering these factors, it is not hard to identify HBR as an influential actor within the network that builds managerialist discourse, despite being itself only a source of standalone texts. This is due to its own republishing activities, other sales and publishing efforts by its parent company, and the relatively cozy relationship both HBR and its parent company hold with individuals and organizations within the discursive network. In this section I describe these elements, to provide the rationale for my use of HBR texts as a source for identifying managerialist discourse.

Harvard Business Publishing (HB Publishing) is an independent corporation affiliated with Harvard Business School, with offices in nine countries. HB Publishing has three market groups. The first is HBR, the company's "flagship" magazine, which produces six hard copy issues per year, a blog (hbr.org), a weekly newsletter ("Ascend") for young professionals, eight podcasts, and approximately 20 webinars per year ("Harvard Business Review," 2024). The second market group is Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, which provides tailored leadership development training to "Global 2000" corporate clients. This is offered in multiple formats, from digital materials embedded and tracked in a company's own learning management system to on-campus executive education for senior leaders ("Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning," 2024). The third, Harvard Business Publishing Education (HBP Education), provides course materials for use in undergraduate, MBA and executive education programs. This consists of multiple products, from "core curriculum" to business cases, online courses and simulations, as well as materials to support business educators. Education publishes books compiled from HBR articles (e.g. "HBR's 10 best reads on diversity"), and sells reprints of HBR articles and book chapters, boasting "50,000+ course materials" ("Harvard Business Publishing Education," 2024).

The entrepreneurial repackaging of HBR-branded material for different market niches and customers big and small is an impressive effort on its own, and gives some indication of the overall market demand (and therefore dissemination and consumption) of these texts. A closer look also shows the networked nature, involvement of multiple actors, scope of "travel" and reproduction that HBR texts demonstrate. In terms of magazine authors, HBR accepts article proposals from anyone, as long as they offer expertise, evidence and originality ("Harvard Business Review," 2024, Guidelines for authors). For example, the July-August 2024 issue lists

34 authors for its 19 articles, of which half are business school academics (four from Harvard), while the others are executives (5), consultants (7), business authors (2) and HBR staff (3). In terms of sales, HB Publishing sells far more than its own products, including more than 16,000 case studies produced by other business schools (e.g., INSEAD, China Europe International Business School, Indian Institute of Management, London Business School, University of Hong Kong) and more than 3,000 articles published by other practitioner-focused business magazines, such as MIT Sloan Management Review, Rotman Management Magazine and California Management Review. One might expect these other publishers to be competitors, but they appear to enjoy a symbiotic relationship with HBR through the reprint sales channel. In all, more than 60 other publications, publishers, and business schools sell information through the HB Publishing Education pipeline. Longevity of demand may be a factor: of the 65,175 items available for sale through the Education channel in June 2024, more than half (33,632) were published more than 10 years ago, which suggests that many ideas enjoy a long (and profitable) republishing life.[1]

In addition to being available for resale as reprints, HBR chooses top articles to republish in the magazine itself, so an idea that has traction is celebrated, repeated, and reinforced. For example, Daniel Goleman's article "What makes a leader?" (Goleman, 1998), which popularized the concept of emotional intelligence in management, was published again six years later under the header "Best of HBR" (Goleman, 2004). The key points of the article also appeared as an inset in his 2000 article, "Leadership that gets results" (Goleman, 2000), and again in a 2001 article about leaders' moods (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001). In 2004, eighteen business leaders and scholars contributed brief first-person articles to "explore how to manage emotional

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[1] Some of the clearly-out-of-date articles I used in this study are not available as reprints, so there is some pruning of the archive to keep it relevant.

intelligence” ("Leading by Feel," 2004), demonstrating both the reach of the ideas, and the willingness of those beyond HBR to contribute in further disseminating them. This willingness to be involved is no doubt due to HBR’s high profile, but such relationships may also be cultivated by the publication’s gentle editorial touch: it is reported that “a favor [HBR] grants its subjects” is to allow them to edit their own comments before publication ("Reviewing Harvard's Business Review," 2002). This underscores the insider nature of HBR. Permitting an interviewee to edit an article before it is published frequently occurs in corporate communications, where relationship maintenance and mutual benefit are key, but the practice is frowned upon in independent journalism, where veracity is supposed to be prioritized over influence.

HBR’s popular article “Managing your boss” (J. J. Gabarro & Kotter, 1980) amply demonstrates the “built up progressively” nature of management discourse, and HBR’s role in it. It followed the similarly-titled “How to manage your boss” by Peter Drucker (1977), published in *Management Review,* and it mentions some of Drucker’s ideas, using his name (J. J. Gabarro & Kotter, 1980, p. 98), while not actually citing his publication. (Drucker was by then a leading light in management academia and apparently required neither introduction nor citation.) J. J. Gabarro and Kotter (1980) drew from the separate work of both authors; an article published in the journal *Organizational Dynamics* (J. Gabarro, 1979) and a book published under the imprint of the American Management Association (Kotter, 1979). Clearly the combined effort under the catchy title struck a chord. The article was reprinted in HBR in full or in excerpt three more times (J. J. Gabarro & Kotter, 1988, 1993, 2005), published as a book chapter (J. J. Gabarro & Kotter, 2007), then expanded into an HBR book by the same name (J. J. Gabarro & Kotter, 2008). The material is also for sale as a two-hour online course ("Harvard ManageMentor: Managing your boss," 2019) and there are at least 13 subsequent HBR articles and books related to “managing up,” managing bad bosses, managing multiple bosses, and more produced by authors other than the original two pioneers of the concept. Within the HB Publishing Education database, in the 2005 reprint, the magazine claimed:

> In the 25 years since it was published, this article has truly improved the practice of management. Its simple yet powerful advice has changed the way people work, enhanced countless manager-boss relationships, and improved the performance of corporations in ways that show up on the bottom line. Over the years, it has become a staple at business schools and corporate training programs worldwide. (J. J. Gabarro & Kotter, 2005, p. 92)

Notwithstanding HBR’s own glowing assessment, it is evident that the article has had an impact beyond Harvard’s walls. Management consultants have morphed the ideas towards their own purposes, clearly building on, but often not referencing the original article (or Drucker’s, 1977 original text). See for example “Manage your boss” (Owen, 2007), published in a journal for industrial and commercial training, and *Manage your boss* (Vehar, 2016), produced by the Center for Creative Leadership, a “top-ranked global provider of leadership development” (Vehar, 2016, p. 52). The ideas have also filtered through academia into journals for different sectors and trades. For example, “Managing your relationship with your boss” (Pastor & White, 2014), is aimed at pharmacists. It recognizes Gabarro & Kotter in its text and liberally paraphrases their article. Pearce (2007) offers ten steps for managing your boss, aimed at nursing leaders; Santovec (2010) proposes that women in higher education should manage their boss; Schumacher (2015) writes for those in the mining trades, and Kelley (2009) appears in a journal for payroll managers. These articles do not mention Gabarro & Kotter, but draw on their ideas, and those of Drucker, to varying degrees.

Finally, the topic can be found in the business press, as recently as February 2024 (Blodget, 2024), published in *Business Insider.* An earlier article on the same topic in the same publication (Bhaimiya, 2022) includes interviews with professors at Brandeis International Business School and Trinity Business School, as well as the CEO of a software company. Academics and CEOs all echo themes from the original Gabarro-Kotter-Drucker articles, demonstrating the infiltration of ideas through texts into practice, and back into text. The ideas have appeared in publications as diverse as New Zealand Management (Flanagan & Finger, 1997), Black Enterprise (Randall, 1992), American Libraries (Pergander, 2006), allAfrica.com, (Chieza, 2015), Hindustan Times (Goudreau, 2010) multiple YouTube videos, and at least twenty-five books with similar names listed on Amazon.com as of June, 2024.

In this section, I have introduced and briefly explored the way in which texts from HBR play a central and influential role on the development of managerial discourse, through iterative re-publication and repackaging by multiple actors for use in corporate, university, consulting and popular settings, dissemination through friendly and mutually reinforcing networks, and the eventual disappearance into common practice and shared understanding, even when HBR's name and the original authors are no longer visible. These provide ample evidence of the uncontested legitimacy HBR enjoys as a leader within managerialist thinking, even to the point of being an example of the "modern power" described by Van Dijk (1993): "dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear 'natural' and quite 'acceptable'" (p. 254). Although my choice of texts in this dissertation is drawn from this single source, I feel confident that it offers an effective sample and broad view of managerialist discourse, beyond what might appear to be a narrow frame.

4.4 Research Process

The steps I took in this discursive study were developed consistent with recommendations from Hardy (2022), and tailored to address my research questions:

1. What managerialist discourses does *Harvard Business Review* reproduce?

2. (a) Where does care manifest within organizational life and work? (b) What types of care are recognized (valued) vs. types of care that are not?

3. How do managerialist discourses help produce privileged irresponsibility (lack of recognition for care) in organizational life?

4. How does the manifestation and recognition of care within organizations relate to the perpetuation of (economic) inequality by organizations?

My questions stem from the central question of whether managerialist discourses produce a situation of privileged irresponsibility (and therefore inequality) within organizations. I needed to work with a selection of texts that seemed likely to demonstrate both managerialist themes and situations where care might be rendered but not recognized. The process I developed was consistent with recommendations from Phillips and Hardy (2002) and Hardy (2022), and moved through the following broad stages:

1. Stage 1: Select texts strategically to represent a corpus of texts
2. Stage 2: Systematically comb the sample texts for instances where relevant phenomena are mentioned
3. Stage 3: Identify patterns related to the research questions and investigate in more depth.

Below I describe the detail of my approach for each of these stages.

4.4.1 Stage 1: Selecting Texts

This stage includes: sourcing research texts; developing search terms and initial text selection; secondary screening; and scoring and selection of research sample.

Sourcing Research Texts. To produce my sample of HBR articles, I accessed its archive of issues through the online database EBSCO Business Source Premier, via the Patrick Power library at Saint Mary's University. This database is comprehensive, containing the full set of HBR articles from 1922-to the present[2], and is searchable. As of September 2022, when I accessed it to begin selecting texts, the HBR database included 15,078 articles.

Developing Search Terms and Initial Text Selection. To select potential research texts, I developed a set of search terms informed by six central concepts from my background literature. This included care literature, organizational economic inequality (Amis et al., 2020), and the Braverman-inspired question about whether care is divided in organizations. My goal was to create a search "net" that would collect those texts with the most likelihood of yielding material relevant to my research. (For example, an article cautioning companies that an excessive focus on big data could hurt their brand (Robert, 2015) would provide little insight for my research questions.) Table 4.1 shows the 17 search terms used to pull articles from the HBR database and how many articles each search yielded; note that some articles may be counted in more than one search.

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[2] Peter Webster, research librarian at Saint Mary's University, contacted EBSCO to confirm that their database, and the Saint Mary's subscription access, includes all articles published 1922-2022. Private communication, June 28, 2024.

Table 4.1

Search Terms

Concept	Informed by	Search terms	Number of articles
Care	Care literature	Care	441
Efficiency	Amis et al. "organizational myths"; Braverman	Efficiency	570
Emotion	Care literature	Emotion	124
		Compassion	25
		Empathy	56
		Trust	195
		Love	86
Merit	Amis et al. "organizational myths"	Merit	65
		Qualification	67
		Job evaluation	37
		Career development	227
		Job promotion	66
Organizational structure	Amis et al. "organizational processes"	Subordinate	359
		Boss and-not-subordinate	242
		Equality	50
		Privilege	20
Women	Care literature; Amis et al.	Women	443
		Total	3073

I expanded the literature concepts into 17 search terms, as shown. The "organizational myths" from Amis et al. (2020) that I used – meritocracy and efficiency – were previously discussed in Chapter 2. I also worked with the organizational practices that Amis et al. (2020) identified as the main sites where economic inequality is produced (hiring, promotion, role allocation, compensation, and organizational structure). Table 4.2 presents the five practices and explains how they were used (or not) to inform both article selection and coding (which is discussed later).

Table 4.2

Application of Organizational Practices Identified by Amis et al. (2020)

Organizational process	Relevance and application
Hiring practices Amis et al. (2020) call hiring practices “gatekeeping mechanisms” (p. 4) that serve to channel members of privileged groups into better career paths, and others into lower paid occupations with fewer opportunities. They implicate three mechanisms within hiring: *recruiters* who tend to be positively biased towards applicants who are similar to them in culture, education, or experience; *recruitment tools and instruments* that are not neutral and perpetuate patterns of disadvantage and bias; and *informal networks* that both provide exclusive access for privileged employees or perpetuate inequality in “mundane” jobs (e.g., by referrals from those already in such jobs).	Because hiring is usually an interaction between two people who do not have (as yet) a workplace relationship, and because one of the individuals in a hiring process is not (as yet) actually engaged in the organization, I did not anticipate that this area would yield the type of care activity I was seeking. Therefore, I did not focus on hiring practices in this study.
Promotion Opportunities for promotion provide a clear link to inequality in society beyond the organization, since the “fluidity and speed” of promotion has a direct impact on economic and social positions beyond work (Amis et al., 2020, p. 6). The authors identify three mechanisms at work: *informal networks* through family, alma maters or culture; *access to mentors*, which is disproportionately accessible to those with higher socio-economic status or perceived advantages (appearance, gender, schooling, etc.); and *socialization*, which leads some employees to expect advancement and others – disproportionately those who are racialized, or women – to lose confidence.	Promotion is a process where hierarchy is inherent, and therefore where levels of power and privilege can be discerned. This concept was used for both article selection and for within-article coding as follows: <u>Article selection search terms</u>: career development; job promotion; qualification <u>Article coding</u>: promotion/job role; hierarchy; task allocation; org structure
Role allocation The authors note that although often presented as neutral and value-free, “the allocation and occupancy of roles reflect entrenched values made manifest” (p.8). They identify two important factors that are implicated	Since care work can be embedded in roles but is not always visible, role allocation, whether acknowledged or not, is of particular interest in this

Organizational process	Relevance and application
in inequality: the *demands placed* on those in particular roles, and the *tasks they are given*. In terms of demands, there is a question of who is "suited" to a role, with this often leading to the selection for leadership of those who appear least encumbered, or "more committed" (this is of particular interest for the study of care and privileged irresponsibility). Task assignment reproduces inequality because it serves to impose social identity; even within the same job, for example, men and women may be disproportionately assigned different tasks, perpetuating gender stereotypes and differential access to opportunity.	study, especially where a role involves care. For article selection, the specific terminology of "role allocation" was not effective, so I relied on those used in job promotion, then paid particular attention to roles during article coding. Article coding: 13 "care" codes; promotion/job role; task allocation; org structure; effectiveness/competence; unencumbered worker; various codes related to hierarchy.
Compensation Although remuneration structures are perceived to be meritocratic, and efficient in terms of retaining talent in competitive marketplaces, the literature shows multiple ways in which salaries between different groups can be unequal. Amis et al. (2020) identify two key mechanisms that link compensation with the reproduction of inequality: *remuneration structures* and *exploitative and discriminatory practices* that limit access to higher-paying jobs by marginalized groups. Of note, they mention that compensation is skewed against roles that require "relational" work (perhaps evidence of care) and that are often occupied by women (Amis et al., 2020, p.11); they also mention a study that notes how those who perform direct care work are often poorly paid, and are "gendered, raced, and classed" .	Compensation is clearly germane to issues of economic inequality, and relevant to roles related to care. However, my study focuses on care provided when it is not identified as care; that is, I do not examine jobs in the paid-care sector. Although the issues inherent in unequal compensation may include the invisibility of or denigration of care, I found that compensation, as a distinct concept, did not provide a useful term for article selection or coding, and I relied on those explained in other categories instead.
Organizational Structuring Amis et al. identify two mechanisms that perpetuate inequality within organizational structure: *organizational culture*, and *hierarchies and bureaucracies*. Culture includes language that positions men as actors and women as emotional support, excluding women from advancement; professional cultures that value male-associated characteristics such	Elements of organizational culture, especially those related to gendered roles and differently-valued types of work, are highly relevant to this thesis. Similarly hierarchy, with its built-in power differentials, is of interest in terms of finding where care appears or is hidden within.

Organizational process	Relevance and application
as decisiveness, competitiveness, assertiveness, and lack of emotion; and cultures in female-dominated fields that advance males since they may be viewed as less adept at front-line (therefore "female") roles. Organizational culture may reinforce issues raised earlier, where the "unencumbered" employee is valued, rather than one who opts to take advantage of work-family policies that allow flexibility and time for family care. Hierarchies and bureaucracies are shown to strengthen divisions between groups by concentrating power in the hands of a few who are interested in retaining it, and silencing those who are left out (Amis et al., 2020, p. 15-16).	Article selection search terms: subordinate; boss-not-subordinate; women; equality Article coding: org structure; competition; conformity; culture; efficiency of emotion; 5 "emotion" codes; gender-female; gender-male; hierarchy; superior-subordinate; strength/toughness; needy/weak; patriarchy; power/influence; rational; status; unencumbered worker; women.

To develop the 17 search terms, I used the concepts directly (e.g. "merit"), but I also supported these with additional terms I felt would help to identify the concept within HBR's own keywords for each article. For example, "merit" alone yielded only 65 articles, but "career development", which is related to ideas of merit, yielded 227. Where a search term performed poorly, I sought related terms that could better represent its meaning. For example, "organizational structure" (Amis et al.'s (2020) yielded results that were too broad and not related, so I substituted the terms "subordinate," "boss," "equality," and "privilege," as these offer insights into power within organizational structure. The search resulted in a set of 3,073 articles, which included some redundancies due to overlaps in the search sets. This set was sizeable enough that I was confident my set of search terms was sufficient.

Secondary Screening. My next step was to review the abstracts of all articles in my initial set, to eliminate redundancies and identify a sample of those most worthwhile to read in full. This screening led to some wholescale eliminations. For example, the search term "trust" primarily yielded articles related to *financial* trusts. In the few cases where it was related to the relational and emotional concept of trust, this was usually covered by a different search term;

therefore, the entire set of articles produced only by the "trust" search term was dropped. Some articles were book reviews, which I eliminated. Some were letters to the editor; if the original article had not come up in my search, I eliminated the related letter.

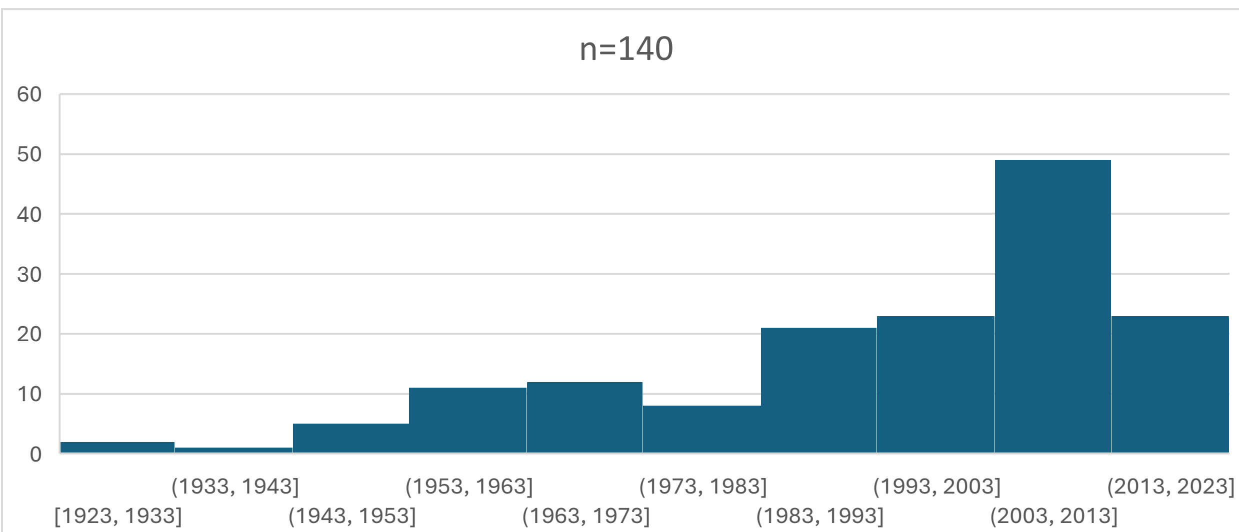
In general, I avoided articles related to collective labour and also marketing topics, as these tended to focus away from the individual-level relationships between employees, or employees and supervisors, that I was seeking. Discussions of emotion and care in the context of marketing tended to be focused on the external constituency of customers, not relationships inside an organization. Those related to unions tended to be on the broader level of collective issues and grievances, and therefore were more aligned with the standardized and bureaucratized practices of human resources rather than the individual relations I was seeking.

Finally, if an article had an extremely minimal abstract (some were only one sentence), it was eliminated as I didn't have enough material to evaluate, unless its title appeared compelling to my purpose. This screening resulted in a list of 431 articles.

Scoring and Selection of Research Sample. From here my goal was to identify a "manageable, relatively limited corpus of texts" that could support my analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 72), so I sought to select the articles that appeared to offer the richest "density" of content related to my inquiry. Therefore, based on reading its abstract, I scored each of the 431 articles against each of my 17 search terms, using a 1-4 point scale, from 1 (lower interest) to 4 (higher interest). The score indicated my judgment about how likely the article might be to provide insight into work that is valued/privileged, roles and relationships, hierarchical interactions, visible or invisible care, and generally the areas that could inform this study of care and inequality. The final score for each article, therefore, helped indicate how many search terms it hit and how relevant it was deemed against those terms (for example, if an article scored 2 on "efficiency," 1 on "emotion", and 2 on "boss," its total score =5). After this scoring, I dropped all articles with fewer than four points, while ensuring I still had representation from each decade. This process produced my research sample of 140 titles, which are listed chronologically in Appendix 1, Sample of Articles from HBR. See Figure 4.1 for a graphical representation of the time periods the articles represent. The larger sample from more recent decades indicates increased HBR coverage of topics related to my research, such as the emotional landscape of work, relationship management, and advice for individual career-building as opposed to general management topics.

Figure 4.1:

Distribution of Articles by Decade, 1923-2022



4.4.2 Stage 2: Systematically Comb the Texts for Instances where Relevant Phenomena are Mentioned

The goal of this stage was to surface instances where the dominant discourses of managerialism could be seen, as well as instances that demonstrated care within organizations.

This was accomplished by reading and coding texts to produce collections of relevant instances that could then be analyzed together.

Reading and Coding Texts. With my data sample of 140 HBR articles sourced across 100 years, I began to read the articles in full. Since managerial and organizational discourses have developed and solidified over time, I chose to read chronologically. I used Atlas.ti software to code any instances of phenomena related to my inquiry, using the software simply as a tool "for automating and managing the subjective process of manual coding" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 78). I created codes by combining theoretical antecedents from my literature with reflexive/autoethnographical insights formed through observations of workplaces I have experienced; I developed codes as my reading deepened my insights into the texts.

My broad interest is to examine how care is located within organizational practices and discourses, yet I theorize that engaging in or needing care tends to be less *visible* because it sits outside standard organizational discourse (see Section 2.5.1). Therefore, I also created codes such as "human element", or "workplace experience" to use as markers to lead my analysis back to areas where I felt I might find, upon review, evidence of care being present or subordinated. I also created codes to mark relevant contextual elements, such as "image of business/executive" for elements that seemed to describe the way business/executives are expected to appear or present themselves, or "social class" for elements that described (often explicitly, in earlier years) this marker of identity. I coded visual material (illustrations, cartoons, photographs) in addition to text. This work resulted in 76 codes (see Appendix 3 for the list of codes and their descriptions). Since coding continued to develop as I read through the texts, I completed a second reading/coding of all texts, to ensure that codes created as my insights deepened were equally applied to earlier texts.

4.4.3 Stage 3: Identify Patterns Related to the Research Questions.

This stage included collation of coded phenomena and analyzing data.

Collation of Coded Phenomena. Using the Atlas.ti software, I was able to pull the results of each code from across all articles that contained material relevant to that code. This produced thick data sets of cross-cutting content, pulled from different articles, authors, and eras, and offering similar indications of my coded themes despite often being sourced from quite different article topics. Atlas.ti software permits the user to click through on any individual text selection to immediately view it again within its original article, so the sets of collated data also function as pathways to revisit and compare the context of coded selections. This functionality supports the "emergent aspect of data analysis" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 75) by simplifying the process of viewing data simultaneously through the researcher's perspective of "discourse" and the original text's intention of "informing about a topic." For both of these reasons, the use of qualitative analysis software was helpful in mitigating the risk of researcher bias (or "cherry-picking"), first by ensuring that all instances of a code were pulled together across multiple articles into one data set, and second, by allowing material to be viewed both as part of the data set and within its original context, to avoid its misinterpretation.

Analyzing Data. At this stage, I began to read through the coded data sets to identify patterns that could provide insights into my research question themes, returning to original articles as needed to understand where context (article topic, date, industry, etc.) might allow richer comparison or insight across individual coded phenomena. I tried to be mindful of the caution from Phillips and Hardy (2002) that "contextual and interpretive" sensitivity is where the benefit of discourse analysis lies, which should not be undermined by being too systematic or mechanical, potentially reifying concepts (pp. 74, 75). My goal was to develop, through the "distilled" data sets, both a broad sense about the phenomena in my study, as well as identify specific examples that could help illustrate the patterns that emerged. I read related data sets adjacently (e.g. "Needy/weak" with "Strength/toughness"; or "Relationship" with "Unencumbered worker") so that I could compare the ways these concepts reflected, reinforced, or competed with each other. Also instructive was when various codes seemed to appear together consistently, indicating some sort of relationship (for example, if "Strength/toughness" and "Status" consistently appeared coded to the same individual quotations).

Using my research questions as a guide, I clustered the emergent patterns and themes into the three categories presented in the next three chapters. In Chapter 5, I focus on the discursive context for this study, the managerialist discourses reproduced in HBR. This answers my first research question. The chapter explores the relevant aspects of organizational life that structure the backdrop behind considerations of relationship, value, identity, and meaning (and specifically, care and inequality) of later chapters. Chapter 6 examines care within organizations: where and how it occurs, who appears to be involved, and how it is recognized and valued, or not, answering the two parts of my second research question. Chapter 7 focuses on considerations of privileged irresponsibility, addressing my third and fourth questions, and how these intersect with the provision and recognition of care.

4.5 Critiques and Limitations of a Critical, Discursive Approach

As I stated above, my discursive approach is informed by Phillips and Hardy (2002) and Hardy (2022). I am also informed by critiques of discourse analysis in organizations. One critique is that studies can shift to a too-narrow focus on language rather than use discourse to understand how worlds emerge and power relations manifest (Phillips & Oswick, 2012). Studies must find a balance between a myopic focus on detail vs. losing sight of detail and context in a search for aggregated patterns (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). In my study, I keep this in mind by comparing texts (and the detail of their language) across different years and topic areas (to seek broader patterns).

Blackledge (2013) outlines several limitations to the use of critical discourse analysis (p. 616), three of which I find relevant to note and respond to here. First, he raises the concern that researchers' bias can introduce analytical categories rather than finding these within the text or letting them emerge from within the text. I have worked to mitigate this difficulty by first utilizing research categories derived from literature on care and inequality as outlined above, then secondarily allowing themes to emerge from the texts. By also limiting my research to one consistent source of texts (HBR), I have endeavoured to limit bias by seeking analytical results from within this one arena, albeit over many years and issues. Having said that, I recognize that selecting a narrow sample from 100 years of texts is an operation inherently based on researcher bias.

An additional critique of critical discourse analysis by Blackledge (2013, p. 618) is that "much of the research hitherto undertaken in CDA is situated in late modern, post-industrial, Western contexts, and has rarely ventured into developing world contexts." I recognize this is true in my study as well, as my focus lies on a central influencer, HBR, within that Western world. This critique suggests future work I could undertake to build on the research within this thesis.

On a different front, posthuman theorist Braidotti (2019a) critiques her "beloved" anti-humanist French teachers, including Foucault. Although their work helped inspire a variety of interdisciplinary studies, from gender and queer to postcolonial and cultural studies, she says they were not particularly interested in these developments, preferring a classical humanistic education: "They ran the risk instead of promoting just a quantitative growth of identity related claims and thus reinforcing discursive powers of inclusion and exclusion" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 107). She says "critical postHumanities" work must be aware of decentring anthropomorphic and anthropocentric patterns of thought, "because the dominant model, both for traditional Humanities and most of the critical Studies areas alike, is the social constructivist approach based on a nature-culture divide" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 111). By working with discourse analysis through a posthumanist lens, I hope to be mindful of this critique.

4.6 Reflexivity

Through a posthumanist lens, all subjectivities are connected and all knowledge is subjective (Braidotti, 2019a), so it is helpful to assess the knowledge "production process" by reflecting on the researcher's previous knowledge and integrated position in the process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015, p. 12), and the limitations and bias this can present. While I aim to critique elements of power, privilege and inequality within the social world of organizations, I recognize my own situatedness at the apex of a system of capitalist colonization that has comprehensively structured our contemporary social world within and beyond organizational life. How I perceive inequality is, then, from a position of privilege, formalized by Western academic training, permeated by colonial settler socialization, and structured by the hegemony of market thinking. That I critique these structures is an effort to identify and help disempower them, but I acknowledge the extent to which one's standpoint is baked in, and deconstructing one's own formation is a lifelong journey.

I find it important to consider even how my perception of the concept of care is likely limited and shaped by my situatedness in time and social space. To define such a fundamentally relational and existential covenant as a quantifiable practice or exchange is probably already a damaged and westernized view, alienated from a true understanding of caring connection and the sublimation of self into the fabric of interdependence. Market thinking, and "economically cooptable concepts such as value" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 188) have contributed to an abstract and impoverished conceptualisation of relationships; the trends of individualism and privatism deny the modern self "any wider relational connection" (Restakis, 2010, p. 226). This reduces us to pondering questions such as "can markets be caring?" (Tronto, 2013, chapter 5), which as Tronto notes leads to distortions in how we think about caring responsibilities overall (p. 115). I see, in writings of Indigenous teachers, how far from a holistic and interrelated worldview these ideas are. For example, in her writings about Indigenous gift economies, Kimmerer (2013) describes a dream she had about a local village market where one day food was given away rather than being sold: "since every market basket contained a meal, there was justice" (p. 29).

Although this study is inevitably influenced, structured, and constrained by my cultural and ontological formation as an individualized Westerner, I can only hope that the view that social phenomena are in a "constant state of revision" (Bryman, Bell, Mills, & Yue, 2011, p. 63) means that my examinations of care may contribute to a refreshed understanding of this most essential bond – even within organizational life.

Finally, I must duly and reflexively admit a certain pessimism I bring to considerations of organizational life and our current society. This comes of many experiences watching organizational practices, structures and hierarchy at work (some of which are included as vignettes in this thesis), as well as time spent in environmental activism against a backdrop of perpetual environmental decline fueled by market greed, with a stunningly lacklustre societal response. My critical gaze is usually a sharp and useful tool, but I recognize (especially when teaching undergraduate students!) that sliding into cynicism does not help change the world for the better.

This means, for me, taking responsibility for evaluating my own reactions to organizational phenomena that often are simply the result of people acting as best they can to make sense within a discursive system. Following the reflexive dimension proposed by Phillips and Hardy (2002) that researchers should "acknowledge that language constructs rather than reveals" (p. 85) reminds me to identify and interrogate that discourse, and the power it can confer or withhold, without assuming it reveals a fundamental truth about the individual caught up in it. Again, I think pondering care not just as a transactional practice required for a decent life, but as a transformative element of human interdependence can offer an antidote to cynicism. Perhaps as always, when trying to peer underneath the workings of problematic systems, compassion is key.

In this chapter, I have outlined my critical, discursive approach, the rationale for the texts I have used, and my research process. In the following chapters, I present my findings within those texts, and what can be said in response to my research questions.

Chapter 5: Managerial Discourse and the Harvard Business Review

Vignette: Not tough enough

At the start of salmon season during my second summer at a remote fish processing plant in Alaska, I was told I would be a "lead" on the night shift women's line. This was a plum assignment. In the brief catch-it-as-fast-as-you-can sockeye season, a lead got to work 16 hours a day instead of 12 like regular workers, and the extra hours were all paid overtime. In addition, the four leads were usually among the last to be sent out of the plant after the three-week season, which boosted your total earnings even more.

The job was simple: help anyone on the line having trouble. Set a good example, work hard, be on time, keep everyone moving efficiently. Most of the time we were packing: slipping 10-pound fish off a conveyor into metal pans for block freezing. Periodically we stopped and cleaned everything thoroughly.

Cleaning was a welcome break as the plant was quieter and the pace was not set by the conveyor. Instead of ordering my team to the various tasks: "You – work the hose. You – scrub equipment. You – lift the pallets and clean the floor," I would take them out on the dock for a two-minute breather under the night sky and ask them which jobs they wanted. Some liked picking fish scales off equipment; some preferred to scrub. The cleaning seemed to go better when people got their choice.

This was noticed. I was not gruff like the female day shift lead, who barked commands and signaled authority by her lack of smile. Although no one ever detailed the exact duties of the job to me, I gleaned that inviting worker input was not supposed to be part of it. I don't think anyone ever reprimanded me for not "taking charge" more firmly, but somehow I understood that holding a very-brief crew meeting was floating a whiff of insubordination in the air.

When the fish started to come in slower and it was time to start reducing the crew, I was in the first group to be flown out to Anchorage. Nothing was said, but we all knew clearly that I had failed as what I would later learn to call a "Theory X" manager. It was an excellent lesson, and one I took as a compliment.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of three that present my findings from within the texts of *Harvard Business Review* (HBR). It answers my first research question: What managerialist discourses does HBR reproduce? I begin by offering a brief history of "managerialism" – how the discourses developed, and how HBR came to be central in promoting them. I then present the discourses found during the analysis steps outlined in Chapter 4, grouped among five themes: the rationale for management; gender and embedded sexism; rationality (with elements of emotion, control, strength and weakness); efficiency (with elements of hierarchy, power and social class, the unencumbered worker, and merit); and management mystique. I then examine these discourses using the posthumanist concept of *potestas,* or restrictive/constraining power discussed in Chapter 3, to consider whether the discourses themselves constitute *potestas.*

5.1.1 A Note About Article Referencing

As you read chapters that elaborate on my findings from HBR, you will note an anomaly I have employed that breaks from proper APA style. I have chosen to reference those articles from HBR that I quote directly by using the *article title*, rather than *author name,* as the titles are informative, sometimes colourful, and they enhance the contextual understanding of the quotes as incorporated into my discussion. The full APA references are included in Appendix 1: Sample of Articles from Harvard Business Review, ordered chronologically so that they are easy to find by year, and again in Appendix 2, provided in proper bibliographic format (alphabetically by author).

5.1.2 A Note About Gender

As will be discussed, earlier articles from HBR – unless they are specifically referring to a woman employee or manager – always presume masculine gender for workers, employees, managers and executives, referring to them all as "men" and using the masculine pronoun exclusively. It was not until the 1980s that common pronoun usage started to change, with the adoption of "he or she," denoting that "a manager" could be of either gender. Often in current-day writing, the historical exclusion of women is noted with [*sic*] appearing after a gender-exclusive pronoun or statement (for example, "The manager called in his men [*sic*] and told them HR was posting for a new executive and expected him [*sic*] to start soon"). APA style says [*sic*] is used to indicate incorrect spelling, punctuation or grammar that "might confuse readers."[1] However, I have chosen to present these historical texts as originally written without noting this "error," to better preserve the flavour of the texts' era – noting here, of course, that such language is no longer the norm.

5.2 The Managerialist Project

The early 20th century saw the industrial revolution morph into the "Administrative Revolution" (Kanter, 1977), marked by the rising class of white-collar workers in ever-larger corporations. This revolution would result in fashioned texts and practices of a new profession:

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[1] APA Style website accessed June 20, 2024, https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations/quotations/errors

management (Burnham, 1942; Itani, 2017; Jacques, 1996, pp. 136-141; Kanter, 1977; Khurana, 2010). Management's discourses of efficiency, rationality, "scientific" methods, and the wisdom of "control of a relatively small and exclusive group of men over a large group of workers" (Kanter, 1977, p. 20) contributed to a comprehensive new way of thinking and being. Managerialism – the belief that professionalized management practices and concepts can be universally applied to any organization, whether "an advertising agency, an oil rig, or a university" (Klikauer, 2015, p. 1104) – developed as a sort of meta-discourse, a mystique (Locke, 1996), an ideology (Enteman, 1993; Klikauer, 2015).

The development of professionalized business schools in universities offered managerialism its "most fertile training breeding ground" (Klikauer, 2015, p. 1103) plus a legitimacy that propelled it into organizations of all shapes and sizes (Locke, 1996). Formalized business education helped create the ideological consistency needed to present "easy to digest principles such as competition, deregulation, efficiency, free markets, and privatization… as unquestioned truths, as neutral and natural" (Klikauer, 2015, p. 1106). Specialized business education, and the "scientific" division of management *thinking* from labour *doing* helped position managers as the "ruling class within organizations and within the business world" (Genoe McLaren, 2011, p. 43). Since this new management class had no traditional ruling power (not validated by traditional property ownership), the core principles of management – rationality, efficiency, hierarchy – were promoted to help maintain its mystique and position (Kanter, 1977, p. 20). Thus, the discourses of managerialism became entrenched not only within organizations, but also in society in general: a way of looking at production, work, entitlement, self-worth and fealty based on efficiency and rationality, infused with a masculinized and paternalistic ethic (Kanter, 1977, p. 20).

Taking a central role in this managerialist project, Harvard Business School (HBS) produced the "*crème de la crème* of the managerial elite" (Kanter, 1977, p. 20). With the 1922 launch of the HBR with its focus on macroeconomic trends, it struggled for two decades to be profitable and to reach a wider practitioner audience. Most opinion articles during this time were created by HBS faculty, and some limited publications by HBS students. By 1931, this had shifted, with 70% of articles written by outside contributors. HBR grew to disseminate texts illuminating and championing managerialist ethics, recognized as a "bridge journal" (Spector, 2006, p. 274) which grouped scientific theories with management practices to offer "expert" management advice to audiences ranging from students to those working in business. HBR's founder, Dean Wallace B. Donham, a former banker and Harvard-trained lawyer, called the "new profession of business" a "social consciousness with the sound evolutionary progress of civilization as its objective" (Donham, 1926, p. 401).

Nine decades later, in an article about itself, HBR still claimed central status within the managerialist project, reflecting an HBR that is now recognized as a popularization journal, given its high circulation and broad audience appeal (Pollach, 2022). For managers who "hunger for the insights that will enable them to succeed," the article advised that HBR offers "a special provenance, some special strengths, and a deeply informed notion of what the management agenda should be" (Kirby, 2012, p. 88). For more than 100 years, this agenda has become the social reality of organizational life, whether it be in a government department, school, factory – or fish plant.

5.3 Managerialism in HBR's world

This section summarizes the found elements of managerialism that appear in HBR, grouped across the following five themes: the rationale for management, gender in business and embedded sexism, rationality, efficiency, America-centrism, and management mystique.

5.3.1 The Rationale for Management: A Needed Profession for a New Era

As described above, HBR was launched as the idea of a formalized "management" cadre was beginning to take shape, first at Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania, and followed by others including HBS (Kanter, 1977, p. 19). In 1908, HBS was initially conceived to be an independent faculty "to teach a higher code of business morals" (Lawrence Lowell letter, reproduced in Cruikshank, 1987, p. 37), with the first business ethics course (social factors in business enterprise) introduced in 1915 (Abend, 2013). After the First World War, HBS courses were reduced, with concerns that the school could not continue given its diminishing enrollment. By 1922, HBS considered itself a faculty of Applied Economics and melded economic theory with practical applications in light of the 1920-1922 depression (Cruikshank, 1987).

Those involved in the project of developing this management profession were keen to justify its value and importance. HBS Dean Wallace B. Donham positioned management as a critical element in the new "complicated industrial civilization" (Donham, 1926, p. 401), needed to ensure that 200 years of advancement in pure science could best be harnessed for human benefit. Notably, he said "the scientist himself has no control over the results of his thinking," (Donham, 1926, p. 401); instead, it was "men of business" who should control progress, solving problems in a way that would “contribute to the orderly evolution of society” (Donham, 1926, p. 401). This task was not easy, and “time was of the essence” due to the “appallingly rapid change” (Donham, 1926, p. 401) of modern science/society. Because of this, Donham emphasized that this new management profession held historic importance, responsibility, and power: “There is a close analogy between the position of the governing class in the earlier, simple societies and that of the business group in our present complex social organization” (Donham, 1926, p. 405). The idea of developing management as a profession was supported by Harvard President Lawrence Lowell (Lowell, 1923), giving fuel to the call for new skills and approaches, and an exceptional new elite class of worker to perform them. Dean Donham also emphasized the need to develop an ethical social consciousness to guide this new profession.

As fit its mission, HBR continued to define the concept of management over the next 100 years, tackling topics such as the right skills for a manager (“Testing for ability in management,” 1932; “Wanted: Mature managers,” 1946), managers’ psychology (“The executive neurosis,” 1952; “Executives as human beings,” 1972) and personality (“Could your personality derail your career,” 2017; “Why bossy is better for rookie managers,” 2012), and myriad aspects of the functional role of the modern business executive, “charged as he is with the responsibility of exercising his influence and his leadership upon the daily doings of the members of his organization” (A theory of industrial conduct and leadership, 1923). Never questioned, however, is the need for, and importance of, managers and management itself: “Management always has been the most important part of business, for goods could hardly be produced or distributed without the enterprise and initiative of man” (Testing for ability in management, 1932, p. 269).

While this is clearly good self-promotion for a journal written by those who study management for those who practice it, the unquestioning belief in the role and practice of management underscores the persistence of managerialist ideology itself. The certitude of Frederick Taylor's (1911) "one best way" for each task appears to also have settled over the entire management movement; while HBR's articles explore questions of shape, scope, and priorities of management, the institution itself is solidly fixed.

5.3.2 Gender in Business and Embedded Sexism

Vignette: One man at the table

As a reporter in the early 1990s, I was invited to sit in on a meeting of the local economic development committee in a rural region. The director was running late, so the others began the meeting with a discussion about several new opportunities. All middle-aged women, business owners and managers, the committee members contributed and debated ideas with lively interaction, and as an observer, I gained a sense of the ingenuity and business savvy of the group. Then the director – the only man – arrived. He was jovial and appeared to be well-liked, but the rhythm of the meeting immediately changed. The women waited for him to speak first, added only basic comments, and accepted his proposed decisions with congenial nods of agreement but little discussion. I saw no indication that they were guarded, shy, or discontented, just that they appeared to expect him to take charge and to bring the ideas, while they collectively shifted to an un-entrepreneurial and supportive role. Although this might have been deference to his role as director, I knew from their previous discussion that members were largely self-nominated and there was little power distance conferred by the titles. Rather, it seemed his gender, and their shared expectations of gender status within organizations, structured the committee's interactions. Although I had witnessed how opinionated, energetic *and competent these women could be, I suspect the director had no idea, and probably felt they depended heavily upon him to ensure the committee would succeed.*

Throughout the articles studied, at least up to 1965, it is common for HBR articles to talk about businessmen, men in business, advancing a "man," being an "idea man," or work requiring "manliness," etc., where "men and women" do appear but are mentioned mostly in passing. This goes beyond the standard grammar of the day; these references consistently demonstrate that the default person in business, whether worker, manager, employee, leader or executive, was a man. For example:

> Usually, it is just about as hard to judge whether a man who is working well at one level of management will "take hold" at a higher level. […] Even experienced executives find it hard to assess the exact scope of a man's ability and the breadth of his shoulders. (Assessment centers for spotting future managers, 1970, p. 150).

The words "woman" or "women" appear just three times across the four articles in my sample dated before 1945, apart from a brief discussion of the Hawthorne experiments (where the female subjects are named by job role, e.g., "Operator No. 2"). Searches for alternate terms, such as Mrs., Miss, and female returned no results. In the same four articles, there are 88 matches for "man" or "men." Authors are predominantly male.

By 1953, in my sample, there is an emerging discussion of the opportunities for women in management (written by two women authors). However, the 1956 article entitled "Successful wives of successful executives" and the 1972 "Executives as human beings," which interviews "40 midcareer corporate officers and their wives," demonstrate that the default executive continues to be a man with a wife. Imagery in the sample supports this; graphic elements depicting managers are predominantly masculine unless the story is specifically about women.

The exclusion of women from the business landscape is reinforced by terminology and discussion that positions men and women in separate spheres. For example, the archaic phrase "the distaff side," used to refer to women (distaff relates to spinning and weaving; the "spear side" was historically used to described men), appears in three articles in the 1950s-1960s. In 1946 the factory atmosphere is described as "ordered, disciplined, and *virile*" (Wanted: Mature managers, 1946, emphasis added). Male managers are described as harboring fear about more women "entering" supervisory and executive positions ("Women in management, pattern for change," 1971) or "invading" the all-male public arena ("What do men want?" 1993, p.62). And in an article presenting the findings of 2,000 executive surveys (half men, half women) about their attitudes towards women in senior roles, the authors expose their own bias about where women (and men) belong: "The ultimate in humiliation for the non-breadwinning husband of a very successful career woman is the recently coined term 'househusband,' an ingenious but cruel adaptation of 'housewife'" ("Are women executives people?" 1965, p. 175). Language in a 2004 article titled "Coaching the Alpha male" is similarly anti-feminine: it reassures that "effective" coaching will not "remake the alpha into an unrecognizable powder puff" (p. 60).

While HBR's language has become more inclusive, recent articles show the resilience of old stereotypes. Articles describe how gender bias continues to stymie women's leadership aspirations ("Women rising, the unseen barriers," 2013), how women say they continue to have trouble with being perceived as either "too feminine" or "too masculine", neither considered appropriate for advancement ("Hacking tech's diversity problem," 2014), how women executives who are beautiful are perceived as less truthful and trustworthy while the same is not true for men ("For women in business, beauty is a liability," 2019), and how men who take time off to care for children may be mocked, passed over for promotions, or face doubts about their competence ("Will working mothers take your company to court?," 2012). Whether this is due to the early association of a "masculine ethic" with bureaucratic rationality, as noted by Kanter (1977, p. 25), the typically masculine-centric nature of business textbooks and training (Mills and Helms Hatfield, 1998, in Mills, 2017, p. 33), or to the reality that feminine qualities had long since been "driven to the invisible margins of the business world" (Jacques, 1996, p. 13), the underlying persona of management in HBR continues to be masculine.

5.3.3 Rationality

The fundamental management ideal of measuring, planning, organizing and controlling all activity within the organization is infused throughout the pages of HBR; the workplace must be "ordered and disciplined" ("Wanted: Mature managers," 1946, p. 243). Management is produced by (and therefore produces) "the administrator," an individual lauded in a 1956 article as the American "national type":

> He thinks practically, in terms of concrete situations. Essentially and necessarily a conservative, he welcomes cautious developments provided these lie well within the conventional, accepted framework of his society. Nothing will induce him to step beyond those limits if he can help it; and in this he is professionally correct, for he is the leader and guardian of his society (*Permission to think,* 1956, p. 34).

Surprisingly, even in 2022, advice for upwardly-aspiring managers does not stray from these managerial lines. An article entitled "How to sell your ideas up the chain of command" gives the following rather mundane examples of "great ideas": "a product tweak that will save your company money, a process change to increase your team's productivity" (p. 139). Managers are expected to take measured, well-planned steps; they are expected to paint inside the lines.

In this section, I examine several of the components of rationality that emerge from HBR. These include the way emotion and its instrumentalization are presented, the idea of control, and themes of strength and weakness.

Rationality: Emotion. The managerial profession, with its "scientific" approaches and methods, was to apply rationality to overcome the "greed of the capitalists, " so the design of organizations was expected to suppress "irrationality, personality and emotionality" (Kanter, 1977, pp. 21-22). However, throughout the articles in my sample there also runs some recognition of the divergent nature, and therefore the management challenge, of human psychology. As early as 1923, an article discusses how worker behaviour is driven by diverse "instincts" rather than wages ("A theory of industrial conduct and leadership," 1923). In 1934, an author writing about the Hawthorne studies describes the unpredictability of emotions, as women despairing the loss of their jobs during the Great Depression failed to maximize their earnings by working extra hard in their last weeks on the job. Instead, "the financial incentive has failed exactly when it is most compelling" ("The scientific study of the industrial worker," 1934, p. 470).

Because managerialism aims to be consistently rational even though humans are not, HBR articles repeatedly underscore that showing excess emotion, or being associated with emotion, is not acceptable for managers, who must embody the rationalist ideal.[2] See Table 5.1 for examples drawn from articles.

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[2] HBR itself is so synonymous with rational, unemotional management themes that this was cause for some teasing from the news magazine *The Economist.* In a book review in 2000, the *Economist* author quotes HBR as saying that talented individuals will only stay with one employer if their jobs fit "their long-held (continued next page)

Table 5.1

Characterizations of Emotion in HBR

Example	Source
Emotions can result in "emotional deadlock rather than an objective solution" – an impediment to decision-making.	"The case of the punctilious president," 1965, p. 161
Discussing or expressing emotions may be seen as immature, irrelevant, and "not work." Managers should steer colleagues "back to facts" rather than deal with emotional variables that might interfere with organizational process.	"Interpersonal barriers to decision-making," 1966, p. 87
"In the world of business, feelings are considered a nuisance that must be coped with or a possible threat to the effective functioning of the organization."	"Executives as human beings," 1972, p. 68
Managers are expected to maintain objectivity by keeping a protective distance from the people they manage.	"Managers and lovers," 1983, p. 143
Expressing emotions may be seen as "wimpiness" and cause people to wonder if a leader is able to make "hard decisions."	"What makes a leader?" 1998, p. 96, p. 101
Showing emotions within corporate culture is to "commit professional suicide," and become labeled as a whiner. "A manager or executive who is labeled as such would quickly find that the choice assignments go to those who don't publicly broadcast their feelings."	"Response letter, The toxic handler," 1999, p. 174
Emotions are subtly associated with a "yuck" factor through reference to "emotional contagion" where people "catch" feelings (both bad and good) from others.	"Manage your emotional culture," 2016, p. 64-65

While this might be challenging enough for men, it produces an uneven field from the start for women. The traditional association of women with the emotional and nurturing landscape of private life, home and care creates a double-edged liability in organizational life. In the landmark article "Opportunities for women at the administrative level" (Fuller & Batchelder, 1953), the emotional "problem" warrants a sub-section of its own (p. 124). Interviewees believed emotionality meant women were unwilling to act as a supervisor of others (p. 121), were insufficiently "tough-minded" and objective (p.117), and therefore were lacking in the "primary

emotionally driven passions." *The Economist* author quipped, "Yes, that's right. It's happened. The word "passion" has appeared in the HBR" (Anonymous, 2000).

quality of a good administrator" (p. 124). The fear of women "bursting into tears" was reason for men to avoid working with them, or to shuffle them into out-of-the-way roles (p. 124).

In 1965, as US legislation outlawed employment discrimination on the basis of sex, 51% of male executives surveyed agreed that women were "temperamentally unfit" for management ("Are women executives people?," 1965, p. 168). On the other hand, a woman who doesn't bring "special" qualities to work might leave subordinates "disappointed at not receiving the warmth, support, and encouragement that female bosses are 'supposed to excel in'" ("Executive women 20 years later," 1985, p. 44). Even recently, an article advised women to be "composed and in command of their emotions" in executive meetings, because men in the room often perceived "too much emotion" when women felt passionate about an idea" ("Women, find your voice, 2014," p. 120-121).

Whether an article treats emotion as anathema or revelation, what emerges in HBR is the desire to understand and *then manage* the emotional landscape of the organization. There are some exceptions. Some articles in later years discuss how to recognize and navigate emotion without attempting to manipulate it. For example, 2002's "Leading in times of trauma," notes that "the managerial rule books fail us at times like these" (p. 55), and 1992's "Nothing prepared me to manage AIDS" shares a manager's distressing struggle to balance human and organizational needs. Discussions such as these trend towards the care ethics imperative to treat situations in context, perceiving and meeting needs, upholding relationships and valuing all facets of individuals. Far more common, however, are articles which problematize emotion so that the manager can mitigate or harness it, in the interest of maintaining personal and organizational productivity.

Rationality: Control. Bureaucracies "continually pursue a stability that eludes them" and so they seek to eliminate uncertainty (Ferguson, 1984, p. 10) through various forms of control. This includes internalized control, aimed at presenting oneself as appropriate for the organization; "one's self-image becomes a commodity marshaled in pursuit of organizational advantage" (p. 104). As outlined above, emotion introduces unpredictability, and therefore *self*-control is a highly evident element of managerialism found in HBR. See Table 5.2 for examples.

Table 5.2

Characterizations of Control and Self-Control in HBR

Example	Source
Self-control is essential because "never before have the men at the helm in industry needed […] so steady a hand or so imperturbable a temper" (p. 228). The mature manager acts with "cool certainty" and does not take situations personally. "Upon social and human, as upon technical, difficulties he does not make hasty judgments – nor moralistic ones; he remains analytical" (p. 228).	"Wanted: Mature managers," 1946, p. 228
Losing your temper at work can lose your employees' respect and your ability to manage them.	"Hothead habit," 2008
Not possessing emotional stability can destroy everything: "if the boss's psychological makeup is warped, business plans, ideas, interactions, and even the systems and structure of the organization itself will reflect his or her pathologies"	"Coaching the toxic leader," 2014, p. 102
It's important to learn to control certain "dark side" personality traits (e.g., excitable, colorful, imaginative, reserved cautions) as they can negatively affect your career.	"Could your personality derail your career" (2017)
People in "leadership roles, prestigious organizations, and competitive workplaces" are supposed to "keep it together"	"When a colleague is grieving," 2019, p. 120
Even if you don't feel it, "feigned happiness was attributed to competence; it signaled resilience and a commitment to professional goals"	"Should you hide your emotions at the office," 2020, p. 21

Control is also applied to the emotions of employees. From the time of the Hawthorne studies, managers have sought to influence employees' emotional state in order to achieve the best outcomes, "since social conditions and relationships can influence perceptibly a person's efficiency" ("The meaning of scientific management," 1949, p. 690). This effort exploded after Daniel Goleman's (1998) finding that emotional "intelligence" has twice the impact on business performance than IQ or technical skills, which conferred a bottom-line legitimacy on emotional control ("What makes a leader?," 1998). Goleman's five components of emotional intelligence helped structure both self-management (*self-regulation* "frees us from being prisoners of our feelings," p. 98), and other-management (*social skill* is "friendliness with a purpose" because it helps you move people in the direction you desire p. 101). Emotional intelligence, he concludes, has benefits for both the individual and for the organization.

Rationality: Instrumentalization of Emotion. From this point, the instrumentalization of emotion as a management tool grows in popularity in the HBR texts. See Table 5.3 for examples. Over the past 25 years of HBR, it seems evident that the managerial project, once threatened by emotion, has found a way to compartmentalize and instrumentalize human feelings for the purpose of business performance.

Table 5.3

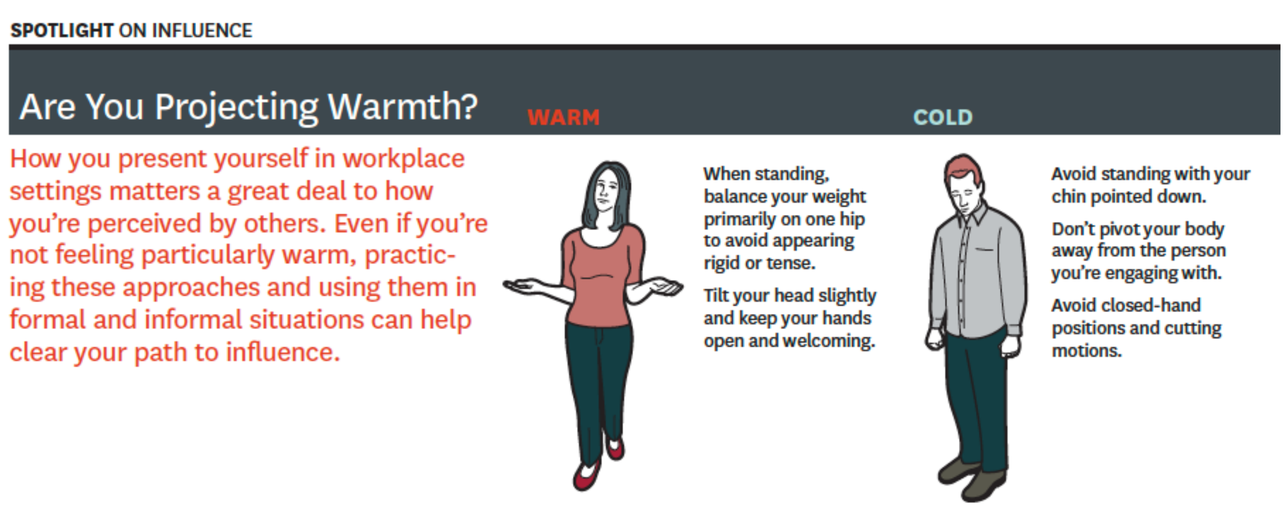
Examples of Instrumentalized Emotion in HBR

Example	Source
Would-be leaders should selectively harness their weakness, empathy and intuition – elements previously subjugated and hidden – to "engage people and rouse their commitment to company goals"	"Why should anyone be led by you," 2000, p. 63
A leader's mood is directly linked to "performance: profit or loss"; therefore, leaders should imagine and rehearse new behaviours to help rewire their brains, effectively instrumentalizing their emotional landscape for business success. This can't be faked; "primal leadership demands more than putting on a game face each day."	"Primal leadership: The hidden driver of great performance," 2001, p. 44.
Managers should not inhibit their own emotions because "positive emotions are a low-cost, high-payoff source of value."	"Why repressing emotions is bad for business," 2009, p. 30

Using warmth is the best way to influence others: "even a nod, a smile, an open gesture." Tactics for projecting warmth can be "dialed up or down as needed"; illustrations of correct body language for properly messaging warmth are provided (see Figure 5.1). Since this can't be faked, the manager must marshal their inner world to "genuinely" fulfil the management task.	"Connect then lead," 2013, pp. 56, 59
To influence commitment, creativity and retention, managers should get people "to feel the emotions valued by the organization or team – or at least to behave as if they do." This entails getting employees to display the desired emotion, even if they don't feel it, through "surface acting," although "deep acting"[3] (using facial expressions, body language and tone of voice to coax themselves into the real thing) is less likely to cause burnout.	"Manage your emotional culture," 2016, p. 64
Managers who support mourning employees generate value beyond just supporting the individuals: "They also complement the vision, planning, and guidance that we traditionally expect from managers. In confronting grief, managers help organizations do better."	"When a colleague is grieving," 2019, p. 123

Figure 5.1

Instrumentalization of Emotion to Gain Managerial Influence



Note: From "Manage your emotional culture," 2016, p. 60

[3] These terms match those presented in Arlie Hochschild's work on emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983). In perhaps another example of the power of managerial discourse to selectively appropriate concepts it finds useful, her work – then 40 years old – is not mentioned, and nor are her warnings about the risks of manipulating emotions for work.

The need to extract business value from emotion affects management researchers as well as managers. This demonstrates the discourse-building effect of HBR, where researchers serve up what they deem of interest to profit-focused practitioners, and practitioners take their cues on the latest wisdom from those who are deemed to be experts. So, research into the emotional life of the organization is frequently justified by its authors through the use of business performance language, as in this somewhat defensive excerpt from "The toxic handler: Organizational hero – and casualty" (1999):

> Research on topics such as organizational pain is sometimes derided for being soft or unrealistic or even for being "politically correct." […] But our study did not start with an assumption that organizations, per se, are responsible for their employees' personal happiness. Rather, we were motivated to study toxic handlers because of their strategic importance in today's business environment.[4] (p. 98)

Much less common are researcher comments that place priority on the welfare of employees rather than their value to the organization, such as this rare example: "People deserve happiness. They deserve dignity and respect. When we act on that realization, it is not only good for business. It affirms our value as human beings" ("Inner work life," 2007, p. 83).

The push for rationality and self-control, and the clear commodification of emotion to the service of the organization, lays the groundwork for our examination in the next chapter of care in the organization. Since emotion is only appreciated when mechanisms are found to direct it to

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[4] This comment is particularly poignant for me, as Peter Frost, one of the authors and originators of the concept of "toxic workplaces," was my MBA leadership professor at the University of British Columbia. Knowing Dr. Frost as I did, I'm confident his personal motivation for studying organizational pain had less to do with business performance than with understanding how to actually reduce suffering in organizational settings. However, making his work suitable to the HBR audience clearly necessitated this disclaimer.

organizational benefit, it is possible to surmise that care might be similarly unseen and unvalued except when instrumental applications can be found for it.

Rationality: Strength. Another thread of the rationalist discourse is the ideal of strength. This stems from the historic association of reason and science with masculinity (Kanter, 1977; Noble, 2013; Tronto, 1993), along with a general "cult of the strong" that paints the "business-hero" as virile and larger-than-life (Falk, 1959, pp. 5-6). Consistently across the pages of HBR, a good manager is identified as strong, confident, assertive, "tough." Although there are limits (there is criticism for toxic leaders or "being a jerk"), the idea that managers should be "strong" permeates most articles. This fortifies ideas about the importance and burden of the job they are in, and it dictates and restricts the manager's expected behaviour, even language, in all manner of situations. See Table 5.4 for examples.

Table 5.4

Characterizations of Managerial Strength in HBR

Example	Source
Strength makes the instrumental use of emotion (discussed earlier) more acceptable: "tough" empathy is recommended, giving people "what they need, not what they want." The Marine Corps is the example, where recruits are pushed to be the best they can be, but only those who fit the system are permitted to stay. Strength does not mean carrying, or caring for, those who can't make it.	"Why should anyone be led by you?" 2000, p. 68
A manager must have internal strength to keep their own sentiments under control. They must have "mental toughness," and "remain cool under fire" since the job of manager, and especially of an executive, entails pressure and competition.	"How the best of the best get better and better," 2008, p. 123
An experiment found fair and respectful managers are more effective, but there's a "hidden cost": they may be perceived as less worthy of promotion.	"Why fair bosses fall behind," 2011
Projecting strength can help cover perceived deficits. Experiments found "low status" managers (younger, less experienced, graduated from a second-tier school) are perceived as more effective when they use a directive style	"Why bossy is better for rookie managers," 2012, p. 30

("take charge, set the course, and tell subordinates what to do"), rather than a participative approach.	
Strength is related to competence; warding off "challenges to one's strength" helps prove that you're capable of the job. Therefore, a manager must work to project it: "the trick is to cultivate a demeanor of strength without seeming menacing."	"Connect then lead," 2013, p. 60
Women are recommended to use "muscular" language – active words and authoritative statements – in order to be effective in meetings. For example, "That is absolutely right, and here's why" instead of "I tend to agree," or "Here is my plan" instead of "Maybe we can"	"Women, find your voice," 2014, p. 120
Too much strength can backfire for women. If they are direct, outspoken, competitive or assertive – "tough" – they can face a backlash for being "uppity women."	"Hacking tech's diversity problem," 2014, p. 97

The managerial bias towards stereotypes of "strength" looms exceptionally large in a 2006 HBR case study titled "The nice guy," and it is of particular interest due to the prevalence of care that it presents. The case tells the story of Paul, a 10-year executive at a successful and growing media company, "a good fellow who trusts people," who believes he is in line to be CEO. The central question is, "Is he tough enough for the job?" (p. 21). The case is written from the protagonist's point of view and is narrated through his stream of consciousness, which allows the reader to see behind the workplace mask and witness sentiments and concerns usually not unveiled at work. Paul's thoughts show his concern for his wife's health, his plans for his kid's baseball practice and his upcoming anniversary. He allows an employee caring for a sick mother to hand off uncompleted work to him. Meanwhile, during the day, he is negotiating with a potential client and planning for a meeting with the current CEO, where he hopes to be told he'll be the next in the CEO role. Instead, he is told he "needs to get tougher and meaner" and probably will be passed over.[5]

[5] For fuller details about this particular case, please see Appendix 4.

The case is notable not only for its obvious point that being “a nice guy” is the antithesis of being promotable. It is also remarkable for the way the four “experts” who analyze the case weigh in. They use words such as “navel-gazing,” “daydreaming,” “worrier,” and “people-pleaser.” They focus almost exclusively on his “too-gentle” handling of the employee with a medical crisis at home and on the personality elements in the case writeup. It’s notable that this is a rare case in HBR of a male executive being shown as a caretaker – not just of his employees, but his family at home. Even using “tough empathy” might not have saved Paul from the faux pas of revealing his whole caring self to a managerial audience.

Rationality: Weakness. The question of strength, of course, raises the spectre of its opposite, weakness. Weakness is indirectly linked to care, says Tronto (1993), because of the hostility we feel towards having needs, being needy, or depending on others to meet our needs (p. 123). The self-sufficient and autonomous worker is the central player in the discourse of the paid organizational workplace; the work ethic links this autonomous worker’s effort to the ability to meet one’s own needs, which then equates to worthiness, which “misses entirely the care work that is necessary to keep human society functioning” (Tronto, 1993, pp. 165-166). Care is related to needs, which imply dependence, which – when autonomy and self-reliance are glorified – can be seen as weakness. See Table 5.5 for examples from HBR.

Table 5.5

Characterizations of Weakness / Dependency in HBR

Example	Source
“It’s really difficult for me to express dependence. Feelings of dependence are identified with weakness or ‘untoughness,’ and our culture doesn’t accept these things in men.” – Executive interviewee	“Executives as human beings,” 1972, p. 62
Leaders are encouraged to share information to engender loyalty, communication and problem-solving (i.e., relationship), but it’s noted that this also entails risk:	“Ways women lead,” 1990, p. 123

"because information is a source of power, leaders who share it can be seen as […] needing to be liked."	
A manager notes that his company provided counselling for workers after a bitter strike – but none was provided for managers, because managers "felt, perhaps rightly, that to talk about their feelings would have hurt their careers."	"The toxic handler – organizational hero and casualty," 1999, p. 103
Needing emotional support can give the impression of "inability to cope with pressure," and therefore being "unreliable or unworthy of promotion."	"The toxic handler – response letter," 1999, p. 174

Numerous articles refer to the issue of people avoiding talking about problems for fear of looking needy or weak: subordinates make bad decisions because they're afraid to ask for help from a superior; superiors fail to request the information they need from subordinates because they don't want to appear "soft" or incapable. It becomes easy to see how care itself may be treated as a pariah, when people feel so compelled to be seen as "care-free."

The association of managerial strength with competence, and of dependence with weakness connects to another theme that dates back as early as Frederick Taylor and his infamous trainee: the infantilization of the subordinated worker. Schmidt – although chosen for his physical strength – was a "little" man who "trotted" back and forth to work, who was characterized as "mentally sluggish" and caricatured for his Pennsylvania Dutch accent (Taylor, 1911). Since management are the "heads" who design and plan the work and workers simply the "hands" who perform it, treating workers as "Other" helps to justify their subordination to managers (Jacques, 1996, pp. 80-81). This is easier when the worker is presented as weak and needing support, and the manager is autonomous and strong. Although this might (and sometimes does) provoke a care-providing response from the manager, care – as we shall see in the next chapters – is often suppressed in the same way that emotional and relational issues also are.

In this section I have used HBR excerpts to surface the managerialist discourse of rationality: the rational manager is controlled and strong, does not show weakness or neediness (dependence), and keeps emotions harnessed to the right level to produce organizational value. These excerpts demonstrate the restrictive nature of *potestas* – the power that prohibits and constrains (Lundström, 2021). The elements of the discourse of rationality act to constrain managers into individuated, isolated subjects, a situation counter to the relational bonds that are fundamental to human flourishing. I will return to this at the end of the chapter.

From the discourse of rationality, I turn now to the discourse of efficiency, and how it shows up in the pages of HBR.

5.3.4 Efficiency

Efficiency has been the goal, promise, and near-religion of management "science" since Frederick Taylor (1911) first championed the idea, and it fills the pages of HBR as the primary, constant, and never-ending quest of the manager. For example: "Faced with rising material costs and wages, the manager must spur his organization to greater efficiency, so that the plant produces in greater volume and still keeps prices down and profits up" ("Human relations theory – a progress report," 1956, p. 131). However, Amis et al. (2020) say the "myth" of efficiency consists of a false premise: that "adoption of efficiency-enhancing practices is what leads to organizational success" (p. 17); they identify efficiency as a pursuit that makes the problem of inequality systemic, rather than accidental (p. 16).

This section examines the ways that the efficiency discourse appears in HBR, to aid in understanding how care is made invisible and inequality persistent. Sub-sections include: hierarchy, power and social class; the unencumbered worker; and merit.

Efficiency: Hierarchy, Power and Social Class.

Cheryl is clearly a well-educated achiever who really enjoys the satisfaction of being in harness and thrives on making her goals. (“Off-ramp – or dead end?”, 2007, p. 57).

One of the most prominent features of the modern organization is its hierarchical structure, which divides decision-making between specialized positions with defined levels of authority and responsibility, to which (in theory) individuals are rationally assigned on the basis of competence. While this division of labour is promoted in the managerial discourse as the way to most effectively utilize expertise and organize responsibilities, efficiency is a justification that is “at best secondary and frequently irrelevant” (Ferguson, 1984, p. 11). The true goal of hierarchy is “imperative control over human beings … [to make] possible a particularly high degree of calculability of results for the heads of organizations” (Weber, 1921, as cited in Wren, 1972, pp. 231-232). The language in the opening quote, of an employee being “in harness to achieve goals” seems to substantiate this point.

Prevalent in the HBR articles in my sample is the awareness that everyone in a hierarchy is managed: “no one is ever separated from the role of subordinate, no matter how high his position in the hierarchy” (“The dynamics of subordinacy,” 1965, p. 129). Although there are plenty of articles about managing subordinates, there are also many about how to manage upwards, avoid punishments or career pitfalls, and appease bosses who manifest varying degrees of competence and benevolence. The importance of those “above” is absolute: “Nearly everyone in the administrative world is subordinate to someone else. Thus getting along with superiors is critical to career success” (“The subordinate’s predicaments,” 1979, p. 132).

Hierarchy confers power – specifically, *power-over*, so inequality is a structured and constant reality in organizational life. It also confers status, since the "higher" you go, the more rewards (pay, perks) and recognition you receive. See Figure 5.2 for graphic images from HBR that illustrate the power differential between hierarchical levels, and Table 5.6 for examples of hierarchical power and status in HBR articles. Although overt discussion of social class has exited the pages of HBR, articles about differential power levels within the hierarchy continue to appear (see for example "Power, capriciousness, and consequences," 2013, and "How power-hungry bosses keep their power," 2015). Whether we call it social class or not, "organizations… demarcate employment and other opportunities that in turn define social and economic status for the vast majority of people" (Amis, Mair, & Munir, 2020, p. 1).

The power imbalance within hierarchy creates several other organizational dynamics to note. Being "under pressure" and facing competition are both frequently mentioned, even at top levels: "The truth is that the big wheels are not free to do as they please. They too are under pressure" ("Human relations theory, a progress report," 1956, p. 131). This affects relationship dynamics. Since there are more perks, but fewer positions "higher up," managers are incented to compete even while they must collaborate: "without competitive behavior, rapid promotion is improbable" ("The real crunch in managerial manpower," 1973, p. 149). Meanwhile, the psychological stresses of subordination are also rife; for example, one article shares research that

Figure 5.2

Images of Hierarchy in HBR

Note. Clockwise from top left, from “King of the Mountain” (2003, p. 144), “The cure for horrible bosses (2011, p. 42), “How power-hungry bosses keep their power” (2015, p. 24), “Do you hate your boss?” (2016, p. 98). Images depict control, pressure, domination, subordination and resentment. Frequently, images show the superior in the hierarchy at a larger scale than the subordinate, graphically representing the power difference.

Table 5.6

Power and Status in Hierarchy as Seen in HBR

Example	Source
Power	
Managers are expected to "squeeze out" production from their people	"A machinist looks at management, 1944, p. 250
Managers must judge "the personal worth of a fellow man" and "play God"	"Reappraisal of appraisals," 1958, p. 61
Managers must desire to exercise power, and "enforce [their] words through positive and negative sanctions"	"The real crunch in managerial manpower," 1973, p. 149
Bosses can be a threat, but they also may provide defence from organizational bullies or censure: "I let him hide behind my skirts because when you are the boss, part of your job is to protect your people when they screw up."	"The boss as human shield," 2010, p. 109
Status	
A successful executive wife should support her husband's "rise" by matching his behavior and manners on the "road upward." Her community work creates a "social steppingstone in getting to know the 'right people.'" Entertaining other executives can offer "avenues of mobility" to "smooth their upward path."	"Successful wives of successful executives," 1956, p. 65
Subordinates are referred to as "little" or "people at the bottom"	"Care for the little guy," 2003, p. 45
Subordinates are "down the pecking order"	"How to be a good boss in a bad economy," 2009, p. 45

says a consistently abusive boss is less stressful than one who is erratic ("Consistent abuse beats unpredictability," 2016, p. 28); another says it is "enervating to work for a boss whom one does not respect" ("Women as a business imperative," 1992, p. 109). See Table 5.7 for more examples of the relationship effects of hierarchy.

Table 5.7

Impact of Hierarchy on Relationships in HBR

Example	Source
Subordinates may withhold needed information from a boss, either through self-interest or hostility.	"The executive neurosis," 1952
Despite mutual dependence, the heavier dependence of the subordinate "inevitably results in the subordinate feeling a certain degree of frustration, sometimes anger, when his actions or options are constrained by his boss's decisions."	"Managing your boss," 1980, p. 97
Managers want honesty but "underestimate the difficulty subordinates have in being honest about their own problems or weaknesses with people who have so much influence on their careers."	"The manager: Master and servant of power," 1986, p. 77
Hierarchy creates barriers to trust, which "has to grow on rocky ground" between people at different levels	"Nobody trusts the boss completely – now what?" 1989, p. 137
To get the job done, managers must accept "a certain amount of hostility and resentment from their subordinates"	"Managing people – ten essential behaviours," 1995, p. 11
Leaders should deliberately keep a social distance. "Even as they are drawing their followers close to them, inspirational leaders signal their separateness."	"Why should anyone be led by you? 2000, p. 68

In short, HBR's articles leave no doubt that hierarchy – the power and status differentials that virtually all people within the organization are subject to – has a pervasive and intense effect on relationships. In the name of efficiency, hierarchy perverts the relational, interdependent and interconnected nature of life. Inevitably, this means the provision and reception of care – based as it is in relationship – must be shaped in such a way as well.

Efficiency: The Unencumbered Worker

Vignette: The unencumbered working mom

In the late 1980s, Rhoda held the position of executive assistant to the chief of police in a major Canadian city – a position with high-level access, privy to confidential information and responsible for administrative functions for time-sensitive, high-profile issues. She was also a *single mother of two young girls, ages about 10 and 12. They were a huge part of her life – but not her work life. Maintaining professional appearances meant she never talked about her children at work. Moreover, they must never intrude: she could not receive a call from them at work (this was before cell phones), or if she did, she had to hide it. She couldn't stay home with a sick child or call home to check how they were doing. Her employer expected her to be fully focused on her job and such distractions would be frowned upon, even though she was highly competent and had already proven her success and commitment to her job. Her time, her attention, her care, was to be fully at work while she was in the office. Thirty years later, the stress of that divide still showed in her face when she told me this story.*

"In general," says Acker (2006), "work is organized on the image of a white man who is totally dedicated to the work and who has no responsibilities for children or family demands other than earning a living" (p. 448). This "unencumbered worker" supports organizational efficiency by having no impediments to, or unpredictability in, their ability to work; they are reliably and fully available to the organization. The unencumbered worker also expressly demonstrates the privileged irresponsibility of the organization, since they arrive for work already cared-for (i.e., fed, housed, provisioned, supported emotionally, etc.) but the provision of this baseline input to the organization's function is taken for granted. Presenting oneself ready to work is a care burden employees perform daily, either by themselves or with the support of a home partner.

HBR articles demonstrate this element of managerialism both through early stories that present it as a de facto aspect of management life, and later articles that show the ways it is being questioned. In the 1950s, the North American ideal of a suburban housewife supporting a full-time working husband is prominent in HBR. This constrained women's access to organizational careers, since executives believed that a married woman "shifts her allegiance from her job to her home" ("Opportunities for women at the executive level," 1953, p. 125). Meanwhile men were expected to be fully unencumbered: "Managers expect male employees to give top priority to their jobs when career demands and family obligations conflict," ("Sex stereotyping in the executive suite," 1974, p. 47). Being fully mobile for the job was a given for the male executive; it was the "task of the wife to cooperate" ("Successful wives of successful executives," 1956, pp. 64-65).

The result of stripping home and community life away from "the manager" is that they are rendered an incomplete, or partial person. This invades even the most intimate aspects of the (male) executive's life: "Because of his single-minded concentration on the job, even his sexual activity is relegated to a secondary place. […] Many, probably most, regard sexual relations as frivolous and diverting from *the main objective of life"* ("Successful wives of successful executives," 1956, p. 65, emphasis added).[6]

Since only certain aspects of this individual are deemed relevant or acceptable in the workplace, they also become the only issues that he (or she) is able to see and interact with in their managerial role. This is another way in which the "efficiency" discourse works to make care invisible: when the reality of caregiving and care-receiving at home is not respected as part of a whole person's life, neither will it be recognized or valued at the office.

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[6] The neutered, single-minded, unencumbered American executive contrasts starkly with the comments made by a Japanese chairman in a 1974 article: "The Japanese believe we have to take the whole person into account and constantly ask ourselves, 'Is he happy?' […] For example, an employee's wife had her seventh baby yesterday. I must be familiar enough with this situation to ask him, 'Is your baby due today or tomorrow?'" ("Made in America under Japanese management," 1974, pp. 66-67)

To some extent, times have changed. Women have entered managerial and executive ranks, men are more engaged and visible in parenting, men and women are more vocal about seeking career options that permit a well-rounded life outside of work; fortunately, the articles from the 1950s seem cringe-inducingly anachronistic. And yet, bias against those who are perceived as providing care for anything other than the job and the organization continues. In 2012, research found that women with children were 79% less likely to be hired, and half as likely to be promoted, as women without children; in experiments, a business consultant identified as a mother was judged by participants as "significantly less competent and less likely to be hired" than a father or a man or woman whose parental status is not identified ("Will working mothers take your company to court?" 2012, p. 96).

Being unencumbered may continue to have a discursive hold on the imagination, even as times change. In 2015, experimental research found that both men and women perceived an architect as more creative when they were told the architect was a man. Interpreting the results, the researcher said, "we live in a very individualistic culture that emphasizes *being independent as a way to achieve*. And we associate innovation with *autonomy*" ("Even women think men are more creative," 2015, p. 31, emphasis added). While "whole" people have made some inroads into organizational life, what continues to be most valued may be only those parts of an individual that are unencumbered and available for full fealty to the job. As we will see in Chapters 6 and 7, this creates a conflicted space for care.

Efficiency: Merit. The "myth of meritocracy" (Amis et al., 2020) supports the discourse of efficiency by implying that the person best suited for a job rises to take it, based on the worthiness established through their hard work and extensive training (represented through credentials). Although numerous studies have shown that it is indeed a myth, the belief that organizational systems are meritocratic is widespread and deeply held; "so taken for granted that it has assumed a fact-like status" (Amis et al., 2020, p. 19).

In 2014, HBR directly identified the meritocracy myth, presenting research that companies that claim to be meritocracies actually tend to give women smaller bonuses than men with equivalent performance reviews ("Hacking tech's diversity problem," 2014, p. 96); again in 2016 the journal reported, "While merit sounds like an easy, obvious filter for talent decisions, it's anything but. We believe we know good talent when we see it, yet… we're terrible at evaluating people objectively" ("We just can't handle diversity," 2016, p. 71).

Despite this apparent awareness, the idea that individuals can advance based on merit continues to be embedded in HBR's pages. There is mention of meritorious effort: putting in long hours, bringing in new business, solving problems; there is also advice given to overcome personal failings that might limit success (see, for example, "The paradox of excellence," 2011, and "Why bossy is better for rookie managers," 2012). Interesting, however, is how such "advice" articles frequently focus on managing the boss, which has less to do with merit than with cultivating a favourable relationship with the person who decides your fate.

Ultimately, whether HBR reflects or debunks the discourse of meritocracy is less relevant to this study than its clear advice that certain behaviours and attributes – the managerialist preferences discussed earlier such as strength, rationality, control of emotion, etc. – are more likely than others to gain favour and promotion. Combined with multiple research findings that document the lack of actual merit-based advancement in organizations (Amis et al., 2020), we again are left with a situation where a discursive valuation of what is important in organizational relationships can mean that less-valued work – such as care – may not be perceived as worthy of recognition or reward, contributing to inequality within organizational life.

5.3.5 Mystique

Vignette: You don't have to explain

I was new in a senior role in a medium-sized non-profit, introducing myself to a funder. "I'm sort of the general manager," I said, explaining the mixed bag of HR, operations, strategy and general trouble-shooting that was my job. After the meeting, my boss, the organization president, chided me. "Don't call yourself a 'manager'," he said, somewhat disparagingly. "But it's not clear to people what I work on," I explained, "and everything I do is management." "So what?" he said. "You don't have to explain. You're the <u>*VP*</u>*!" The only explanation I could ever see for this was mystique, and if the VP had some, clearly then the president would have even more.*

A final element of managerialism as found in HBR is its self-belief, its sense of mystique, defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary (merriam-webster.com) as an "air of mystery and reverence" and the "special esoteric skill essential in a calling or activity." This appears overtly in articles from HBR's first 50 years, when core concepts of management practice were being developed, then proselytized to other countries after WWII. There is mystique in the work: "Business management has become a highly specialized profession because of the complex and the heavy demands it makes on its practitioners, and the talents required are such that relatively few persons are qualified. ("The executive neurosis," 1952, p. 35). And therefore, mystique surrounds the individual: "As a dominant figure in American society, the business executive has assumed a social noblesse oblige – a responsibility for taking an increasing part in directing community affairs" ("Successful wives of successful executives," 1956, p. 65), and "the exceptional executive, like a truly great artist, is born, not made" (Testing for ability in management, 1932, p. 279).

These are aged quotes from an era of more flowery writing and an as-yet-unshaken belief in the positive march of Progress; the idea that managers are great artists or hold rare talents has been toned down in the second 50 years of HBR's publication. Still, there is still the occasional celebration of heroism, such as the 2011 profile of an executive who took on two high-profile jobs in the space of 23 months – while giving birth to a first child and then twins ("Surviving twin challenges – at home and work," 2011). (Notably, she had a husband able to take two major breaks from work to stay home with babies, but this gets only passing mention in the article.) How did she survive? According to the article, by setting goals and employing the "tools" of division of labour and delegation (managerialism), appearing calm and supremely organized while at work (rational, strong, in control), not allowing her family life to be seen as "impairing her in any way" (an unencumbered worker), and working "extremely hard" (merit).

The context and language may have changed, but we can see in this recent article that the mystique of the manager is still firmly in place. Along with being strong and not-needy, the additional layer of mystique creates a discursive self that is exceptional, expected to succeed, and largely self-contained and independent. This has ramifications for care, and how it is seen, as we will see in future chapters. First, however, a look at *potestas* in managerialist discourse.

5.4 Potestas: The Constraining Force of Managerial Discourse

In this section, I outline three main ways that the managerialist discourses in HBR, outlined above, represent *potestas,* an entrapping, repressive force that appears as a protocol of institutional control.

As outlined in Chapter 3, posthumanist theorist Rosi Braidotti writes of two aspects of power: the negative form, *potestas,* and a positive form, *potentia*. *Potestas* prohibits and constrains, while *potentia*, or empowerment, helps increase relational capacity. Braidotti also refers to *potestas* as “the repressive structures of dominant subject-formations” (Braidotti, 2019, p. 34).

Recall that posthumanism is found at the convergence of antihumanism, which critiques the humanist ideal of rational “Man,” and anti-anthropocentrism, which rejects the idea that human are atop a species hierarchy. These central elements of Enlightenment thinking have produced an ontology that sets humans apart from nature (and our own material selves), and introduces dualistic thinking that produces multiple “others” and structures all relationships hierarchically. This ontology is considered a contributing factor in the various crises facing human and non-human life on the planet: climate degradation, biodiversity loss, damage from colonization, racism, neoliberal capitalist economic disparity, the decline of democracy. Although these issues are usually discussed on a society-wide basis, my project in this thesis is to interrogate their genesis within the social construct of the organization, through its managerialist discourses.

5.4.1 Three Forms of Potestas in HBR Discourses

I have identified three ways that the negative force of *potestas* is evident in the managerialist discourses outlined above: it isolates and disconnects the subject from relationality; it perpetuates dualistic thinking and therefore hierarchy; it constrains immanence, and the ability of becoming.

Isolates and Disconnects: Posthumanism sees all life and material as interconnected. We exist, and flourish, through relationship. Care ethics also focuses on the primacy of relationship: "Relations, *not individuals*, are ontologically basic" (Noddings, 2013, p. xxi, emphasis added). The posthuman subject does not stand apart; it is entangled with other humans, material, *zoe,* knowledge, technology, and more. Says Braidotti (2019a), "This relational process supports a thick and dynamic web of interconnections by *removing the obstacles of individualism*" (p. 45, emphasis added). I understand this, ontologically, to confer responsibility. My ability to act stems from the relationships I hold, including relationships with water, food, other people, etc., and from the care I have received that permits me to be active. And, my ability to act has impacts on others, human, nonhuman, and material.

However, managerialist discourses function to isolate the subject, valuing, as we have seen, core elements such as self-control and being unencumbered, rational, and mindful of the constructed social distance of hierarchy. The humanist subject is strongly evident in managerialist discourse, but it is a subject created through restrictive force. On the one hand, organizational rewards will not come to those who don't outwardly embody these norms, for example, by being "nice" (caring for others) or taking a collaborative (relational) approach. On the other, managerial mystique serves to promote and reward a self-image that reinforces the ideal of separation, individuality, and autonomy.

The suggestion in several articles that managers imitate relationship norms, such as projecting warmth or concern in order to gain influence and employee compliance, is an example of managerialist *potestas* isolating and disconnecting the manager even from themself. As Hochschild (1983) warned, this type of emotional labour can ultimately be dangerous, estranging a manager from their own feelings. Moreover, it starts to confound the most intimate level of connectedness. It appears we are already quite accepting of the managerialist façade: in a study, researchers found that subjects were more likely to assign a high-stakes work task to those (fictional) employees who said they would hide personal feelings of sadness or distress, rather than assign it to those who said they would share their feelings. Interestingly, however, this only applied to the workplace setting. When the context was changed to after-work drinks, test subjects valued honesty, and felt that those who pretend to be happy when they are not, are untrustworthy ("Should you hide your emotions at the office?" 2020, pp. 21-22). It seems clear that there is a restrictive and isolating force within organizations that is less evident outside of them.

Perpetuates Dualistic Thinking: The Enlightenment ideal of the exceptional human helped develop a dualistic basis in Western thinking that also influences human connection and relationship. Posthuman thinking, by comparison, "does not deny the power of differences, but rather argues that they are not structured according to the dialectical principle of internal or external opposition, and *therefore do not function hierarchically*" (Braidotti, 2017, p. 16, emphasis added). Managerialist discourses, however, act to entrap (*potestas*) those in organizations in dualistic and hierarchical thinking. In addition to the explicit manager/subordinate hierarchy throughout organizational life (and therefore HBR), the managerialist discourses are rife with hierarchy: images of strength (good) and weakness (bad); gendering that often relegates women to problematized, "other" positions; and the sense that organizational title extends into society as social class.

Coupled with the isolation discussed earlier, this creates a loner-hero ethic where every individual has to be the star of their own show, while accepting that they are also cast in a "lesser" role at least part of the time. It creates a landscape of constant competition, since someone will be higher and someone lower. The incessant hierarchy and privileging of one over another degrades trust, so that leaders are encouraged to keep their social distance ("Nobody trust the boss completely – now what?" 1989). Stories such as "How to manage your boss" (1980) make it clear that you can't expect help (or care) from others; you need to do it yourself. This also feeds ideas such as the "anthropocentric savior-complex," (Lundström, 2021, p. 349) the idea that "WE can save the planet," which merely perpetuates the human/nature dualism that helped create environmental problems in the first place. Or worse, the feeling of being disconnected from nature so that whatever's going wrong is "not my problem."

Constrains Immanence and Becoming: Finally, the *potestas* inherent in managerial discourses can be said to constrain the ability of those in organizations to engage in *becoming*, which stems from immanence. Immanence is an expression of radical interconnection, of embeddedness, and of the liveliness of matter. Effectively, a posthuman position understands that all life is flow. We humans tend to want stability and predictability, but even within our own body's microcosm we are constantly being replaced and rebuilt; everything, including us, is always becoming. This is not a bad thing. Meschitti (2019) describes it as a type of creativity:

> The power of becoming can be seen as the power each body (subject) has to establish new connections and change. […]The desire to become (making new connections in the flow) is a source of freedom for individuals, and ultimately of joy. (Meschitti, 2019, p. 27)

The challenge in comprehending the posthumanist concepts of immanence and becoming can be daunting. Most of us who are products of Western-based education systems have been subjected to Taylorist systems and managerial thinking from our earliest years of school; we have been trained to perceive ourselves as separate, individual, and sovereign. But this self-image is dependent on overlooking care (as well as basic non-negotiable connectivity, such as the need to interact with the ecosystem for oxygen every few seconds). An immanent positionality, says Carstens (2020) sees care not as external, but "already contained within and immanent to the flourishing of life itself" (p. 80). So although we do need some sort of working avatar to house our self-concept (one that can autonomously drive the car, take the kids to soccer, and get the month-end report submitted), we are more honest when we remember that this subjectivity only exists as a function of radical connection, not in place of it.

The posthumanist vision of creativity and change stemming from vital connection contrasts sharply with ideas of individualized personal merit, and the image of managerialist achievement and innovation we saw earlier: "We live in a very individualistic culture that emphasizes being independent as a way to achieve. And we associate innovation with autonomy" ("Even women think men are more creative," 2015, p. 31). When people would rather make mistakes than ask for help and appear less than autonomous, we can see discursive *potestas* power at play.

Pursuing Meschitti's thought a bit further, we find her connecting becoming with the ability of individuals to grow professionally, try new projects, etc. But it is also an impetus to relationship: "the desire to become […] serves as an input to create connections" (Meschitti, 2019, p. 29). While HBR offers many articles about teamwork and the power of collaboration, there is little that signals this ontological level of becoming-through-connection, creation-through-connection. And only seven articles of my sample of 140 mention joy. One does mention the "apparent joy in collaborative helping" in a company whose culture "is not about cutthroat competition" but then says, "Many organizations discourage helping, at least implicitly, because it is seen as incompatible with individual responsibility for productivity" (IDEO's culture of helping, 2014, p. 60). Here, managerialist *potestas* is very clear.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the ways that HBR constructs managerialist discourses related to efficiency, rationality, gender, the mystique of management, and elements within these, such as strength, the unencumbered worker, control, and merit. This answers my first research question: What managerialist discourses does HBR reproduce?

I have also considered how these discourses, viewed as the restrictive power *potestas,* can be seen to constrain the posthumanist subject and run counter to posthumanist concepts of connection, relationship, and non-hierarchy/monism. In the next chapter, I explore how care manifests within the organizational world described by HBR.

Chapter 6: Care within the organization

Vignette: The official gardener, or care made mainstream

Some years earlier, the environmental campaign organization had remodelled its offices. This included a decision to invest in about 60 high-quality potted plants, some of a significant size. These were complemented by an outdoor patio filled with more plants. Three staff members collaborated on selecting the office greenery, and then continued to regularly maintain it. Five years later, two had left the organization, and the indoor garden was maintained by just one administrative staff person, who watered, pruned and fed all the plants outside of her regular duties.

The great quantity of greenery softened and enriched the cubicle landscape, especially during the gray of winter, and people loved the plants. Still, it was largely taken for granted. There were even occasional mutterings about why this one (relatively low-status) employee was spending time watering and pruning, away from her job that was tied to a computer. "She obviously doesn't have that much to do…"

When the organization began a Canada-wide campaign to encourage people to spend 30 minutes a day in nature, many staff learned of the scientifically-proven health benefits of plants. A manager calculated the current value of the office's large garden "asset," the potential cost of having an external contractor maintain it, and the employment benefits it provided. Noting the lack of respect granted to the individual who cared for this asset, I also developed and gained approval for a new job description, paid at one hour per week, for the organization's "Official Gardener." There was a formal announcement and recognition at the staff meeting; there was applause. The work of care was thus granted official status; the one lone person who had *manifested this caring effort for years and who now had a title and pay for the work was deeply touched. Interestingly, however, this work was not visible or valued until it was analyzed, quantified, and understood within organizational terms. Our own campaign work had permitted it to enter the organizational discourse, where standard "workplace" discourse had previously left it devalued.*

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second in which I present my findings from within the texts of HBR. It answers my second question, which has two parts: Where does care manifest within organizational life and work? What types of care are recognized (valued) vs. types of care that are not? I conclude this chapter by applying a posthumanist lens, examining care through the concept of *potentia,* a form of positive power, and by looking at the ways in which managerialist discourses (*potestas)* affect how care is viewed.

6.1.1 Organizational Care in this Study

Showing up each day ready to take on tasks, complete assignments, and collaborate with others across myriad organizational relationships requires attentiveness to needs, responsibility, and competence – the same moral elements Tronto (1993, 2013, 2015) associates with various phases of care. Just being there and "getting the work done," even if it's a routine part of the job description, entails care, for the job and the organization itself: "In the context of care-giving in work situations, the needs to which workers are obliged to orient themselves are not just the personal needs of others but also organizational or task-based goals" (Mumford, Holman, McCann, Nagington, & Dunn, 2019, p. 91). As noted earlier, this thesis does not focus on care work that is identified as care, such as nursing, childcare, janitorial services, etc. Rather, I am seeking to identify work that may not be seen as care, but that shows up when I apply Tronto's (1993) definition:

> Care is a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web. (Tronto, 1993, p. 103)

As described in Chapter 2, care is defined by needs, and entails both recognizing needs and taking action to see that they are met. It is based in relationship, and responsive to context. Identifying care in this chapter becomes important in my next chapter, when I seek to identify when care *is* provided, but *not* recognized (privileged irresponsibility).

6.2 Getting the work done: Care in HBR's organizational workplace

Within the pages of HBR, care is evident in a variety of forms: care for the work itself, care for the organization overall, care for colleagues, subordinates and superiors, and more. This section examines these various types of care at work.

6.2.1 Care for the Work, Care for the Organization

Vignette: Pay raise at the pizza restaurant

It was the end of my shift at the family pizza restaurant, 8:00 pm. I had noticed we were running low on cheese and a few other items, so I jotted a note and left it taped to the dough mixer where Darley, the morning shift worker, would see it. It was her job to put in the food order each day; the note would save her a few minutes.

The next day when I arrived both Darley and I had been given a raise ($0.25 an hour!). The owner of the restaurant had seen my note and was so pleased by this evidence of unrequired cooperation he decided to reward us. I was thankful, but mystified: was such a simple supportive gesture really that unusual?

The article “Inner work life” (2007) presents a diary study examining what employees think and feel as they go about their work, the “subtext of business performance.” During a high-profile project crunch, a small group of diarists record how they collaborate and problem-solve, how members of other teams offer “fantastic help” with a “smile on their faces” and how higher-ups drop in regularly to check on progress and send pizza and bottled water as they work long hours. All diarists report being exhausted yet happy; a typical entry by one diarist reads: “Today our entire office worked like a real team again. It was wonderful. … I have been here about 15 hours, but it has been one of the best days I’ve had in months!!” (p. 79). The article authors note that perceptions (of the project’s importance to the company) and emotions (the elation of good teamwork), plus clear goals (clarity about needs), contributed to employees’ motivation. The authors do not use the word care, yet the work of these employees could easily be characterized as care – for the organization, for the project, for those “higher up” who rely on their outputs.

This sort of care (apart from the 15-hour crunch) is the relatively unremarkable daily practice of most people who show up at work prepared to attend to the needs for which they are responsible within their organizational role. In later sections, I look at care provided to other *people*, but there is also a larger idea: that of meeting the needs of *the organization* itself. Back in 1956, HBR noted the benefits of a system “in which workers gain feelings of pride and belonging through the contributions they make to the better functioning of their organization”

(“Human relations theory, a progress report,” 1956, p. 128). Later, in 1998, it said, “When people love their job for the work itself, they often feel committed to the organizations that make that work possible” (“What makes a leader?” 1998, p. 100). A researcher who studied middle managers found that they often stayed in difficult jobs despite better prospects elsewhere, due in part to personal connections and loyalty to subordinates, but also something more: “In all of those instances, though, I sensed an overarching commitment to the organization itself, or to middle managers’ idea of the organization” (“In praise of middle managers,” 2001, p. 76). The idea of the organization – an entity to be cared for – can be so strong that when one Canadian company was acquired and subsumed by a competitor, managers invited employees to “a church-like ceremony where the company was eulogized by executives and hourly workers alike” (“The toxic handler: Organizational hero – and casualty,” 1999, p. 105).

This reification of the organization has its risks, of course, for those who care. First of all, the needs of the organization typically take priority over those of individual employees. In “Nothing prepared me to manage AIDS,” (1993) a manager confronts this directly as he tries to support an employee who becomes terminally ill and must be removed from his job:

> As a manager, it was the most agonizing task I ever faced. On the one hand, I knew that removing Jim was necessary to meet my responsibilities as a manager. On the other hand, I believed that taking action against him meant failing my responsibilities as a human being. […] one of the most numbing side effects of Jim’s illness was my own anguish at having to put the interests of the organization ahead of Jim’s need to take pride in his work and status. (pp. 31-33)

Second, the reified *organization* itself cannot care back – although we speak of organizations as if they can. There are popular discussions about “caring companies” (see People

Magazine's "100 Companies that care in 2023"[1]), and recognition awards for "Companies that Care,"[2] for example. Business ethics literature includes discussions of care in management (e.g., Picard & Ottaviani, 2020). These are all efforts to understand "the organization" through the actions taken by the people (typically owners and managers) who create and direct its relationships via their shared effort, endowing the construct of the organization with an "identity" (e.g., a "brand personality"). So there is a sort of "care" provided by "the organization" through Human Resources (HR) and other employee policies, but which are enacted by individuals, as in the case of managing AIDS, above.

I will consider care provided through HR policy below, understanding that while the organization itself cannot care, collective management policy and practice effectively represents "the organization," especially in employees' eyes. I also recognize that this collective organization does hold power, and privilege, over individual employees. However, for the purpose of understanding inequality as it is produced within organizational life through privileged irresponsibility, I will focus predominantly on relationships between humans (e.g., superiors and subordinates; colleagues). It is to these interactions that I turn to now.

6.2.2 Care for Colleagues

Images of care within the workplace between colleagues take several forms in the pages of HBR. On a day-to-day basis, some act like "givers," which seems indicative of care: "they contribute to others without seeking anything in return. They might offer assistance, share knowledge, or make valuable introductions" ("In the company of givers and takers," 2013, p.

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[1] People Magazine's 100 Companies that care in 2023: https://people.com/human-interest-people-100-companies-that-care-7749999)
[2] See the Honor Roll at https://www.companies-that-care.org

90). Explicit care is evidenced in an article about toxic handlers – those colleagues who soothe jangled nerves, reposition abrupt messages from superiors, and listen to fears, who voluntarily shoulder the "sadness, frustration, bitterness, and anger that are endemic to organizational life" so that employees can move on ("The toxic handler – organizational hero and casualty," 1999, p. 101). Employees also help one another through hard times, when there is rapid change, or when the work entails high pressure or competition: "One interviewee in investment banking hosts dinners for her division, gives out gag gifts as party favours, passes out M&Ms at meetings, and throw parties 'to celebrate ourselves'" in order to balance the anxiety of the work environment ("Ways women lead," 1990, p. 123). Care between peers likely varies depending on the culture of specific organizations; there's also indication – at least historically – that "business culture has a bias against close friendships among managers," since it might jeopardize objectivity, or make employees less willing to relocate ("The subordinate's predicaments," 1979, p. 140).

Notwithstanding these examples, my analysis found that the focus of HBR leaves it not a very fruitful source for examining the question of care between colleagues. The publication focuses much more heavily on subordinate-superior relationships than on collegial, peer-level issues. This does not mean care doesn't occur at the peer level, but that HBR yielded more examples of hierarchical relationships.

6.2.3 Care for Subordinates

Vignette: The rules don't permit care

Maya worked in a medium-sized company where she had advanced over several years from customer service to an administration role. After a vacation in Europe, she learned she was pregnant. Maya wanted to keep the baby even though the father did not want to be involved, but *she realized she would need a higher level of income. So she went to talk with the VP of her department.*

Ana, the VP, listened to Maya's request for a wage increase. However, within the company's compensation structure, this could only come with a promotion and new title. Maya did not ask for a promotion immediately, but wanted to know if she could expect to be advanced at some point in the reasonable future.

Ana told Maya that she could not give her a promotion, nor guarantee one in the future; she said it was not the responsibility of the organization to ensure that Maya had a level of income simply based on her needs. Furthermore, she was angry and made it clear she was personally put out that Maya had even approached her with the issue. Maya was dismayed. After considering her options, she chose to terminate the pregnancy.

As a co-worker of both, hearing the story later, I wondered how differently Ana might have reacted if it was instead an old friend, a next door neighbour, or a person she knew from church or a yoga class who needed support to raise a child; that is, how different it might have been if their relationship and roles were not structured by organizational hierarchy.

Across the scope of the articles in my sample, the examples of care for subordinates mainly show up as ensuring subordinates are sufficiently informed, engaged and provided-for so they can be productive and meet organizational goals. While this is an instrumentalized notion of care (to be discussed later), it still constitutes care in that the employees have arrived prepared to accomplish certain tasks, have needs in doing so, and can have those needs met by an attentive boss. Because individuals at all levels pay more attention "upwards" (care for superior) than "downwards" (care for subordinate) in the hierarchy ("How to be a good boss in a bad economy," 2009), it is also true that many bosses are not as attentive as they could or should be:

> Many managers, like Bonnevie, assume that the boss will magically know what information or help their subordinates need and provide it to them. Certainly, some bosses do an excellent job of caring for their subordinates in this way, but for a manager to expect that from all bosses is dangerously unrealistic. A more reasonable expectation for managers to have is that modest help will be forthcoming. After all, bosses are only human. ("Managing your boss," 1980, p. 94)

The idea of being helpful – caring – to subordinates grows in HBR as the "human relations" movement blossoms into extensive "leadership" research starting around the mid-1990s, concurrent with knowledge work replacing the more tangible production of manufacturing. For comparison, in 1973 a list of attitudes and motives expected to contribute to success in management and "rapid promotion up the managerial ladder" did not mention subordinates at all, including only items such as "a favorable attitude toward authority," "the desire to compete," "the desire to exercise power," and "a desire to capture the attention of others through distinctive kinds of behavior" ("The real crunch in managerial manpower," 1973, p. 148).

More recent articles, however, do identify ways in which bosses care for their subordinates, by taking the heat from a bad-tempered CEO or toxic organizational situations ("The toxic handler – organizational hero and casualty," 1999); offering hand-holding, problem solving, and support during times of rapid change ("In praise of middle managers," 2001), or taking on "boring and silly tasks, and battling idiots and slights that make life harder than necessary on their people" ("The boss as human shield," 2010, p. 106). Articles mention bosses coaching, encouraging, defending ideas ("Nobody trusts the boss, now what," 1989) and working to "enhance other people's sense of self-worth" ("Ways women lead," 1990, p. 120).

Caring relationships can be distorted by the power imbalance of hierarchy. Tronto (2013) warns against this phenomenon: "when care is embedded in another framework of values, it does not necessarily lead in a progressive direction" (p. 102). She uses an example of parents in a competitive "winner-take-all" society: "what it means to care well for one's own children is to make sure that they have a competitive edge against other children" – even if those parents generally believe in equal opportunity (p. 101). Within organizational life, differential levels of power can affect the ability to see needs. "Research confirms what many of us have long suspected: People who gain authority over others tend to become more self-centered and less mindful of what others need, do, and say" ("How to be a good boss in a bad economy, 2009, p. 44). This appears discursively in an article about gender and how available bosses make themselves to their subordinates, called "Management men and women: closed vs. open doors" (1980).

While the article generally found that female managers were twice as accessible as males, it is most instructive for how the author characterizes some of the interactions between manager and subordinate. While male managers said they had no trouble saying no to subordinates, female managers, by making themselves available, are described as having "created situations whereby their employees could *bother them* with requests" (p. 56, emphasis added). Similarly, the author theorizes that women, whose early role models were nurturing mothers, "see [nurturing] as a valued trait. Perhaps they translate this value into expression of care and concern for subordinates *(at the cost of their own time)*," (p. 58, emphasis added). Although the author lists both positive and negative consequences of accessibility, care for subordinates is characterized as a *bother* and *lost time*. Embedded in the HBR framework of managerialist values, care is shifted from something that "repairs and maintains our world so we can live in it well" into a secondary role as something that impedes the manager, presumably from doing "more important" work. The way accessibility is characterized in HBR demonstrates how a managerialist values framework may skew the perception of care in the workplace and subordinate it to other activities.

Ultimately, what is best for the organization guides the care that superiors provide to their underlings. In a case from 2007, Cheryl, a marketing director, is torn between 60-hour weeks and her 7-year old daughter. While the company hints at a promotion, she considers asking her boss (Marcus) for reduced hours instead. One of the experts analyzing the case weighs in:

> "[Cheryl] should try to see things from her boss' perspective. Marcus may be caring and sympathetic, but his focus is on what's best for the business, not what's best for [Cheryl's daughter]. He has the support of a wife at home; he can't be expected to fully understand Cheryl's situation or make decisions for her. His job, as Cheryl's boss, is to see that she manages her team and contributes to the bottom line, period." ("Off ramp or dead end," 2007, p. 64)

Here, the fact that Marcus is described as "caring" mostly has to do with a friendly tone and a pep talk he gave about keeping up the hard work towards promotion. He does not help meet her needs (indeed, since he has "a wife at home," he barely understands them). What's best for the organization comes first.

6.2.4 Care for Superiors

Vignette: Always make your boss look good

I was a middle manager in the marketing team at a small new "socially responsible" bank. Our launch budget was spent and marketing activity was ramping down, so we were trying to make do with less and less to spend on marketing efforts, and everyone on the team was frustrated with senior administration's inability to support our initiatives. At a team meeting I expressed the exasperation I knew my colleagues shared: "We have lots of ideas! But I have nothing to do." Although she said nothing at the time, my clearly displeased VP began to dump work on my desk: dead files, months-old unanswered random customer comments, long-shot non-profit partners to research, etc. These came with a little note: "Since you don't have enough to do." I realized that I had transgressed a key rule: despite invitations to honestly share our thoughts and ideas at the team table, my higher priority as a subordinate was to make sure – always – that my boss looked good.

Reading through HBR, the message appears over and over: it is the job of subordinates to take care of their bosses. This can be related to tangible tasks such as screening requests for appointments to protect the boss's time, or conversely, organizing your own time so that "if my boss is calling, I'm very accessible" ("Management men and women, closed vs. open doors," 1980, p. 62). It may consist of organizing meetings or delivering information to suit a boss's preferred style, "If your boss is a listener, you brief him in person, then follow it up with a memo. If your boss is a reader, you cover important items or proposals in a memo or report, then discuss them with him" ("Managing your boss," 1980, p. 98), or couching negative information to superiors carefully and reassuringly following unwritten rules, viz., good news before bad, say nice things about other departments, downplay missed targets ("Interpersonal barriers to decision making," 1966, p. 89). Caring for the boss also entails always being mindful of the pressure and burden of responsibility the boss is facing:

> When deciding whether to speak up about an idea or a problem at work, most employees think first about their own standing…. Few people, however, focus on their manager's ego. How will this suggestion make my boss feel? … Of course, some leaders are able to absorb feedback and ideas without feeling criticized or threatened. But even in those cases, there is very little downside to protecting their egos and neutralizing their insecurities. And it's possible to do so without feeling manipulative or sycophantic or exerting a lot of effort. ("How to sell your ideas up the chain of command," 2022, p. 140)

This sort of advice to subordinates implies that the underlying competitive nature of life within the organization – notwithstanding the daily effort of collaboration – produces a frailty in relationships that requires constant attentiveness.

Approaching your manager in private, and demonstrating your intention to help the organization and co-workers (not yourself) are key to "explicitly conveying the benevolence of your motives" when floating ideas; prefacing negative feedback with "a simple phrase such as 'I really want the best for you'" can help protect a boss's thin skin ("How to sell your ideas up the chain of command," 2022, p. 141). And even when the boss is not focused on your needs, it's your job to take care of theirs:

> What are the "bad" bosses doing? Frequently cited grievances include micromanaging, bullying, avoiding conflict, ducking decisions, stealing credit, shifting blame, hoarding information, failing to listen, setting a poor example, slacking, and not developing staff. Such dysfunctional behavior would make anyone unhappy and unproductive. However,

> whatever sins your boss commits, managing your relationship with him or her is a critical part of your job. Doing it well is a key indicator of how effective you are. ("Managing yourself: Do you hate your boss?" 2016, p. 99)

Similarly, a superior may have "temper tantrums, playful moments, idiosyncrasies, and periods of depression or elation," which can intimidate, confuse or frustrate a subordinate. Therefore, the subordinate must work to understand them in order to tolerate the bad behaviour while protecting the relationship and accepting "whatever friendship develops" ("The subordinate's predicaments," 1979, p. 140). It's hard to imagine a job description for a daycare worker would sound very different. In any case, evidence that care exists within organizational life – at least for superiors – appears to be strong.

6.2.5 Subordination as Care

The necessity for the subordinate to attend to the superior's needs – and to accept that care may not flow back in equal measure – is compelled by the reality of hierarchical power:

> How do you [the subordinate] get the resources you need – the information, the advice, even the permission to keep at it? The answers always point toward whoever has the power, the leverage – that is, the boss. To fail to make that relationship one of mutual respect and understanding is to miss a major factor in being effective. ("Retrospective commentary," 1993, p. 156)

Fraught with its inherent competition, the power imbalance creates a situation where the subordinate must work to ensure they maintain organizational structures and expectations (e.g., hierarchy and efficiency) as they go about their work.

This brings us to an interesting type of care: willingly subordinating oneself for the good of the system, or what could be termed "subordination-as-care." For example, one article notes that without "helping" or "citizenship behaviour" within the organization, efficiency would suffer: "tasks would have to be optimally assigned 100% of the time, projects could not take any unexpected turns, and no part of any project could go faster or slower than anticipated" ("IDEO's culture of helping," 2014, p. 55). Although it seems counterintuitive to think of subordination as a form of care, care always entails the prioritization of competing needs and decisions about scarce resources (Tronto, 1993), which may include setting aside one's own needs in deference to those of another. The difference within organizational hierarchy is that needs and resources are structured by authority and power levels, so care is placed in a competitive context that – as Tronto (2013) warns – can lead to perverse outcomes.

This type of subordination-as-care can appear in different ways. As women entered the masculine-gendered organizational workplace, an effort I'll call "don't rock the boat" was historically expected of them. Those who were the first to break into managerial ranks were advised not to cause problems by ensuring their success didn't arouse "the envy or ire" of those around them because "modesty is far more important in a woman's business career than it is in a man's" ("Are women executives people?" 1965, p. 170). One way to do this was to downplay one's authority or power:

> Even where women have been given titles, the "successful" ones are careful not to flaunt them. A woman sales manager reported that after a number of years in that job she had yet to be introduced to a customer by any of the salesmen as "our sales manager." She was always "Mrs. Blank, from our main office." ("Opportunities for women at the executive level," 1953, p. 119)

Lest these examples seem dated, an article in 2004 notes that "giving is the chief activity that defines femininity," and one of the top resources women are expected to give is recognition, relinquishing it to the men with whom they work. Not doing so can lead to negative repercussions: "When women speak as much as men in a work situation or compete for high-visibility positions, their femininity is routinely assailed. They are caricatured as either asexual and unattractive or promiscuous and seductive. Something must be wrong with their sexuality" ("Do women lack ambition?" 2004, p. 56). And even in 2014, "Our interviews additionally suggested that women in tech often get promoted but don't get the title or salary that typically accompanies the new job" (Hacking tech's diversity problem," 2014, p. 97).

"Don't rock the boat" also manifests as paying careful attention to hierarchical status levels. In general, subordinates must accept their position, that is, permit their superiors to assert power without reacting self-defensively ("The subordinate's predicaments," 1979, p. 133). But maintaining the hierarchy can require more subtlety (what Jackall (1988) refers to as "fealty"). For example, because giving praise is a way of gaining status over another by establishing that one is capable of sitting in judgment, "when the work of a high status person is praised by a low-status person, this is often seen as presumptuous or even insulting." Similarly, if a low-status junior assistant comes up with the best idea, it must be blessed by the higher-up (e.g., "That's a good idea, young man") to "grease" the situation, restore the superior's status and the group's "equilibrium," before the good idea may be put to use ("Praise reappraised," 1963, pp. 63-64). Being careful about how, when, and to whom one speaks up, is an element of subordination-as-care.[3]

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[3] This shifts with culture. An article about Japanese management notes that "it is not considered an affront when a junior manager questions the opinion of his superior" ("Made in America under Japanese management," 1974, p. 63).

Clearly, organizations would cease to function without people willingly taking on subordinate roles to uphold the organization's goals as their job requires. This is well understood within organizations, since almost everyone is subordinate to someone else, and the ability to build large structures of collaboration are one of the hallmarks of our economic system, if not our species overall. Therefore, it's not the subordination itself that is in question here, but the extent to which it may be a locus of privileged irresponsibility and inequality.

Since we confer status and higher pay on superior roles, this seems worth examining. A 1988 article about "followership" points out: "the leadership role has the glamour and attention… when we play it well we get applause and recognition… Followership dominates our lives and organizations, but not our thinking, because our preoccupation with leadership keeps us from considering the nature and importance of the follower" ("In praise of followers," 1988, p. 143). The article identifies that effective followers are not intimidated by hierarchy, but they understand that their leaders are also following the lead of others, so they "try to appreciate the goals and needs of the team and the organization." They are "committed to something – a cause, a product, an organization, an idea – in addition to the care of their own lives and careers" (p. 144). In short, they subordinate themselves towards the care of the organizational structure and purpose. It is a form of care – maintaining, continuing and repairing the "world" in order to live in it as well as possible.

There are situations, of course, where subordination goes further than the "enthusiastic, intelligent and self-reliant participation – without star billing" that is described above (p. 143). That same article also describes "sheep," "alienated followers," "yes people," and "survivors," whose subordination may be passive, critical, cynical or un-enterprising; in other words, not the best type of followership. This is where the reality of hierarchical power alters the nature of subordination-as-care. In a case study called “Challenge the boss or stand down,” (2011), a new senior marketing specialist (Tom) openly criticizes his boss’s strategy and business targets in front of others in a meeting. This results in a short leash, a requirement to report all his work activities and hit all deadlines, and a warning that his employment may be under review. Two experts provide opinions on the case. Both say Tom should have respected his boss’s 20-year track record and that he did not do enough work – either in building relationships or industry research – before presenting his views. And both make it clear that subordination is a critical piece of his job. One says he should not have publicly challenged his boss’s authority: “Tom may believe that hierarchy doesn’t matter in today’s corporate world, but bosses still love the sort of deference that validates their status.” His recommendation to “repair this damage” includes apologizing and applying “the power of flattery, which research shows is all but impossible to overuse” (p. 140). The second expert says Tom should extend an olive branch to his boss, but also think about his future:

> [N]ot everyone is cut out for corporate life, and Tom ought to carefully examine his suitability for a career path that often will require putting the needs and preferences of bosses and the organization above his own. If he thinks he will be unable to cultivate the humility, selflessness, and patience that are required for corporate teamwork, he may want to leave his job at D7 Displays before he is terminated. (p. 141)

In short, subordination takes effort. It takes attention to needs, and a harnessing of one’s motivations and impulses to ensure those needs are met. The extent to which this is recognized depends on the bosses for whom one works and the way in which they wield their privilege. However, there is a hint that they may not be incented to demonstrate good behaviour. Consider this comment from an article titled “Why fair bosses fall behind” (2011):

> Numerous academic studies have shown that the most effective leaders are generally those who give employees a voice, treat them with dignity and consistency, and base decisions on accurate and complete information. But there's a hidden cost to this behavior. We've found that although fair managers earn respect, they're seen as less powerful than other managers – less in control of resources, less able to reward and punish – and that may hurt their odds of attaining certain key, contentious leadership roles. (p. 26)

From the description one can infer that the bosses in question here are those who do *not* turn a blind eye to the necessary "subordination-care" done by their subordinates, but who instead recognize and value it (i.e., not privileged irresponsibility) and who even care in return. However, this impairs their own opportunity. One can further infer that subordination-care may go unnoticed in many cases, as bosses (subordinates themselves) look upwards for their own wellbeing, and therefore privileged irresponsibility may find fertile ground.

6.2.6 Care Instrumentalized and Human Resources Management

Vignette: One day is enough care

My brother's wife passed away from breast cancer in spring 2022, after a faster decline than expected. Two months later, my mother collapsed while visiting Vancouver. My brother, a unionized marine electrician with more than 20 years' service at the Halifax Dockyards, travelled from Halifax to Vancouver to see mom in ICU and share in the decision to let her go.

He was able to take the standard bereavement leave of five days, but of the discretionary additional three days available in case of travel, his manager saw fit to approve only one. This was "caring enough," it appears, for a cross-country round trip and the sudden death of the second most important relative in his life in the space of a few months. The manager was quite *self-assured about the appropriateness of her decision, and since the organization's level of "care" was codified and she was within the parameters provided for this case, she showed no interest in viewing the situation otherwise.*

Care – maintaining, continuing, repairing – is at its heart an action intended to achieve an outcome: that we can live as well as possible in a life-sustaining web (Tronto, 1993). One could say, then, that care is always instrumental, purposeful, etc. But the intention at the heart of care is not self-centred, or impersonal: "an ethic of care takes the needs of the relationship and those who participate in the relationship as the starting point for ethical responsibility and responsiveness as opposed to depending upon generalized, external, overarching universal principles or rules" (Hawk, 2011, p. 14). By comparison, care provided by "the organization" through individual managers following standardized policies and practices is care instrumentalized, stripped of the basic elements of relationship and responsiveness. It may meet an employee's needs, but such policies are calculated to maximize the benefits (or minimize costs) for the organization, at least over the long run, as their top priority.

Instrumentalized care, used to improve business performance, is frequently promoted in HBR, and comes with a long history: "It was early learned by those making scientific studies that careful attention to the comfort of the worker was not only humane but profitable" ("The meaning of scientific management," 1949, p. 685). So, for example, an argument for supporting working parents – "the family as a business issue" – is examined as a way to combat labour shortages, improve productivity, reduce absenteeism and improve the bottom line ("Business and the facts of family life," 1989, pp. 122-123). Similarly, "your company will gain tremendous financial benefits when you accept your responsibility to women and working parents" ("Women as a business imperative," 1992, p. 113). Investing in specific types of health care for employees (e.g., allergy tests) can offer a competitive business advantage: "At the heart of programs like these is the belief that healthy employees are an asset meriting investment – that you may a see a greater improvement in efficiency if you treat workers' asthma than if you install a new phone system" ("Presenteeism: At work – but out of it," 2004, p. 58). Such investments are not required when the labour market is slack, however: "business leaders didn't put a lot of stock in HR during the 2001 and 2008 recessions, because employees – keenly aware of how replaceable they were – stayed put and more or less behaved themselves" ("Why we love to hate HR – and what HR can do about it," 2015, p. 56). Despite, as discussed earlier, the way employees reify the organization into an entity for which they care, it's clear in HBR's articles that "the organization" only does enough in return to benefit itself.

Instrumental care is evident beyond just HR policy as well. In numerous articles, managers are encouraged to make employees "*feel* cared for," because, for example, this "improves the work climate and generates loyalty to the manager and the organization" ("Management men and women—closed versus open doors," 1980, p. 66, emphasis added). Compassion from a boss "adds corporate value.… What's more, it's free" ("How to be a good boss in a bad economy," 2009, p. 48). Care is a way to reap benefits downstream: "It is often tempting to abandon an employee who is in trouble, out of favor, or simply unpopular, but the extra effort expended on behalf of such a person can pay big dividends later" ("Nobody trusts the boss completely – now what?", 1989, p. 138). In "Care for the little guy" (2003), a CEO forgoes $155,000 of his own bonus money so that $1,000 bonuses ("a drop in the bucket to me and most CEOs") can be paid to 155 of the people "at the bottom of my company" who earn $25,000 to $45,000 a year. He described the value this generated:

> If you draw the line on your own greed, and your employees see it, they will be incredibly loyal and perform much better for you. Right now, we're experiencing our lowest level of attrition in 11 years, and we're tracking toward another banner year because people are happy. ("Care for the little guy," 2003, p. 45)

Since the organization, through policies and managers, can offer only an instrumentalized version of care, employees can arrive at a bleak moment when the fiction of actual relationship is exposed – even if they sit at the top of the hierarchy:

> When that chairman of the board or CEO finally retires, he suddenly learns that he's lost all value. "He becomes a nonperson"… shocked and overwhelmed by the fact that "he never was someone to be cherished for his own sake but only as an instrument of power and a conduit of goods." (Willard Gaylin, cited in "What do men want?", 1993, p. 52)

One can theorize that those "at the bottom" of the organization likely realize much earlier in their careers that they are not "cherished for their own sake" but instead are cared about only as long as it provides corporate value.

I will return to the question of instrumentalized care in organizational life, and its effect on the people who both execute and experience it, in my final chapter (Section 8.3.1), especially as this relates to Braverman's theory of deskilling. Certainly, though, HBR's blithe discussions about the ROI of corporate care indicate its managerial view of care's purpose. Fortunately, there seems to be some indication of care at work that isn't purely instrumental, as I found and share next.

6.2.7 Real Care

Actual care makes for a better workplace. Articles about toxic handlers, collaborative workplaces, "cultures of helping" and the positive performance effects of "companionate love" all underscore how the human ability for connection and interdependence, and the power of reciprocity, reform personal and organizational outcomes for the better. These too, can be found in the pages of HBR, and it behooves my reflexive effort to not be cynical to ensure they are mentioned here. Some companies are opening up conversations about values and purpose at the highest corporate levels; "PepsiCo, Southwest Airlines, Whole Foods Market, The Container Store, and Zappos all list love or caring among their corporate goals" ("Manage your emotional culture," 2016, p. 61) (although it is possible that this constitutes what The Care Collective (2020) calls "carewashing," p. 11).

Some HBR author/researchers characterize care in terms that transcend facile bottom-line speak, for example, about leadership when employees are in pain: "This is a kind of leadership we wish we would never have to use, yet it is vital if we are to nourish the very humanity that can make people – and organizations – great ("Leading during times of trauma," 2002, p. 61). Similarly, about the most important managerial behaviours: "[these] don't involve giving people daily pats on the back or attempting to inject lighthearted fun into the workplace. Rather, they involve two fundamental things: enabling people to move forward in their work and treating them decently as human beings" ("Inner work life," 2007, p. 81). Some companies, like IDEO, strive to build cultures that include authentic mutual support ("IDEO's culture of helping," 2014); sometimes bosses just get the caring touch right, like showing up with pizza when employees are putting in a 15-hour workday. And they do, as many articles attest, find that these efforts are good for the bottom line, which of course is important; the question is always whether encouraging human values at work is done for its own sake and the good of the employees, or ultimately, only as long and far as it benefits the organization. It remains unclear whether hierarchical bureaucratic organizations can actually be "caring."

6.3 Posthumanist Lens and the Story of Care from HBR

In the previous part of this chapter, I answered the first half of my second research question: "Where does care manifest within organizational life and work?" In this section, I now answer part two: "What types of care are recognized (valued) vs. types of care that are not?" I also consider how the posthumanist conceptualization of power (*potestas* and *potentia*) can be seen within the findings from HBR.

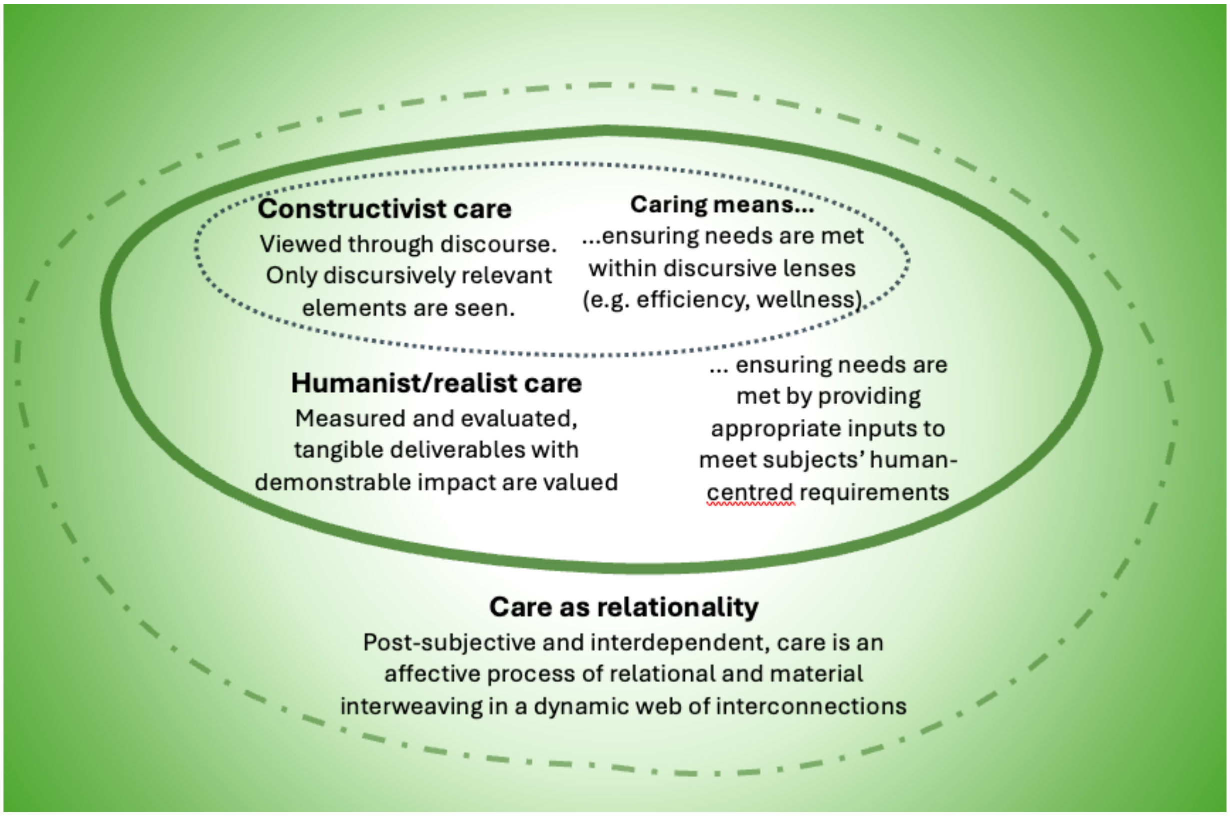
First, however, I quickly revisit the conceptualization of posthuman care I laid out in Chapter 3.

6.3.1 Posthuman Care and Potentia

My understanding of care is as ontology, foundational to the interconnectedness of existence. Yet my project is to try to understand care within the social construct of the organization, where most people spend most of their lives, and particularly, to understand how care is seen, or not seen, within that socially constructed world. This is why I developed the figure introduced in Chapter 3, which suggests that our understanding of care is affected by the position from which we view it.

Figure 6.1 (3.4)

Understandings of Care Within Onto-Epistemological Landscapes



In the posthumanist realm (largest oval and beyond), care is a sustaining flow of material and affective interconnection that supports our ability to "live as well as possible in the world" (Tronto, 1993). In the discursive realm (smallest oval), which is embedded in the posthuman but restricted in its outlook, all we understand of care is what our discourses permit us. This diagram refers to managerialist discourses, hence efficiency and wellness, but theoretically it could be applied to other discourses, such as aging, citizenship, or motherhood. In each case, the construction of care, what we can see of it, might be a bit different, but it would still be constrained. The point is that discourse – our human tendency to produce self-referential (humanist) constructions to understand reality – is limited in its ontological scope. As I argued in the last chapter, discourses are a form of *potestas*, or restrictive power (Braidotti, 2019), that constrain our ontological awareness.

Braidotti's (2019) other form of power is *potentia*, or empowerment, which is "capable of increasing our relational capacity" (p. 50). I theorize that *potentia* could in fact be *care*: a positive force that empowers, through its inherent relationality. If not all *potentia* is care, I believe we might at least say that all care is *potentia.* Interestingly, however, I find that the care I have identified in HBR gives me thin cloth for exploring this idea. To explain, I will turn back to my research question: "What types of care are recognized (valued) vs. types of care that are not?

6.3.2 The Recognition of Care in HBR

After the multiple examples found in my HBR articles, it becomes apparent that the few types of care that are valued within HBR's organizational world are those that benefit the bottom line. Workers putting in 15-hour days to get a project done, and receiving pizza from the boss to recognize their effort; "givers" who help others for the benefit of the organization; the boss who was supportive and caring to Cheryl as long as he kept her on track towards doing more work for the organization – these were some examples of work that could be considered care. There were some examples of care that were less-valued: the story about the manager who had to care for staff with AIDS didn't say how his efforts were viewed by *his* bosses. The story about toxic handlers suggested that this work was little valued until research started to prove that toxic handlers could improve productivity. Supporting your boss by caring for his or her needs often went unrecognized until literature about leadership and emotional intelligence started to shine more light on how a boss should be harnessing the benefits of engagement and motivation. These observations seem fairly predictable.

Outside of ensuring productivity and profitability, being a care-giver can be detrimental: “A male manager who obviously cares about his employees and pays attention to their needs may risk being viewed as “soft” by his peers,” and may “foster more closeness than he wants” – a slippery slope of potential inefficiency (“Management men and women: Closed vs. open doors,” 1980, p. 62). The downside goes beyond just negative perception; it can affect prospects. Young men who are “agreeable” – meaning cooperative and who value relationships – earn 20% less on average than their peers (“Nice guys finish poorer,” 2012, p. 26). Although there are organizations that find ways to normalize care at work (see section 6.2.7), the association of care with traits that are the antithesis of the managerialist ideal is prevalent and consistent over the decades in HBR.

It is also predictable, then, that showing a “need to be cared for” can signal failure (“Executives as human beings,” 1972 p. 64). There is no room for even occasional care, according to one executive interviewee: “You can’t express dependence when you feel it, because it’s a kind of absolute [….] You are either dependent or independent; you can’t be both” (p. 65).

I was hoping to find more descriptions of *receiving* care, but I found that HBR’s content is largely prescriptive, either directly through its advice, or simply because it highlights those who will take the actions it recommends. So it tells you how to care for your boss, or for people who are grieving at work, but it does not present much of the other side of the story. Apart from “Inner work life” (2007), based on a diary study that specifically asked employees how they felt about their day, there isn’t much content that tells us how it feels to be *cared for* at work. I was interested in understanding whether being cared for might have an *empowering* effect, whether it might *increase relational capacity*; in other words, whether the experience of being cared for would feel like an experience of *potentia*, to further my theorizing about care being a form of potentia. Certainly in the "Inner work life" (2007) article, the attention and encouragement from higher-ups, the collaboration and mutual support from colleagues, appeared to empower the diarist who was profiled. However, HBR yielded little else. To take this line of inquiry further, I think an interview-based study would be a next step.

6.3.3. Potestas and Care

Although I was not able to find many examples that directly demonstrate the empowering experience of *potentia*, it is possible to see where managerialist discourses act as *potestas* – a restrictive, negative power that impedes the relationality that would be fundamental to care, and therefore the empowerment of *potentia*. An example comes from the treatment of pregnancy in the workplace.

In 1992, Felice Schwartz, the founder of Catalyst, Inc. and a campaigner for the inclusion of women in the workplace, wrote the HBR article "Women as a business imperative," in which she argued that being a family-friendly company was an important strategic business priorities. Written directly to CEOs, one of her calls for action is to "end the conspiracy of silence" and "acknowledge maternity." She wrote: "At best today, a pregnant woman's condition is ignored. At worst, she is forced to hide her pregnancy as long as possible" ("Women as a business imperative," 1992, p. 111). Schwartz's letter called for basic accommodations for pregnant employees, but discursively, she was arguing against the limiting and unrealistic managerialist model of the unencumbered worker: "Some 85% of women have babies. That's a fact that companies don't handle well" (p. 111).

The article was published 30 years ago. Yet the idea that we suppress part of who we are when we are at work runs strong. There is a fascinating similarity between Felice Schwartz's call for pregnancy to be normalized and a 2020 journal article examining how employees allocate care when at work (caring for colleagues vs. caring for the work). Antoni, Reinecke, and Fotaki (2020) observed a clear boundary between personal and professional selves at one of their study sites: "A harmonious working life required avoiding encumbering coworkers with one's own personal difficulties" (p. 464). They describe a situation much like the one described by Schwartz decades earlier. Despite a manager's impending maternity leave, the authors observe what they call "willful blindness to caring needs." Nobody, including the manager herself, talked about the pregnancy. They did not even about the arrangements for her leave, which caused anxiety for some, but who still chose not to bring it up. Productivity and "professionalism" were thus maintained. Employees would chat lightly about certain aspects of their personal lives if it was relevant to client work, such as IKEA purchases or banking, but not what they called "personal-personal" topics, such as health, grief, or family (Antoni et al., 2020, pp. 463-464). Say the authors, "enacting a strong boundary between aspects of the person that were and were not relevant to performing the work allowed workers to avoid dealing with care for coworkers." As a result, care for their work need not be interrupted (Antoni et al., 2020, p. 465).

Here we see a clear example of managerialist discourse performing as *potestas,* a restrictive force, a sort of institutional control. The worker must be unencumbered for the sake of efficiency and productivity. The pregnant worker continues to present as efficient and unencumbered because all conspire not to recognize or discuss her pregnancy. This allows the other workers to remain unencumbered too, as they are permitted to sidestep the inefficiency of having to provide care, or even to engage on a more interconnected, relational basis. The reality that a new life is imminent – cause for celebration, support, and care outside of work – is subordinated to the managerialist need for predictability, rationality, control and strength. As outlined in the previous chapter, we can see the tendency of managerialism, acting as *potestas,* to isolate and disconnect subjects from relationality.

True to their roots, HBR's texts rarely present this managerialist *potestas* as detrimental. But indications do creep in. In an article exploring definitions of success for "men of the 1990s," an accountant shares the internalized dualism he maintains as a function of his work: "I'm a different person at work than I am outside work. When I'm in an environment that somehow nurtures, that somehow is cooperative rather than competitive, it enables me to be a different person, *to be myself*" ("What do men want?", 1993, p. 60, italics added). Clearly the environment he finds cooperative and nurturing is not the one at the office. In another article, written post 9-11, leaders are encouraged to "institutionalize compassionate acts," because otherwise employees, well versed in how to present themselves at the office, will suppress personal difficulties when at work. ("Leading in times of trauma," 2002, p. 60). Articles such as these tend to have an "alternative" tone, carrying some critique of the status quo; this suggests that the managerialist discourse of maintaining efficiency by suppressing part of yourself is otherwise the norm.

In some cases, particularly in a newer era when HBR articles cater more often to "work-life" balance topics, the managerialist discourse, or *potestas,* appears not as something that prevents relationship, but rather just restricts how it may be thought and spoken about. Consider the comment made by an interviewee about how they juggle work and home: "I just prioritize dinner with my family as if it was a 6 PM meeting with my most important client" ("Manage your work, manage your life," 2014, p. 62). Validating the caring work of spending time with family by locating it within the workday hierarchy suggests that simply "spending time with my kids" did not carry the same significance for this individual as meeting with "clients." The dualistic/hierarchical thinking of managerialist discourse *potestas* is evident here: work is more important, so the family must be converted to a work assignment.

A final example, while extreme, exemplifies the managerialist ideal of the unencumbered manager-hero, able to push past relationality to achieve individual success. In "How the best of the best get better and better" (2008), a sports psychologist and executive coach recommends that aspiring managers "love the pressure": "Managing pressure is a lot easier if you can focus just on your own excellence. Top sports performers don't allow themselves to be distracted by the victories or failures of others[...] They rarely let themselves be sidetracked by events outside of competition […] Elite performers are masters of compartmentalization" (p. 124). To provide an example, he describes a golf pro who led his team to a major international victory just six weeks after the death of his wife. In the HBR layout, this is summarized in the "Article at a glance" box at centre page, appearing as a pithy condensed bullet point of generalized advice, thus: "Elite performers don't get distracted by the victories of competitors—or even by a death in the family." Indeed, in the entire article there is no other mention of any relationship outside of work – neither friends nor family – so there are few such distractions to be considered. Here, the restrictive force of managerialist *potestas* has erased *potentia,* the power of relationality. Inefficient and distracting relations are eliminated so the fully unencumbered individual can succeed; it is the pinnacle of the humanist, managerialist storyline. Unfortunately, as we know, it is not sustainable on an ecosystem level, and very often, not on a personal level either.

6.4 Chapter Summary

To conclude, the pages of HBR reflect a significant amount of work that can be considered care, but the care work that gains recognition is primarily that which will favourably impact the bottom line. This isn't much of a surprise; it fits my model in Figure 6.1: that is, within the discursive realm, the care that is seen is that which fits the discourse, and managerialist discourse acts as restrictive *potestas* that limits access to relationships and care. While there were glimpses of a richer level of care, for example, emotional support not immediately related to productivity, they were few and far between, given the structure (i.e., texts drawn from HBR) of this research project.

Despite not having many direct examples of care provided but not valued, it was possible to identify situations where those with privilege were able to overlook the care they must have received. Receiving care and not needing to acknowledge it is privileged irresponsibility – and the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Privileged irresponsibility

Vignette: "Fork"

Joan brought in the lunch she had fetched and set it in front of Mariel, our department VP in a medium-sized financial enterprise. "I dropped off your dry-cleaning; it'll be ready Thursday." Joan was the department's admin assistant, a promotion from her start in front-line customer relations, and had recently been given additional duty as executive assistant to Mariel. I was a manager, meeting in Mariel's office to discuss a project.

Mariel nodded absently, listening to me. She glanced at the lunch on her desk. "Fork," she stated flatly, looking back to me without making eye contact with Joan. Joan startled and hurried out, returning with a fork. Mariel took it, paying no attention, continuing to focus on our conversation. Joan left the room, tasks complete. I was uncomfortable witnessing this delivery of care that received no thank you or recognition, not even a smile or nod. What was worse was that I knew Mariel and Joan would give the transaction very different assessments of value and meaning. Mariel would not advance Joan's career; she did not consider Joan to be the right fit for "higher" roles, while Joan believed she was improving her chances at advancement the more she worked hard and uncomplainingly at this new job where the VP herself could observe her keen commitment. I knew, from where I sat, that being expected to fetch lunch and a fork for someone higher in the hierarchy would never improve your resume; it would only calcify your strata in the organization. Indeed, after another few years, Joan grew disillusioned and frustrated by her continual lack of advancement, and eventually quit. A few years later she was employed at a major Canadian non-profit as Director of Volunteer Operations for the Western Region.

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I answered my first research question by identifying the managerialist discourses in the pages of *Harvard Business Review* (HBR), and how they can be related to Braidotti's (2019) concept of *potestas*, a restrictive form of power that may appear as protocols of institutional control. Chapter 6 answered my second question, about where care manifests in organizational life and where it is valued. This chapter answers my third research question: "How do managerialist discourses help produce privileged irresponsibility (lack of recognition for care) in organizational life?" This builds from the previous chapters by exploring the link between managerialist discourses and the valuation of care. I conclude the chapter by answering my fourth research question: "How does the manifestation and recognition of care within organizations relate to the reproduction of (economic) inequality in organizations?

In this chapter I explain Tronto's (1993) definition of privileged irresponsibility. I then look at where privilege can occur in organizational life, and turn to the texts of HBR to see how privileged irresponsibility manifests within the stories and discourses there. Finally, I consider Tronto's (1993) concept of "passes out of responsibility" and look at how these are constructed through managerial practices and discourses.

The identification of privileged irresponsibility in organizations provides a link between Tronto's political ethics of care (1993, 2013) and the work of Amis et al. (2020) on economic inequality in organizations. Demonstrating this link helps respond to the call by Amis et al. (2020) for more research in this area, because it identifies the *treatment of care* as a factor in the reproduction of economic inequality in organizations.

7.2 Privilege and Privileged Irresponsibility

The term "privileged irresponsibility" was developed by Joan Tronto (1993, 2013) over the scope of her work on political care ethics. It comes from her analysis of the systems of power and privilege in society, because, she says, "how we think about care is deeply implicated in existing structures of power and inequality. As we currently formulate it, *care functions ideologically to maintain privilege, but this function is disguised*" (Tronto, 1993, p. 21, emphasis added).

Privilege is commonly understood as unearned advantages that benefit those who occupy positions of power in society at the expense of others; "[t]hese advantages are generally taken for granted, invisible, and normalized in society, and privilege is thus an unmarked status, rarely recognized, particularly by those who benefit from it" (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2023, p. 39).

Tronto (1993) describes several ways in which privilege distorts care. First, those who have privilege are able to ignore types of hardships that they do not face (p. 121); this imbalance permits the caring needs of some to be met more fully than those of others and means the provision of care follows the distribution of power in society (p. 146). Second, based on her phases of care (see section 2.2.1), Tronto notes that having privilege allows individuals to selectively engage in *caring about* (noticing a need), or *caring for* (ensuring needs are met, as a parent hiring a nanny), but permits lets them side-step the drudgery of *care-giving*: "What it means to be powerful, in caring terms, is to be able to foist off the unpleasant parts of care onto others and to take on only the care duties we find worthwhile" (Tronto, 2015, p. 12). Finally, privilege means those who receive the caring work of others can presume they are simply entitled to such care. This makes care less visible: "the existence of such an entitlement permits

[care] to 'run in the background, that is, not to be noticed, discussed or much remarked upon" (Tronto, 2013, p. 104).

I suggest that this is exactly what happens within organizations, for example, in my vignette at the start of this chapter. Care is accepted as an entitlement, especially between levels of hierarchy; it runs in the background, and it is not much remarked upon – even to say thank-you. Of course, one can argue that the job roles in the vignette normalize this transaction; after all, one is the VP, the other is specifically tasked with providing care to the VP. This argument is not entirely wrong. The problem enters not solely because care is expected and provided, but because the care that is provided *is not respected*, and as a result, the person who provides care is less-respected along with it.

Why does this happen? We have seen in the pages of HBR that care shows up as "weak, private and female" (see Chapter 6). Tronto (1993) says this association devalues care: "Since our society treats public accomplishment, rationality, and autonomy as worthy qualities, care is devalued insofar as it embodies their opposites" (Tronto, 1993, p. 117). The absurdity in our devaluation of care, of course, is that all people require care, at different levels at different times in our lives, but generally, *all* of us, *most* of the time. Says Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), "for interdependent beings in more than human entanglements, there has to be some form of care going on somewhere in the substrate of their world for living to be possible" (p. 5). Says Tronto (1993), "caring is intertwined with virtually all aspects of life" (p. 119).

Furthermore, in a society that worships autonomy and self-sufficiency as principal values, those who are seen to *receive* care are, as a result, viewed as needy; we socially construct them as "pitiful because they require help" (Tronto, 1993, p. 174). Since we have constructed care-*receiving* as negative, and yet all people require care, we manufacture denial: "those who are powerful are unwilling to admit their dependence upon those who care for them." This makes care further invisible, unrecognized by those with power who receive it. It also devalues the caregiver: the "disdain of 'others' who do caring (women, slaves, servants) has been virulent in our culture" (Tronto, 1993, p. 174). Tronto says there are several ways people who provide care work are dismissed; "regardless of the mechanism, though, the result is that the others who are thus created are seen as fit only for functional roles, are seen as utterly different from the privileged selves who have dismissed them, and are not thought of as potential equals (p. 175). (This is the essence of the vignette at start of this chapter.)

In a nutshell: although care is needed by all, our humanist, self-reliant culture pushes it out of sight, and down in value. Those with privilege are able to have care performed by others and able to ignore/deny it, which allows them to self-construct as autonomous, strong and independent – and therefore, higher-status. In this self-reproducing formula, those with less privilege pick up more of the care work in society, and then by association are seen as only deserving of lower work. By this mechanism Tronto (1993, 2013, 2015) says our treatment of care perpetuates inequality in society. Or as noted by Fotaki et al. (2020), "care work is often allocated to those in less powerful positions, whose care is instrumentalized to reproduce dominance relations" (p.12).

Tronto's goal is a reconsideration of the role of care in democratic society. Mine is to apply her concept of privileged irresponsibility to organizations, to understand whether it contributes to ongoing inequality within organizational life (the focus of Amis et al., 2020). Using HBR again as a source of insight into the managerial workplace, the next sections identify various forms of privilege, and privileged irresponsibility, as they appear in its pages.

7.3 Privilege Within Organizational Life

Vignette: Niki gets a muffin

It was the last day of a nine-month contract for the young front-desk receptionist. As the senior manager at the small organization, I had planned a surprise farewell so staff could thank her, and I was hurrying out to pick up a cake. The president of the organization called me in to ask for a project update, and I told him I would do it after the surprise party. Learning he would have to wait a few hours, he hissed, "Why are <u>you</u> doing this? You're the <u>VP</u>. Who cares if Niki gets a muffin?"

It was not that this CEO had no love of workplace parties. But he had little respect for the (menial) work of the front desk, and less for a departing worker with no lasting value. His disregard for Niki and her work extended to the significance he gave the celebration: getting "a muffin" was his mark of disdain. Even if Niki's status had warranted celebration, however, the president would not have deemed it appropriate work for me (the vice-president). Such non-essential tasks were to be delegated; his objection was not just about Niki getting a cake, but about me taking care of this lowly task (which I saw as culture-building). For him, status was achieved by not having to do such work, not being seen to do such work, and being able to expect others to do such work for you. It was not the first time he extolled me to behave as "a VP," not as a "manager." Executive class was "higher"; it should be kept slightly mysterious and outside the menial norms and duties of others. (This, at an organization of about 20 people!)

In the pages of HBR, privilege – unearned advantages that benefit those in positions of power at the expense of marginalized others – is constructed in a variety of ways. For example, in "What a star, what a jerk" (2001), a top salesman gets away with bad behaviour because of his excellent sales numbers, a type of privilege-through-performance that causes his boss to overlook his negative affect on others. Similarly, "Alpha" males in positions of leadership who behave badly (don't admit fault, don't listen well, intimidate coworkers) are recommended for executive coaching, rather than reprimand, reassignment, or termination, as other misbehaving employees might be ("Coaching the Alpha male," 2004). They are granted privilege because they fit the rational masculine productivity model promoted in the managerialist bureaucracy, while those who don't fit – even if just as productive – are not (see, for example, "The Nice Guy," 2006, and "Women rising – the unseen barriers," 2013).

Privilege can also come from charisma: "If the individual is intelligent, attractive, and well-endowed physically, his way is made easier" ("The executive neurosis," 1952, p. 40), or gender: "We come from (and exist in) a society where men are leaders and women followers" ("Are women executives people ?" 1965, p. 171). And as presented by Amis et al. (2020), privilege also comes from pre-existing class and social alignment with others inside the bureaucratic system. This is baldly expressed in "Successful Wives of Successful Executives" (1956), where wives are expected to help advance their husbands' careers; the article says wives who are "daughters of the business elite" have "not only a knowledge of what to do and how to do it but an added inheritance of social strength and certainty" (p. 67).

These various forms of privilege certainly help construct some of the instances of privileged irresponsibility I found in HBR. Nonetheless, the primary day-to-day privilege within organizational life comes from one's level in the ranks. This position is defined by title and reporting relationships, and in part by the size and nature of the unit "under" it (department, team, project size, budget, line vs. staff, etc.), and in addition, by the size and social status of the organization itself in society (e.g. multinational vs. local company). For the purposes of this study, I have largely assumed that privilege stems from the "place on the ladder" that individuals occupy, so those "higher up" have more power and privilege – in general – than those "below" who report to them.

7.4 Privilege and Privileged Irresponsibility in HBR

In Chapter 6, I identified various ways in which care shows up in daily organizational life in HBR, including care for the work, for the organization, for superiors, subordinates, and colleagues. Here, I identify the different ways I found that privilege appears in HBR, and that privilege helps render care work unseen and unvalued, ultimately contributing to the subjugation (inequality) of those who provide care (privileged irresponsibility).

7.4.1 "Things Will Take Care of Themselves" Privilege

Jackall (1988) describes the bureaucratic authority system as one where "details are pushed down and credit is pulled up." The official rationale for delegating tasks to subordinates is to permit them autonomy and improve efficiency, but Jackall (1988) says the privilege of being able to delegate allows superiors freedom from "tedious details," and insulates them from pressures such as continual interruption. It also protects their privilege to declare that a mistake has been made, but sidestep responsibility for it (p. 20).

Delegation – the most basic element of bureaucratic "efficiency" – is so entrenched it is hard to understand as a form of privileged irresponsibility (where care is delivered but unacknowledged). Yet it is the inverse of "subordination as care," discussed in the previous chapter (section 6.2.5). While the subordinate commits to maintaining (caring for) the organization for everyone's benefit, the superior need not pay attention to details. Obviously, individual supervisors may be adept at saying thank you or recognizing the work that is done, but because of the privileging inherent in hierarchy, they do not have to. Subordinates are expected to solve problems without running to their boss with "every glitch and hiccup" ("Nobody trusts the boss completely – now what?" 1989, p. 136); managers are able to close their door so they can work uninterrupted, while claiming to be more accessible than their subordinates say they are ("Management men and women: Closed vs. open doors," 1980, p. 57). Managers can push the work of handling a problematic subordinate off to someone else: "I'm sure you can handle her and keep her off other people's backs" ("The change-dazed manager," 1993, p. 26). And they can sidestep touchy subjects they don't want to deal with: "Most managers are inclined to look away from a subordinate's personal problem and hope it will clear itself up" ("Managers and lovers," 1983, p. 149).

When a superior fails to acknowledge the basic work of "taking care of things," they fail to engage in the fourth phase of care, *care-receiving* (Tronto, 1993, 2013), whose attendant moral element is responsiveness. There is a diminishing of relationship, as no feedback is provided about the quality of the care. Of course, nearly every superior is subordinate to someone else, so we see that the structure and practice of bureaucratic hierarchy has a tendency to diminish reciprocal human relations and replace these with the abstracted idea of caring for the organization (see section 6.2.1), with which it is not possible to have a real relationship.

7.4.2 "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" Privilege

This category of privileged irresponsibility is the ability of the superior to simply overlook the challenges faced by a subordinate, to ignore the hardships which they do not face

(Tronto, 1993, p. 121). For example, a 1966 study found that executives were frequently unaware of their subordinates' negative feelings. In the study, middle managers reported frustration about lack of cooperation between managers, ambiguous relations with superiors and unclear paths to success. Meanwhile, from the top executives' point of view, nearly all said their relationships with subordinates were "relatively good to excellent," using statements such as "They do everything that I ask for willingly," and "We talk together frequently and openly" ("Interpersonal barriers to decision making," 1966, p. 91).

Subordinates suppress difficulties because "bosses often give off signals that they want to hear only good news" – showing displeasure when they are told about a problem, and even evaluating more favourably those subordinates who avoid doing so ("Managing your boss," 1980, p. 100). An article entitled "Dear white boss" (2002) plainly describes the privileged irresponsibility of a boss who simply doesn't have to think about the troubles faced by a subordinate:

> Just as members of the royalty in medieval Europe were often shielded from the stark realities outside their castle walls, I believe you are in some ways blind to what is happening outside your office door. I truly believe you don't know how frustrated I often am – how frustrated we African-Americans often are – by the lack of acknowledgment or apparent understanding of how our experience in the workplace differs from yours, and how it affects not just our own morale but the health of the organization overall. Have you noticed that the turnover rate for blacks is significantly higher than it is for our white counterparts? Have you stopped to consider why? (p. 78)

Similarly, an article by the CEO of Deloitte talks about how a high turnover rate of female employees was chronically overlooked by senior executives as "not our problem" but rather society's problem, or the problem of the women themselves – until they launched a major internal project and began to learn what they had been overlooking ("Winning the talent war for women," 2000). In these "out of sight" examples, subordinates care for the organization, the work, and even the superior, while the superior's privilege means they fail to recognize the effort this requires.

7.4.3 "I Did it Myself" Privilege

This type of privileged irresponsibility is when superiors claim that they did more work, or believe they had more influence, than they actually did, the privilege that Jackall (1988) calls "pulling the credit up." It is privileged irresponsibility because it denies the care provided to them by their subordinates, who actually did the work, and helps to maintain the privilege of the person in the superior position as a result.

This can take the form of a "tendency to overclaim credit": judging oneself as having contributed more than others to shared projects, developing an overblown sense of entitlement as a result, and then judging the work of others less fairly ("How unethical are you?" 2003, p. 60). Says another article: "High achievers are, as a rule, very independent and don't like to think they need a lot of help. Even those who have been lucky enough to have good mentors think they've won them by being excellent contributors" ("The paradox of excellence," 2011, p. 122). This can even take the form of stealing ideas from lower ranks: "Middle managers too often have seen their good ideas fed to senior management by … consultants, perhaps with more polish and better packaging. … Even if those ideas are pursued … the middle managers don't get any credit ("In praise of middle managers," 2001, p. 76). Says Jackall (1988): "authority provides a license to steal ideas, even in front of those who originated them" (p. 21). The ongoing care work of those lower in the hierarchy is rendered invisible by the "I did it myself" privilege.

7.4.4 "Push the Dirty Work to Someone Else" Privilege

This form of privilege has to do with being able to sidestep care work that is particularly odious, tedious or difficult. In the case study "What a star, what a jerk," (2001), a new executive learns how one of her direct reports (Caroline) has been performing a "smoothing-over" role to keep work on track around an abrasive but highly productive team member, by listening to his tirades, calming him down, and calming other teammates he would attack or offend. The new executive comments, "I gather that my predecessor completely ignored the whole situation – in part because Caroline kept it under control" (p. 40). This is a clear-cut situation of privileged irresponsibility: leaving messy care work to a subordinate, sidestepping the effort, relationship and emotion that such situations can demand.

McMurray and Ward (2014) explore emotional labour as a new category of "dirty work," a distinction that is useful to discuss here. Dirtiness is a social construction related to something that offends against a preferred order, through elements that might be physical (e.g., the bloodiness of meat-cutting), social (e.g., the subservience of shoe-shining), or moral (e.g., the negative associations around sex work). Noting that emotions threaten to "taint or contaminate the clean rational logic of efficiency" in the modernist organization, McMurray and Ward propose that "emotions might be positioned as dirt" (pp. 1127-1128). Dirty work is seen as deleterious, done by those who have few other options and therefore are low on social and organizational hierarchies (p. 1126). Those who engage in it become tainted by association.

This can describe care work, with its association with physically messy (in professions such as nursing or childcare), subservient (meeting needs of others), and emotional factors, and helps explain, by corollary, its low status. The idea that dealing with some types of emotion is “dirty” is evident throughout HBR. As discussed previously, such work is not within rational control, it can upset bureaucratic plans and targets by its unpredictability, and it is associated with the “lowly” realm of women, home, and care (see Section 5.3.3: Emotion). Small wonder, then, that in the example above, the effort to deal with a difficult colleague might be “completely ignored” by an executive, leaving it to someone else to deal with. This is “pushing the dirty work to someone else” privilege. The privileged one benefits from the other’s care effort, but overlooks it as lowly and unimportant due to its lack of inclusion in the preferred order.

We can probably assume that, as a result of the “taint” of taking on this type of work, Caroline will be seen as less central to the core work of the team and be less likely to be chosen for advancement. This is the challenge often faced by women who get asked to do “office housework” such as planning conferences and parties, or cleaning up messes, rather than those jobs that are “glamourous,” i.e., central to the profits of the organization (“Hacking tech’s diversity problem,” 2014). It also explains the lament of a new executive in an HBR case when she has to deal with Caroline’s unglamourous eventual meltdown: “[In this new job], I imagined focusing on numbers, products, customers – on *building* something. Instead, I feel as if people issues – stupid little blowups like this – take up most of my time” (“What a star, what a jerk,” 2001, p. 40). The hierarchy of valued work is clear. Indeed, “it would be quite a departure from business life as we know it for executives to show gratitude to those who practice emotional caretaking at work” (“The toxic handler, organizational hero – and casualty,” 1999, p. 103).

Other “dirty” organizational work entails possible social or moral taint. Again, those in positions of organizational privilege can sidestep its risk, as in these situations:

> … when, in order to test the waters, a superior asks a subordinate to advocate a controversial position that the superior has yet to support publicly, when a subordinate is assigned the task of defending an unpopular cause…. Such situations abound in the day-to-day life of organizations…. events like these place the subordinate at a disadvantage (“The subordinate’s predicament,” 1979, pp. 135-136).

As with other forms of care work, the association of these tasks with being lower on the hierarchy can carry the self-perpetuating concept of “taint” – an undesired quality that reduces prestige for the individual who does the work.

7.4.5 “I Don’t Need You” Privilege

We have already seen how “being needy” runs counter to the ideal of the independent, self-sufficient, rational manager (Section 5.3.3: Weakness). Even though every manager is dependent upon those below them to do work and meet goals (“Care for the work, care for the organization,” section 6.2.1), stories in HBR illuminate how they will try to deny this need (privileged irresponsibility). For example, the 1970s study of executives and emotions found that many feared rejection if they expressed what they needed, and so they learned to “play it cool,” as explained by one interviewee: “You act out certain games or rituals to provoke the desired reaction in the other and have your needs satisfied without having to ask for anything” (“Executives as human beings,” 1972, p. 65). Said another: “At work one gets accustomed not to express dependence and one does the same at home. As a matter of fact, at work I never think in terms of asking for help or expressing my needs but rather in terms of making good use of the available human resources" (p. 64).

Not asking for help, of course, means you do not need to acknowledge when it is given, or provide appreciation: "Alphas feel uncomfortable both giving and receiving praise, and they are adamant about not appearing soft. … As a result, about 80% of the conversations an alpha leader has with his team will contain critical comments" ("Coaching the alpha male," 2004, p. 66). Not needing to give positive feedback (or presumably, thanks) is a form of privilege, allowing the manager to downgrade the care efforts of those around them.

7.4.6 "Defer to my Power" Privilege

Supportive, affirming behaviour can be a form of care, as it helps an individual conquer doubts and perform at their best. HBR articles describe subordinates providing this sort of supportive care, and how those in privileged positions use their power to compel it, even if they don't realize they do:

> Managers … may not see the ways in which they signal to subordinates demands for excessively deferential behavior. … In the superior role, most managers say that they are more concerned about their subordinates' performance than with obedience for its own sake. … Despite the overt message they send, however … many managers communicate subtly to subordinates that obedience and deference are just as important, if not more so. This is usually subconscious on the managers' part. ("The manager: Master and servant of power," 1986, p. 80).

Similarly: "Many [superiors] seem unaware of the extent to which they confuse loyalty with agreement and obedience. They also seem to underestimate the difficulty subordinates have in being honest about their own problems or weaknesses with people who have so much influence on their careers (p. 79).

Having privilege, but not recognizing its impact on subordinates, is a form of privilege that distorts relationships and care. As shown above, superiors can compel the provision of caring behaviours which serve to reinforce their power, without recognizing that they are wielding power. Another article paints a picture of MBA students, new entrants to positions of authority who have not yet learned to be subtle in using it: “They always came in acting like they owned the world. Let’s just say they tended to be pretty arrogant and heavy-handed with the secretaries and clerical workers … They offended them so much that they couldn’t concentrate on their work” (“The toxic handler, organizational hero – and casualty,” 1999, p. 99).

Research shows that people who are given power “(1) become more focused on their own needs and wants; (2) become less focused on others’ needs, wants, and actions; and (3) act as if written and unwritten rules that others are expected to follow don’t apply to them” (“How to be a good boss in a bad economy,” 2009, p. 44). Given that needs – noticing them and ensuring they are met – form the basis of care, this seems a simple recipe for ensuring that those in positions of higher power become more interested in receiving care, less aware of others’ care needs, and less likely to pay attention to social mores about taking care of one another.

There is a self-reinforcing aspect to the third point as well: since powerful people can afford to ignore social convention, the effect (borne out by research), is that “the practice of flouting rules and violating norms actually creates power, as long as the culprit gets away with the behavior” (“Power, capriciousness, and consequences, 2013, p. 36). In the case of care, expecting deference while not demonstrating care for others would be a logical result. Subtle incivility – such as “the manager who sends e-mails during a presentation, or the boss who "teases" direct reports in ways that sting ("The price of incivility," 2013, p. 116), or executive leaders who appear "aloof and oblivious to the team's good work" ("Inner work life," 2007, p. 77) – amounts to a lack of care, even when superiors are not considered to be the worst "boss from hell." Power *over*, a central feature of bureaucratic organizational life, corrupts care.

7.4.7 Care at Home Supports the Organization

A final type of privilege is that of the public realm of the organization, over the private realm of home. Care provided at home supports the career of those who go to work in the organization, and therefore, the organization itself. The unseen care at home supports the efficiency discourse of the unencumbered worker, who appears at work fully ready and available to the organization, without constraint. In an excerpt from 1956, this is clearly stated:

> At her best, the wife provides her husband with a base of operations that gives the kind of support he finds essential in advancing his career. The least she must do is see that the activities of the household do not interfere with his work. She must be prepared to take on the major task of rearing the children. She must not demand too much of her husband's time or interest. ("Successful wives of successful executives," 1956, p. 65)

Not only does the wife take care of the base of operations, a "successful" wife will engage in community activities, ensuring she meets the right people, keeps up with the latest fashions and topics, and entertains business contacts in the home, all to ensure her husband is well-connected and polished, able to "climb." The article describes other "types" of wives, who are not interested in this additional support work. Consider:

> "We found a number of business leaders who seem quite reconciled to the negative roles played by their wives ["negative" means they *only* took care of the children and home]. …

> Such men seem to be saying, 'Although she doesn't help much, I'm not complaining. *I can get there myself*.'" (p. 67, emphasis added)

Here, presented by the two male authors of the piece, is a clear illustration of privileged irresponsibility: an organization man (and through him, the organization itself) receiving significant support and care, without acknowledging it. The wife's daily home-making labour is pushed so far out of the realm of seen and valued contribution that the husband is described as "doing it myself."

Jump forward to 2007, when an expert commentator is opining on the case study featuring Cheryl, the time-strapped rising executive who is weighing whether to spend more time with her daughter rather than seek a promotion. This advisor suggests that Cheryl start her own company. However, she warns Cheryl will need support:

> John [Cheryl's husband] has left domestic operations to Cheryl while he goes about pursuing his own career. He will have to be willing to eat more takeout dinners. He will have to be understanding when Cheryl dedicates some of her nights and weekends to her business instead of to him. But, most important, he will need to be Cheryl's source of encouragement when her business goes through its ups and downs. ("Off-ramp – or dead end?" 2007, p. 65)

The idea that people at home provide encouragement makes sense; the "successful" wives in 1956 were recognized for this as well. But it is telling that in 2007, the key concessions an expert commentator (a woman at that) expects of this husband is that he may have to accept less of his wife's time dedicated to him, and may have to "eat more takeout," instead of, presumably, having her there to cook for him. Note that there is no expectation that he do more cooking or provide more care into the household himself, only that he cope with her "dedicating" less.

Despite other articles in HBR about men taking time off to look after children and men seeking new versions of success, even in the 2000s the trope is persistent: care at home comes from a wife.

Regardless of the gender of the individual who provides the care, it continues to be clear that care provided at home supports careers – the privileged irresponsibility of the organization continues to depend upon consistent out-of-sight management of messy human lives beyond the company's walls: "Life sometimes takes over, whether it's a parent's dementia or a teenager's car accident. But many of the executives we've studied – men and women alike – have sustained their momentum during such challenges while staying connected to their families. ("Manage your work, manage your life," 2014, p. 60). There is no questioning here of whether "sustaining career momentum" makes sense when your teenager is in hospital or your entire family is experiencing the slow grief of dementia, nor does the author question whether the feeble triumph of "staying connected" to family during a time of trouble is sufficient when spending real time and doing hands-on caregiving might be what was actually needed. Clearly, somebody was deeply implicated in the care required in these situations, and it was likely not the person at the centre of the HBR story. Care provided outside the organization continues to support the organization.

7.5 Passes Out of Responsibility

Above are the seven main categories of organizational privilege and privileged irresponsibility that I identified through articles in HBR. In this section, I take up a related concept, what Tronto (2013, 2015) calls "getting a pass out of responsibility." These passes describe the excuses given by people or groups with privilege to explain why they "are already doing their fair share of caring – even when they really aren't" (Tronto, 2015, p. 29). Tronto and subsequent scholars describe six different forms of "passes"[1]:

- The "protection pass": those who perform protection, a masculine-gendered type of "non-caring" care (e.g., police and military), are then not expected to perform other types of "feminine gendered" care. Keeping the two separate helps maintain the hierarchy of men above women.
- The "production pass": "privileged groups are involved in the important work of acquiring economic resources" (Zembylas et. al., 2014, p. 206). The (masculine) "breadwinner" employed for pay outside the home might expect to be exempted from (feminine) "caregiver" work done in the home; "a citizen is one who can present himself as ready to work, unencumbered by household responsibilities" (Tronto 2013 p. 81).
- The "caring for my own" pass: because I care for my own close relatives, I am doing all the care that is required of me. As Tronto (2015, p. 31-32) notes, this can result in unequal care, or worse, competitive care (as in competitive parenting, see Section 6.2.3). Not seeing the needs of those beyond one's home sphere can also result in an "epistemology of ignorance" about whose needs are being met (Tronto, 2005, p. 136).
- The "personal responsibility" pass: this neoliberal view says we all have the same opportunities to take care or not; we are all "personally responsible for the circumstances in which we find ourselves and … it is our own responsibility to care for our well-being and that of our children and our communities" (Zembylas et al., 2014, p. 207). This view does not take into account the impact of historical inequalities.

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[1] This list is compiled in part from Tronto (2013, Chapter 3), and in part from summaries by Zembylas, Bozalek, and Shefer (2014, pp. 206-207) and Bozalek and Zembylas (2023, pp. 43-48) except where otherwise noted.

- The “charity” pass: fulfilling one’s caring responsibilities by giving to charities of one’s choice; then there is no more need to more collectively about others’ needs for care (Tronto, 2013, p. 118). This view believes that forcing people to join into care responsibilities with others “would be a moral harm” (Zembylas et al., 2014, p. 207).
- The “I’m no good at caring” pass (Tronto, 2015): This is based on the gendered expectation that women care “naturally” and that care mostly occurs in the family; even men engaged in care tend to believe women are better at it. Tronto points out that caring requires practice, and everyone can get better at it (p. 30).

While Tronto applied her thinking to considerations of democratic society, these “passes” can be seen within organizations too. This is shown in Table 7.1, where I illustrate the way in which Tronto’s societal passes out of responsibility can show up within organizations, reframed through the organizational myths / managerialist discourses of efficiency and meritocracy. On the left, we have Tronto’s (2013, 2015) passes out of responsibility. On the right, each type of “pass” is rescripted to an organizational setting.

Table 7.1

Passes Out of Responsibility Through a Managerialist Lens

Privileged irresponsibility within the organization: Identifying “passes out of responsibility” as produced/understood through organizational myths (Amis et al., 2020)	
Passes out of responsibility for care (Tronto, 2013, 2015)	Organizational scripts based on *efficiency*, *meritocracy*
Protection pass: performing masculine “non-caring” care is sufficient	• The managerial role is rational, controlled, non-emotional. By prioritizing what is efficient and rational, I protect the interests of the organization. • Delegation is efficient. Activities that are not efficient are not my responsibility; I can “push down” tedious details (section 7.4.1). • Where care may be required from the organization, it is handled via the specialized HR department.

Privileged irresponsibility within the organization: Identifying "passes out of responsibility" as produced/understood through organizational myths (Amis et al., 2020)	
Passes out of responsibility for care (Tronto, 2013, 2015)	Organizational scripts based on *efficiency*, *meritocracy*
Production pass: securing resources exempts from caring duties	• Managers secure opportunities and resources for the team and do not have to take care of minor needs, which are "out of sight, out of mind" (section 7.4.2) • People who work hard will meet their own needs.
Caring for my own: caring duties are limited by the bounds of my own family	• Care is a private matter that I do in my family. My work colleagues also handle care away from work, in their families. Therefore, care is not something we do in the workplace. • If I do discuss my private care duties, I only share "heroic" care that proves my strength as a manager (see section 2.4.3).
Personal responsibility: everyone has the same opportunities to take care - those who require care should have taken opportunities to look after themselves	• Meritocracy means what comes to you is your due, and by corollary, what is due to you is a function of your competence (based on your merit, not your needs). • I am not "needy," I do not require care. If you are "needy" you have less merit.
Charity: I choose where I care; my support of charity is adequate.	• Specialized organizations (and departments within organizations) produce care and charity; this is the efficient way to handle needs. • Organizations that produce care and charity can be evaluated based on efficiency (e.g., management of "overhead" costs).
I'm not good at care: others (especially female) should perform care	• My organizational status stems from my competence (merit), which is based on my rational, autonomous capabilities (strength). Providing care does not factor in this evaluation. • Care is provided by others who are naturally better at handling tedious, odious, or difficult tasks (see section 7.4.4). Since that work is less efficient/rational, they don't warrant significant organizational status.

Several specific examples of passes out of responsibility emerge from the HBR articles. Consider several studies that identified "benevolent sexism – the view that women are inherently in need of protection and special consideration" as a problem for women's advancement ("Women in the workplace, a research roundup," 2013, p. 89). One study found women received more positive comments than male peers, but fewer opportunities for partnership. Another reported women receiving less criticism, but also fewer challenging assignments than male peers.

In these cases, the discursive "protection" of women from facing perceived difficulty aligned with a failure to take responsibility for women's opportunities and development.

Another example is the traditional "production pass," still evident in 2014, of men using the cultural narrative of the good provider to justify minimal time spent in caregiving work at home:

> Several male executives who admitted to spending inadequate time with their families consider absence an acceptable price for providing their children with opportunities they themselves never had. … Even the men who pride themselves on having achieved some degree of balance between work and other realms of their lives measure themselves against a traditional male ideal. "The 10 minutes I give my kids at night is one million times greater than spending that 10 minutes at work," one interviewee said. It's difficult to imagine a woman congratulating herself for spending 10 minutes a day with her children, but a man may consider the same behavior exemplary. ("Manage your work, manage your life," 2014, p. 61)

Tronto (2013) connects privileged irresponsibility and passes out of responsibility on a political level to neoliberal economics that promotes the ideal of autonomous subjects who care for themselves. On an organizational level, it is easy to see how managerialist discourses similarly enable the denial of care, given the ideal of an autonomous, rational, unencumbered worker efficiently advancing on a meritocratic basis. This brings me to my final research question.

7.6 Inequality in Organizations – The Effect of Privileged Irresponsibility

The fourth question this thesis asks is, "How does the manifestation and recognition of care within organizations relate to the reproduction of (economic) inequality in organizations?" The answer lies in the treatment of care.

The articles in HBR demonstrate that the managerialist discourses of efficiency and meritocracy are solidly in place in mainstream business. They also indicate that people in organizations provide care, to superiors, subordinates, the organization, colleagues. Since managerial discourses favour attributes such as strength, autonomy, and independence, however, care becomes marginalized, associated as it is with attributes such as emotion, weakness, and dependence. Those with privilege (higher in the hierarchy) distance themselves from care, denying that they receive it (privileged irresponsibility) and rationalizing why they don't need to take responsibility for it (passes out of responsibility).

This creates a powerful block against care being recognized and valued, and it puts the people who provide care at a disadvantage. Some of the work they do is seen as menial and unimportant; sometimes it isn't seen at all. Summarizing Tronto, Zembylas et. al. (2014) note: "privileged irresponsibility allows those who benefit from being in superior positions in a hierarchical system to remain oblivious about the part they play themselves in maintaining the system. … Those who are privileged will continue to rationalise their position by *maintaining that everybody is benefiting from it*" (p. 207, emphasis added). This aligns with the findings of Amis et al. (2020), who show how deeply held in managerial culture is the belief that efficiency and meritocracy improve organizational function and deliver equitable opportunities – despite entrenched economic inequality within organizations.

This exploration fulfils my interest, after reading Amis et al. (2020), in determining whether the way we treat care in organizations creates inequities within organizational life. In multiple workplaces, it has been disturbing to me to observe that sometimes the things that make us most human – the caring ability for compassion, collaboration, community – can work against those who manifest them most visibly. Care is a necessity, but it is also a gift. In many workplaces, it may be compelled as routine activities in the job description, but it still requires the opening of oneself – Nodding's (1984) engrossment or Tronto's (1993) attentiveness – to assess and understand the needs of another, and act on them. It requires that we operate across personal borders, that we refuse the independent, autonomous, unencumbered and non-relational organizational self. In my opinion, this makes us more human. And yet, within the managerialist realm of the organization, we can see unfortunately that the treatment of care ''functions ideologically to maintain privilege, but this function is disguised'' (Tronto, 1993, p. 21).

This concludes my review, through Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of managerialism, care, and privileged irresponsibility found in *Harvard Business Review.* In the next chapter, I offer concluding discussion and comments.

Chapter 8: Discussion – Care and Inequality in Organizations

Vignette: Don't learn to fix the photocopier

Jackie, my younger female colleague, was frustrated. In her work team, the small details for shared projects such as public events always fell to her: anticipating problems, liaising with the venue hosts, showing up early, ensuring catering and cleanup, checking the fine print. She felt her (all-male) teammates depended on this work but didn't value or recognize it. She felt stuck: if she didn't do the work, the projects wouldn't be as good. But having it taken for granted felt unequal.

The only advice I could offer surprised me as I heard it come out of my mouth. "Whatever you do," I said, "don't learn to fix the photocopier." I had observed many times that being the go-to helper in moments of administrative stress would gain you short-term appreciation, but seemingly deaden your prospects beyond. The selfless hero(ine) who cared enough to drop her own work and do menial but necessary tasks needed by someone else would somehow become less associated with climbing the organizational ladder, and more associated with a certain static level of worker. Those whose work was done behind closed doors, who were always mysteriously too busy to help out in the moment – those people gained importance, and "higher" titles with better pay. No one would ever think to ask them to help with the photocopier. Similarly, it was unwise to be seen too often cleaning the staff kitchen, taking the lead on planning a social outing, or helping everyone remember a colleague's birthday. Rarely did the person who was seen to be taking care of these things hold much official status, and the more they took care of these things, the less likely they were to gain it. I also observed that those who demonstrated this type of care were disproportionately female, in low-level administrative roles.

This is why you had to distance yourself: you would join the caste if you were seen to be doing that work, and once you were located there, it was hard to break out.

8.1 Introduction

At the outset of this study, I posed four questions. The first, “What managerialist discourses does *Harvard Business Review* (HBR) reproduce?” was answered in Chapter 5, where I explored elements of managerialist discourse and assessed how they represent a restrictive force, *potestas,* at work within the organization. My second question asked, “Where does care manifest within organizational life and work? and “What types of care are recognized (valued) vs. types of care that are not?” This was answered in Chapter 6, where I surfaced a variety of types of care from HBR, and considered how negative and positive forms of power, *potestas* and *potentia,* affect them. My third and fourth questions were “How do managerialist discourses help produce privileged irresponsibility (lack of recognition for care) in organizational life?” and “How does the manifestation and recognition of care within organizations relate to the reproduction of (economic) inequality in organizations? These were answered in Chapter 7, where I found and named various forms of privileged irresponsibility in my HBR sample, as well as ways that different “passes out of responsibility,” or excuses for not engaging in care, are produced within managerialist discourses.

In this chapter, I return to my posthuman nested onto-epistemological framing to consider how we view care. I make several other observations including the deskilling of care, the instrumentalization of care, the prospects for caring organizations, and more. I conclude with my contributions, the limitations of this study and opportunities for future research, and some final comments.

8.2 Posthumanism: A Broader Lens for Care

The ontological congruence and general compatibility between care ethics and posthumanist concepts has attracted a variety of theorizing over the past few years (see, for example Bozalek, Zembylas, & Tronto, 2020; Carstens, 2020; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, 2017). This has drawn care ethics discussion from its ethical/political home (for example Engster & Hamington, 2015; Hamington, 2004; Held, 2006; Tronto, 2013, 2015, 2018) towards posthumanist questions of how to cope with environmental crises of the Anthropocene, rising social unrest, right-wing backlash, and more (Rogowska-Stangret, 2020). I find this shift, and the project to expand care ethics to a more fundamental and immanent position, urgent and deeply compelling, agreeing with Rogowska-Stangret (2020):

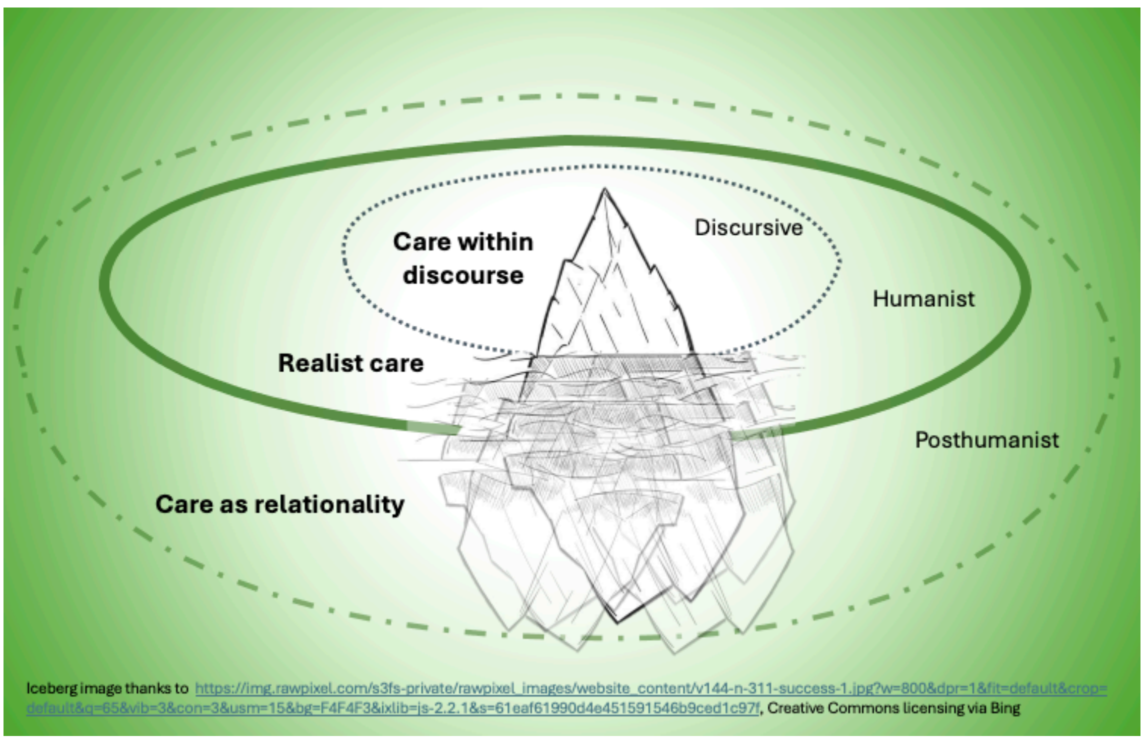
> The question "why care at all?" is an important question that orientates my understanding of ethics as always already a caring. "Why care at all?" is a challenge that does not presuppose any kind of ethics nor any particular understanding of care. By questioning the need for caring at all, it questions any form of engagement in life as such. Thus, one can conceptualize ethics (as caring) as a *conditio sine qua non* of any engagement in life, theorizing, teaching, researching, questioning, making connections, responding, creating boundaries and so on. Care here is not a specific ethical concept; it is a very condition of any ethics, that is, any engagement in the world. (Rogowska-Stangret, 2020, p. 20)

This shift helps unleash care from the constraints of postmodern and poststructuralist theorizing, which, despite their important critiques, remain rooted in a humanist ontology that does not place its lens wide enough for my comfort. I believe a relational ontology offers the broader view we need to understand the neoliberal colonial capitalist project in which we are ensnared, and how it departs so harshly from a world where everyone can "live as well as possible." Without a posthuman lens, I fear we only see far enough to rearrange the deck chairs on the proverbial sinking ship.

In Chapter 3, I introduced my "nested onto-epistemology" as a way to situate humanist theorizing – both constructivist and realist – as embedded within a posthumanist landscape. I then used an iceberg metaphor to describe how our view of care is restricted when we study it only within the realm of human discourse – see Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1 (3.5)

Limited Visibility of Care Within Different Onto-Epistemological Levels

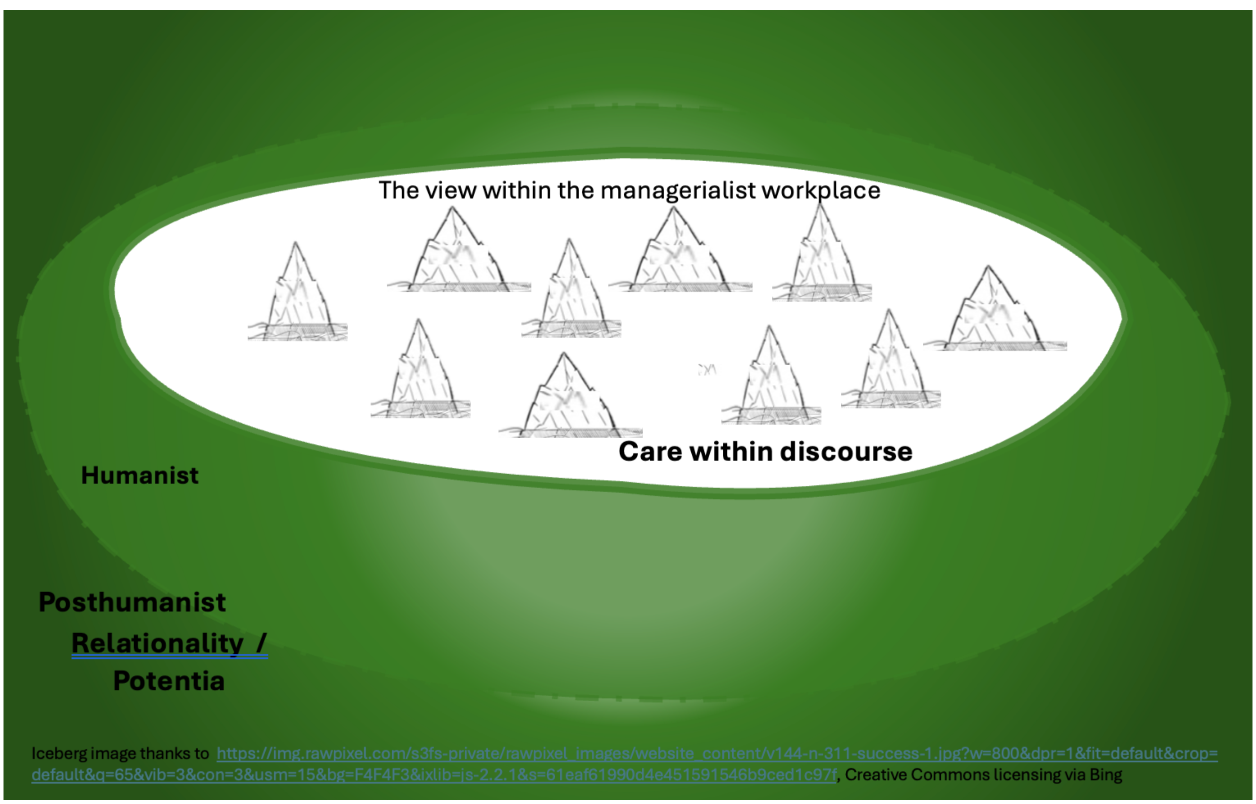


My point is that the radical interconnectedness of care is not evident when we consider it only as a transaction or a service, "care-giving" and "care-receiving" – there is much more below the surface (although my computer illustration skills are too limited to capture the image well). I theorized that discourses act as *potestas* – restrictive power or entrapment (Braidotti, 2019) – that limit our understanding of care.

In Figure 8.2, I offer an additional depiction. This figure suggests our experience of care when we focus only on our humanist discursive realm. We don't perceive the larger part of care; we understand only the "tip of the iceberg," and we therefore don't even perceive our whole selves. Each person may experience care events, as a caregiver, or a care-receiver, getting needs met or helping meet someone else's needs. But these are singular experiences. We are not aware of what we are missing – care as the "relational power of the world to reconfigure itself, to negotiate, to think, to engage, to respond" (Rogowska-Stangret, 2020, p. 23).

Figure 8.2

Tip of the Iceberg: Self and Relationality Restricted by (Managerial) Discourse



Again, my computer illustration skills are basic, but in this illustration the only field fully visible is the landscape of discourse. We are so caught up in our humanist discursive world that we are little aware of the posthuman-level interconnectedness of care, or its experience as *potentia* – empowerment, an increase in relational capacity. This diminishes the concept of care, and truncates our own subjectivity.

Understanding care as immanent, powerful, and empowering offers us a basis for richer theorizing, and an antidote to the way care has been banished to the private home. When we view ourselves as radically connected through care, we are larger than just the tips of individual icebergs. I think such a anti-reductionist view might help us step towards new thinking and break from the "ontology of separation" (Escobar & Maffei, 2022) that has placed us at odds with so many human and non-human "others" upon whom we depend.

8.3 Observations and Discussion

8.3.1 The Deskilling of Care, or, Who We Become When Care Becomes Invisible

Vignette: Bill plays solitaire

Bill was an older announcer who read the hourly radio newscast. In our multi-union environment, Bill's only task was to deliver content on air (not to write it). In the newsroom, this took about 10 minutes each hour. The rest of the time he sat with his tall frame slumped in a chair, resigned and waiting, playing solitaire on his computer. As a newcomer to the newsroom, youthful and engaged in my opportunities, I found the atmosphere around him heavy with despair, and I tended to avoid him.

Later I learned that Bill had been the host of a province-wide daily morning talk show, a well-loved on-air personality, the kind people wrote letters to and whose hokey jokes they *laughed over with friends. But one week at the end of his Friday shift, his manager told him he was reassigned to the newsroom, effective Monday. No advance notice, no chance to wrap up, to "say goodbye" to fans, to be recognized and celebrated on-air. As far as I know, the manager followed proper union and HR protocols in redirecting this "human resource," but it appeared they didn't follow rules of common kindness or care. The sadness that emanated from Bill was a by-product of the management-union structure – contested arenas of work, limitations due to contracts, formal and depersonalized job roles – and the management practice he had experienced. It was not, I believe, how you would choose – or be able – to treat someone outside of that organizational world.*

As outlined in Chapter 2, Braverman (1974) describes how the managerialist drive for efficiency and control led to the division of the labour process into component elements, split between managers and workers. In addition to tangible production work (e.g., the series of tasks required to assemble a car), I believe that care – a basic element of community life – also became divided. Those components of care that help maintain a productive workforce (e.g., health benefits, sick days, training for upgrading, etc.) have been formalized for delivery through the processes of human resources management (HRM). By comparison, aspects of care that require connection, emotional engagement and individualized response have been perceived as inefficient and therefore unnecessary, and have not been located in public life, as we have seen in earlier chapters. Over time, this has helped render these aspects of human interaction unrecognized and unvalued, either present but invisible, or just completely absent. So Bill was treated acceptably as a human resource, but without care or empathy as a human being.

Braverman's criticism of this Taylorist division of labour was that it led to *deskilling*: that as management monopolized the knowledge about work, task workers were progressively left with the "lowest" levels of work, which entailed reduced skill, increased monotony, and less pay. I see a slightly different outcome of this division in the case of care. While applications of Taylor's task-management prescriptions have arguably softened or become less suitable in the much-changed industries of today, the discursive cultural expectation within bureaucracy continues to be one where managers *know* the work and workers *execute.* Given the invalidation of certain work, such as significant components of care, it has become invisible (unknown), and therefore, not assigned for workers to execute. In this case, the deskilling effect comes from the sidelining or suppression of this work. Since we often do not recognize or acknowledge care (privileged irresponsibility), we perpetuate a situation of apparent autonomy; we do not present, or see in each other, our whole selves. We deskill the workplace of its potential life as a community of mutually-supportive, emotionally intact, caring people; we limit interactions and relationships to the purpose of the organization.

In *The Managed Heart,* Arlie Hochschild (1983) describes how the rise of standardized procedures for emotional labour (for example, instructions for flight attendants about how to employ a "sincere smile" when serving people) have resulted in deskilling: "the overall definition of the [emotional labour] task is more rigid than it once was, and the worker's field of choice about what to do is greatly narrowed. Within the boundaries of the job, more and more actual subtasks are specified. ... deskilling is the outcome of specialization and standardization" (p. 120). Similarly, the instrumentalized care that is provided within organizational life via HR policies and procedures leaves those who deliver it less room to manifest fully-rounded, relationally-intact care; the "mind" of the work moves up the hierarchy, leaving the work and workers devalued (Braverman, 1975). Hochschild says there is a cost to this, particularly for those further up the ladder who are deeply invested in the organization:

> Here years of training and experience, mixed with a daily carrot-and-stick discipline, conspire to push corporate feeling rules further and further away from self-awareness. Eventually these rules about how to see things and how to feel about them come to seem "natural," a part of one's personality. The longer the employment and the more rewarding the work in terms of interest, power, and pay, the truer this becomes. (p. 155)

I wonder if the supervisor who chose one day of bereavement leave (out of a restricted option of just three), or the VP who was angry at being asked about the possibility to provide for a family (which did not fit the compensation rules) might have understood relationships and care differently if their roles had not been deskilled of the actual experience of care. (See Sections 6.2.6 and 6.2.3 for those vignettes.) Meanwhile, multiple HBR articles talked about the importance of subordinates "managing up," through the use of flattery, not rocking the boat, suppressing negative reactions when being given direction, putting up with temper tantrums and periods of high emotion, and accepting whatever friendship a manager offers (or not). These are important for the immediate goal of getting the job done, and also for maximizing personal prospects for advancement. Other articles also make it clear that subordinates should not expect much attention in return from their boss; the onus for a good working relationship is theirs to bear. Human interactions and relations are structured by hierarchical status, and the message in HBR is that it is most important to manage emotions and relations "upwards," which as Hochschild says above, must come to feel natural over time.

Hochschild (1983) warns of negative long-term effects of being estranged from our feelings, when a worker has been trained "how to imagine and thus how to feel" (p. 49).

Similarly, Ferguson (1984) says humans are "pliant raw material" that can be damaged cognitively and affectively by repressive bureaucratic power; it causes them to be "less responsive to themselves and their environment, more restricted in the scope of their actions, more cautious in their aspirations and rigidly narrow in their cognitive structures; [it renders] people less than they could otherwise have been" (Spence, 1978, quoted on p. 90). The people who enacted the policies that left Bill playing solitaire had become emotionally deskilled, I would argue, less than they otherwise could have been. As HBR would indicate, they were probably more concerned with managing up, than with caring well.

8.3.2 The Instrumentalization of Care, or, Are We Learning to Only Care "Enough"?

As noted above, the division of labour has helped solidify the idea that official "care" in the workplace is that which is provided to workers through organizational (HR) policy delivered as instructed by management personnel. Such care is developed within cost-benefit parameters aimed at maintaining a productive workforce. Examples include the suggestions seen in Section 5.3.1 that helping employees with asthma might yield a better ROI than putting those dollars into a new phone system ("Presenteeism: At work – but out of it," 2004, p. 58), or supporting working parents for the purpose of coping with labour shortages. Such instrumentalized managerialist care holds an inherent duplicity of motive: it purports to meet needs, but only to a self-interested point. This duplicity blurs the lines between what Rosen (1988) calls "moral relations" which are "engaged in as ends in themselves" and "instrumental means-ends relations," of which workplace relations are typical. In his ethnographic analysis of a corporate Christmas party, Rosen discusses how this blurring serves to reproduce and legitimize organizational forms of control, by institutionalizing activity (in his case, "party") that normally falls outside organizational interactions. And even if organizational care is motivated by the best of intentions, as Tronto (1993) notes, "Often in bureaucracies those who determine how needs will be met are far away from the actual care-giving and care-receiving, and they may well not provide very good care as a result" (p. 109).

Keeping this in mind, I return to my comment at the opening of Chapter 1, that people come to believe in what they do (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). I suggest that our multi-generational experience of workplace "care" (merely five or six generations long), has created a collective acceptance that such calculations – generalized and self-serving (for the organization) – are acceptable, or at least, are the best that can be expected. In the same way that Amis et al. (2020) say that inequality produced within organizational life affects life outside the organization, I suggest that this experience of limited and profit-oriented care within organizations may colour our expectations of how we provide and receive care outside of organizational life as well. Is it "enough," for example, to provide a shelter for people without homes only when the temperature goes so low that the cost (financial and moral) of potential deaths outweighs the cost of providing the space? Our "training" within organizational life, our increased tolerance for hollowed-out care, may poorly prepare us to take up Tronto's (2013) call for democracy based on a commitment to shared responsibilities for care.

Noddings (2013) talks about the relational mode that is at the heart of human existence, essential to living fully as a person (p. 35). She does allow that instrumental thinking can enhance caring, since reasoning powers help determine how best to provide care, as long as we "keep our objective thinking tied to a relational stake at the heart of caring." If we fail to do this, she warns:

> we can climb into clouds of abstraction, moving rapidly away from the caring situation into a domain of objective and impersonal problems where we are free to impose structure as we will. If I do not turn away from my abstractions, I lose the one cared-for. Indeed, I lose myself as one-caring, for I now care about a problem instead of a person. (p. 36)

I suspect my readers may all be able to think of a time within organizational life when they found themselves coping with organizational "care" policies that objectify them as a problem, instead of a person – or where they find themselves "performing care" by (for example) engaging in flattery to manage upwards. Says Liedtka (1996), "Caring, in its ethical sense, cannot be grafted onto business as usual. Caring is difficult in today's traditional rule-based hierarchies because they are not designed to foster care" (p. 192). While Tronto seeks to compel care into the centre of democracy, I believe the challenge facing organizational scholars and practitioners is to seek ways to bring true care – both the imperative to care-give and the experience of being cared-for – back into the organizations where we spend so much time, and which therefore mould our experiences, expectations, and practices.

8.3.3 The Logic of Oppression, or, If We Don't Care About Care, Our Leaders Won't Either

This research has demonstrated that privileged irresponsibility helps to maintain those in power who overlook and undervalue care. When coupled with the research findings of Amis et al. (2020) that meritocracy is a myth, rather than (as widely believed) a system that equitably rewards those most competent, the advancement of those who denigrate care is even more problematic. Since organizational systems that purport to advance the meritorious are ineffective and largely symbolic (Amis et al., 2020, p. 19), those who rise to the top have been therefore evaluated on other, discursive, bases. We have seen in various HBR articles in previous chapters what those bases include: the presentation of a managerial persona that maintains the image of strength, control, and autonomy, to the detriment of relationship, interdependence and humility. This bodes poorly for our quest for leaders who are able to develop and inspire healthy human collectives. Indeed, the rise of Donald Trump would seem to be an outstanding example.

The denial of care is more consequential than just the overlooking of work that has been performed. Privileged irresponsibility is effectively the sidestepping of Tronto's (1993) fourth phase of care, care-receiving, when the relationship between caregiver and care-receiver is acknowledged through feedback from the care-receiver (moral element: responsiveness). In the breaking of this relationship exchange, there is triggered an existential rift as well. Consider the way that Marx explains his concept of alienation:

> Let us suppose that we had carried out production as human beings. Each of us would have, in two ways, affirmed himself, and the other person. (i) In my production I would have objectified my individuality, its specific character, and, therefore, enjoyed not only an individual manifestation of my life during the activity, but also, when looking at the object, I would have the individual pleasure of knowing my personality to be objective, visible to the senses, and, hence, a power beyond all doubt. (ii) In your enjoyment, or use, of my product I would have the direct enjoyment both of being conscious of *having satisfied a human need by my work*, that is, of having objectified man's essential nature, and of having thus created an object corresponding to the need of another man's essential nature. ... Our products would be so many mirrors in which we saw reflected our essential nature. (Marx, 2016, "Comment on James Mill" section, emphasis added)

Marx's examples typically describe tangible products, but if we extend his thinking to the provision of care we can see reflected the relational element that Tronto (1993) expresses in her phases of care. To have satisfied the human need of another is a way to reflect one's own essential nature as well as that of the other. By suppressing the relational quality of care, managerialist hierarchy robs us, in part, of this ability to be ourselves, to see ourselves, and to be seen. At some young age, pondering relationships, I once wrote, “If you love someone, you must give them your weaknesses. Otherwise, you never allow them to give you their strengths.” Denying the need for, and receipt of, care similarly unbalances and impoverishes relationships.

Promoting an autonomous advance up hierarchy with no acknowledgement of support from others also proves a dangerous training ground for humanity on a broader scale. About capitalist economics, its master subject, “Business Man,” and his view of his firm as distinct from society and other “externalities,” Plumwood (2002) writes:

> The hegemonic concept of property based on this formula has built into it the denial and appropriation of certain backgrounded kinds of prior contribution or labour, and the representation of this contribution as inessential. This gives rise to a common pattern or ‘logic’ of oppression or exploitation which includes a hegemonic conception of agency that denies or backgrounds the contributions of subordinated others and re-presents [sic] the joint product in terms of the agency of the master subject. (p. 28)

Plumwood identifies Others, whose collaborative agency is assumed but denied, as women, who labour in the household; non-propertied citizens, whose labour has built the society and its property and infrastructure; the colonized, whose prior lands and assets have been appropriated; and nature, which is seen as “elsewhere,” a realm for collecting positive externalities and dumping negative ones. Thus, in the case of nature, we simultaneously assume its continued performance in supporting us, yet deny its contribution by failing to exercise restraint or make an adequate effort to ensure its ability to continue.

8.3.4 The Excessive and Detrimental Privileging in Hierarchy

In seeking evidence of care or its absence within organizations, I was confronted repeatedly by the hegemony of hierarchy in organizational life, and the way it distorts relationships. Although there are multiple factors that can bestow privilege within organizational life (see section 6.3), the most immediate and influential source of power and privilege on a day-to-day basis is one's level within the hierarchy. Hierarchical levels, and the subordination of each to the next intrinsic in the concept, are supposed to aid in the coordination of activity across a complex organizational system "to inject efficiency into organizational life" (Lowe, 1984, p. 138). Given that a manager has license to direct the work of his or her subordinates, there is some natural privilege built into the system; the manager has power over others. However, this functional reality is embellished, especially as one goes "up" the hierarchy, by several factors.

First, there is the mystique of management, which confers a sense of social class and personal prestige along with managerial level (see section 4.3.5). There is also the mistaken confidence in a meritocratic system, which implies that those "above" must have performed exceptionally to be qualified for advancement. Finally, and especially, prestige is conferred – and cemented in place – by the practice of paying higher salaries the higher one rises in the hierarchy. This builds additional layers of economic privilege onto a role that already carries the ability to direct others. Moreover, the higher pay provides tangible economic substance to the association of rising managerial level with rising social class.

When hierarchy does increase the efficiency of coordination and decision-making, it has an understandable usefulness. However, I believe when we also attach mystique and higher pay, we confer status and create an inappropriate level of privilege that can be damaging. This "position status" means that people who have gone "up" the ladder are rarely willing to come back down, even if they would like to return to the "lower" roles they previously enjoyed, and indeed, might excel at or be better suited to. The loss of income alone is a huge disincentive, not to mention the status penalty, since going "down" carries a perception of failure, even if it is by choice. (Similarly, I have known people who enjoy their work and are not interested in "climbing," and who are perceived as unmotivated or disinterested as a result.) My research in HBR texts corroborates the fervent managerialist association of prestige and privilege with higher levels in the hierarchy, as well as the ability of those with power to behave in ways that affect others negatively (Kanter, 2011; Kets De Vries, 2014; Pfeffer, 2013), including the potential for privileged irresponsibility.

Given these issues, and particularly in light of the systemic and self-reproducing nature of economic inequality within organizations, it seems important to rethink organizational practice so that prestige and salary don't over-inflate the privilege of some individuals, and so that there could be more fluidity of roles, with people able to step in and out of supervisory levels of decision-making without penalty. Meanwhile, numerous HBR articles indicate that a great deal of energy in organizations appears to be appropriated by concerns about one's relationship with one's boss and how to manage it. Perhaps with a better system of shared privilege, that energy could be more gainfully employed.

8.3.5 The Prospects for Caring Organizations

The idea of "caring organizations" has increasingly entered the popular zeitgeist. As mentioned in Chapter 5, an example is *People* magazine's 7-year effort to publish an annual list of 100 Companies that Care, "that go above and beyond to honor their employees, uplift their communities and make the world a better place" through programs such as community donations, employee philanthropy, diversity initiatives, scholarships and environmental efforts

("People's 100 companies that care in 2023: Employers putting their communities first," 2023). The 100 who make the list are exemplary corporate citizens with significant programs that presumably help set the bar for others. Meanwhile, there are also companies using care-related marketing slogans that are criticized for "trying to increase their legitimacy by presenting themselves as socially responsible 'citizens,' while really contributing to inequality and ecological destruction" (The Care Collective, 2020, pp. 11-12). Clearly there is not consensus about what permits an organization to call itself "caring."

Theorists and practitioners alike have grappled with this. Hamington (2011) proposes that care can be conceptualized as part of an organization's learning culture, because this is a natural fit and also because it helps make care "more palatable to business professionals who often regard "caring" with suspicion" (p. 246). Bendl, Fleischmann, and Schmidt (2019) propose that caring organizations may be created using alternative forms of organizing, although they note the challenge when these are embedded in a "non-alternative environment" (p. 276). Laloux (2014) envisions new forms of organizing based on human evolution towards a new stage of consciousness, where the "mask" of rationality is allowed to fall, and employees bring their whole selves – caring, emotional, intuitive – to work (p. 143).

But can an organization actually be "caring"? In section 5.2.1, I concluded that although people do reify and care *for* their organization, it can't care back in a way that entails engrossment, attentiveness, and relationship. Liedtka (1996) says there is precedent for anthropomorphizing the organization: "we speak of organizations that have values, that learn, that reward" (p. 187), but like me, when speaking of caring actions taken by "the organization," she refers to the collection of individuals who together bring it to life. So we can understand caring organizations not as legal entities that are capable of care, but as human collectives that have developed shared caring practices under the representative banner of the organization. Liedtka (1996) says the ability of individuals within organizations to do caring is either helped or harmed by organizational structure and practice:

> Caring, then, though a particular relationship between individuals, is situated within the context of a community, derives its shared focus from the needs of that community, and is only sustainable with the support of that community; care becomes self-reinforcing within that context. Thus, both because it derives its meaning within the context of community, and because of the personal investment required to care, organizations that support individual caring, that create self-reinforcing systems of caring, are essential if caring is to persist at all. (Liedtka, 1996, pp.187-188)

Liedtka's (1996) self-reinforcing systems include the organization's definition of roles, allocation of resources, and systems that reward care-giving, plus protection against "bureaucratic inconveniences, and the lack of opportunities for creativity" that can cause employee burnout (Scott, Aiken, Mechanic, and Moravcsik, 1995, in Liedtka, p. 187). In short, the organization's structures and practices must be aligned towards valuing, supporting and recognizing care. Noddings (2015) concurs; large organizations can "care-about" via policies and public statements, but it is human employees who do the work of "caring-for," as long as the organization provides the right conditions (p. 78).

Drawing from the findings in this study, I can offer my suggestions about some of those conditions needed to support the caring work of employees within an organizational setting. First, there must be an official and embedded valuing of care, championed and enacted by everyone throughout the company. This sounds self-evident, but as described in Section 8.3.1, I'm concerned that we have spent generations within managerial organizations deskilling ourselves of the instinct for connection. Says Engster (2015), "At least since the seventeenth century, one of the main stories we have told ourselves about ourselves in the West is that we are by nature selfish and competitive creatures. These stories have influenced not only how we behave and view others but also what we consider to be morally and politically possible" (p. 227). Freeman and Liedtka (1991) say their years of working with managers convinced them that basic human nature leans toward being "connected with others, concerned with maintaining and nurturing relationships" rather than being "calculated, self-interested economic beings" (p. 97). However, given the extent to which managerialism has shaped North American schooling (Au, 2011; Callahan, 1962) and the experiences in mainstream workplaces most people have (I offer my own vignettes throughout this thesis as examples), I believe the discourses of autonomy and rationality, and the denial of care are more deeply entwined in our "professional" psyches and demeanors than we would like to believe. In any case, despite how obvious it sounds, people intent on building a caring organization will need to be highly attuned to permitting, encouraging, and training each other to care within the workplace.

Second, as discussed in the previous section, the current nature of organizational hierarchy is problematic. Some care theorists doubt the possibilities for care within hierarchy, e.g., Tronto (2013): "Hierarchies pose a threat to care: they divide up the process of responsibility and separate it from the actual work and response to care. Thus, democratic caring will try as much as possible to flatten out hierarchies" (p. 164). Others are unequivocal: Ferguson (1984), for example, is clear that there is no compatibility between bureaucracy and the feminist project of a more humanized workplace.

Given the relationship between managerialist culture and privileged irresponsibility identified in this study, it seems clear also that a caring organization must align its culture to the antithesis of managerialism. That is, emotion must be permitted, weakness/neediness not shamed, people seen as whole, etc. The effort to be in “professional” self-control, to wear the mask of rationality, means we leave part of our selfhood behind, “cut ourselves off from part of our potential, of our creativity and energy” (Laloux, 2014, p. 144). The objective/rational mode also means we close ourselves away from the transformative experience of engrossment that permits us to perceive others’ needs and provide care, and the responsiveness that allows us to acknowledge the caring we receive (Noddings, 2013) elements, I believe, of the posthumanist care we need to tap. Recognizing employees as “whole” people also means recognizing their “encumbrances” – family, caregiving needs at home, interests and commitments outside of work – plus acknowledging that care work done at home to support the worker helps support the organization in turn.

There are many options to consider in the quest to find organizations that might exhibit truly caring orientations. One could of course start with those given the badge of honour in the “top 100” list published in *People.* Cooperatives, with their principles of democratic control and concern for community, are of interest. So too are organizations that have formally committed to broader goals than just their own welfare. Examples include those that are members of Economy for the Common Good, “a platform that promotes a more ethical economic model in which the well-being of people in the environment become the ultimate good of business” (Bendl et al., 2019, p. 264), or Benefit Corporations (“B-Corps”), whose legal structure requires them to consider their impact on all stakeholders rather than focusing single-mindedly on shareholder returns ("Make business a force for good," 2024). Given the link, surfaced in this dissertation, between the treatment of care in organizations and their systemic reproduction of inequality, a natural next step is to empirically explore whether organizations that seek to break traditional models are more caring and equitable – and why.

8.4 Contributions

Broadly, this dissertation engages with the project, already underway, to bring care ethics into organizational studies (see, for example, Fotaki, Islam, & Antoni, 2020a; Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011; Jacques, 1993; Liedtka, 1996; Noddings, 2015; Smith & McKie, 2009), and builds on this work in several ways, as follows:

1. Identifies various ways that care appears historically within organizational life, including care for the work, care for the organization, care for colleagues, care for subordinates, care for superiors, subordination as care, care instrumentalized, and real care. Drawing distinctions between these different situations allows the examination of how hierarchy affects the provision and perception of care. To assist with understanding the organizational context, this study also examines how managerialist discourses of efficiency, rationality, gender and mystique show up and influence the way care is provided, received, and understood. This responds to the research call by Fotaki, Islam, and Antoni (2020b) to "begin the slow work of tracing care through its diverse manifestations in organizational practices and contexts" (p. 10).
2. Introduces and applies Joan Tronto's (1993, 2013, 2015) concept of privileged irresponsibility to management and organization studies. Tronto uses privileged irresponsibility as a factor in political theorization to discuss how some caring needs in society are not met, how the provision of care can go unrecognized, and how people who provide care can therefore be marginalized. I apply the concept to organizational

hierarchy, to similarly examine how the systems of hierarchical power and managerial discourse within organizations may oppress and subjugate some people's needs and their opportunities, helping to maintain inequities in organizational life.

3. This dissertation takes up the effort to determine how inequality is produced within organizational life by exploring the relationship between efficiency and the marginalization of care, through discourses such as hierarchy, the "unencumbered" worker, and the efficiency-enabling mindset of rationality. These discourses contribute to inequality through the mechanism of privileged irresponsibility, which denies the care provided, thus marginalizing the care-giver along with the care. The dissertation thus helps respond to research calls by Amis et al. (2020) to build on their work related to the organizational reproduction of inequality, particularly with regard to efficiency and meritocracy. In the case of meritocracy, this paper may serve to add nuance. For example, Amis et al. (2020) ask, "What is the criterion that firms use for allocating individuals to different roles?" and question how the structure of organizations (for example, flatter versus taller) may influence patterns of promotion. The work in this dissertation raises questions about the type of work one is seen to be doing (rather than the role itself), how one becomes associated with that work, and whether the managerial framing of that work categorizes it as valuable, or leaves it unseen.
4. Suggests a link between the experience of the managerialist workplace and the "deskilling of care" in society, a broad loss of relationality and mutuality that is fundamental to human flourishing. By extension, this may affect our relationship with our ecosystem and our prospects for a sustainable society, by exacerbating nature/culture, mind/body dualisms, deadening our relational self-awareness, and

damaging our understanding of interdependence and embeddedness with other species and the material environment upon which we depend.

5. Offers the concept of "nested onto-epistemologies" to permit the examination of discourse from a posthumanist lens. This idea also offers an approach to understanding how relational concepts, such as care, might be viewed and understood differently from different realms within the nested landscapes. For example, within the restrictive *potestas* of managerialist discourse, care is predominantly understood through its impact on the bottom line (care can cut costs, care can increase productivity). In the posthumanist realm, by contrast, care can be seen as radical interconnectedness through a constant flow of resources to where they are needed.

8.5 Limitations and Future Research Opportunities

It is perhaps inevitable that any study such as this seems to raise more questions than it answers. This thesis is no exception. I am aware of ways in which this work was necessarily narrowed to maintain focus, which could raise questions about my conclusions, or, could offer avenues for future study. The following are my comments in this regard.

1. Historical context: Although I used articles that span HBR's 100 years of publication, I generally treated the "managerialist discourse" as relatively static across them, to identify how managerialism has persisted over time. In some cases, I do contrast articles on the same topic from different decades, in order to demonstrate discursive consistency despite changed social practices and mores, but I have not tried to fully contextualize them within the history of their eras. This could be criticized as incomplete. Despite HBR's introduction of new topics over time, such as work-family

balance or emotional intelligence, this study identifies that managerialism persists into the 2020s, albeit increasingly discursive and embedded. I hope this provides validity in what I have found, despite having had to limit the historical breadth of this work.

2. Differentiating voices within the texts: In this study, I have treated the varied content of HBR monolithically. That is, I have used authors' comments, findings from research, quotes from interviewees within that research, readers' comment letters, and opinion columns all together as material collectively constituting the discourse of managerialism. Some might take issue with this, or slice the content more finely, seeking to differentiate the comments from a guest "expert" from those of a researcher/author or of a practitioner interviewee, given their different subject positions. In a different sort of study, this more fine-grained analysis could perhaps be instructive. However, everything appearing in HBR is selected and edited to fit both the storyline of the article and of HBR's mission overall; its discursive lens focuses all of the content. For this reason – although I identify if it is author or interviewee or "expert" commentator who is speaking, when relevant – I treat all the content as part of one discursive web.
3. Intersectionality: In this research, I did not attempt to take an intersectional lens. In order to focus on the concept of care, and the question of whether the treatment of care might contribute to inequality, I did not also investigate questions of racialization or various other aspects of "othering" (ability, sexual orientation, country of origin, etc.) that clearly can impact inequality inside and outside organizational life. I could be accused here of sticking with a managerialist lens, assuming that "workers" are generally of one shape, type, and colour (although themes related to care meant I did

look at gender), and I recognize this flattens my findings. Revisiting this work with an intersectional approach would not only be interesting, but important and necessary in the ongoing work to address systemic inequality, especially since the marginalization of care has been associated with marginalization of certain populations of people (Tronto, 1993, 2013).

4. Materiality: Despite my posthumanist framing, my discourse analysis focused on just that: discourse. To further develop the concept of posthumanist discourse analysis in future, it would be effective to incorporate a richer element of materiality. For example, in Section 6.3.3., I discuss an example of "care" that is made acceptable by a manager by framing time with their family as a "meeting with my most important client" ("Manage your work, manage your life," 2014, p. 62). Given the discursive expectation of the unencumbered worker, the manager's reframing of care as client work makes sense. However, there is also an enticing question here related to materiality. The worker fails to address their own need for food, nurture, companionship – the *material* supports upon which we all depend. While they may manipulate the concept of family to fit the managerialist discourse, there is no attempt to address the material reality of their own life. Examining the abnegation of materiality within managerialist discourse would enrich both a posthumanist approach to discourse analysis and an understanding of care.
5. Colonialism and Indigeneity: There are intriguing parallels between care ethics, posthumanism and elements of Indigenous teachings and axiology; all are grounded in relationality and place interconnectedness centrally in their ontology (see for example, Wilson, 2008). I touched on this in Chapter 3. Meanwhile, I believe there are parallels

between the oppression of colonialism and its negative effects on both colonizer and colonized (Nandy, 1989), and that of managerialism, which has taken over public and organizational life to a comprehensive degree. Nandy (1989) speaks of the inner effects of colonialism that are unconscious and usually ignored: "Particularly strong is the inner resistance to recognizing the ultimate violence which colonialism does to its victims, namely that it creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter" (p. 3). This relates to my concern that we no longer perceive any alternatives to the neoliberal system we have built and inhabit; we limit our discussions of improvement to tinkering "within the psychological limits", without understanding that our world view and prospects for flourishing have fundamentally been compromised. The study and prioritization of care, with its requirement for relationality and interdependence grounded in posthumanism and materialism, offers some hope for seeing our way back out of the "hyperbolized autonomy" described by Plumwood:

> The 'profound forgetting' of nature which ensues from the hegemonic construction of agency, the failure to see externalised nature as a collaborative partner or to understand relations of dependency on it, is the basis of the now global economic system of self-maximising economic rationality in which the maximum is extracted and not enough is left to sustain the life of the external others on which the rational system, unknown to itself, depends. The more Business Man can disembed himself by hyperbolizing his autonomy and denying the collaborative agencies on which his wealth relies, the more he can appropriate for himself, and the less likely he is to have to share with others whatever wealth

is generated. By his lights, this is rational; from a more embedded perspective, it is the opposite of rational. (p. 30)

Returning to Nandy's quote, I realize I blur the lines in this scenario in terms of who represents the "ruled" he refers to: is it nature, othered and backgrounded, or is it the worker within the managerialist organization? Perhaps the point is that it is both; a relational ontology does not see the two as separate, yet we are both colonizer and colonized in a system that encourages us to forget our interconnectedness, to understand that we are all radically connected. Thus we develop wealth by impoverishing ourselves, we attempt to "care" for the world by improving the details without changing the game. Exploring the linkages between posthumanist care ethics and these ideas is an area I hope to pursue in future study.

6. Another area for future research is comparing the success of care / absence of privileged irresponsibility in organizations that use varying types of structure (hierarchical or not); this is an area I would like to examine empirically. Whether hierarchy, stripped of its status-mystique and unconscionable salary excesses, can deliver effective coordination while still supporting a caring organization is also of interest.

8.6 Conclusion

I tell my undergraduate "introduction-to-business" students that the system we are studying – markets, corporations, international trade agreements, GDP – is all something *that we humans have devised.* That is, there are no immutable natural forces we have to factor in, like the force of gravity or volcanoes or solar energy. Second, I describe what they already know: from climate change to gross inequity, this system – despite some strengths and triumphs – has serious problems. Fortunately, I tell them, since it is our creation, it is a *system that we can change*. Too often we perceive our current reality as fixed, and "business as usual" as, well, usual. But we do not need to take it as is. To have some hope requires the opposite: we must accept that we can change. And at this point, fling ourselves into that effort.

The work in this thesis points to an area of challenge in the system-as-it-is. Although there are organizations where people are relatively happy, and no doubt some where they thrive, the managerialist frame of modern organizational workplaces has an inherent tendency to suppress, contort and deny a part of life that makes us most human: the ability and willingness to take care of each other. Even when care stubbornly continues to manifest within organizational relationships, it is diminished by going unseen or unvalued, and trivialized as "beneath" the status of those who hold power in the system. (Who cleans the staff coffee room where you work? Sends the get well card to the colleague who is ill? Leaves their desk to help with the photocopier?) There is a rift in an ancient contract here, one that predates even language, one that understands we are made of stardust. Humans are social, interdependent and interconnected creatures, who are more than our sum, individually and collectively, when we live in relationship with each other, when we care.

This is just part of the challenge. We cannot adequately care, for each other or anything, until we rework the stories we have been telling ourselves for a few hundred years about human exceptionalism and the supremacy of the rational mind. What hubris to think that our intelligence is the only one, and the best! What foolishness to say elephants are the first "non-human" animals to call each other by name, when our very "discovery" shows how utterly clueless we've been up until now about every other species' use of names except our own. We have a great deal of unravelling to do, to drag out our built-in ideas of supremacy, to open space for humility, to relearn relationship from the most fundamental level. Ideally, we would do this without facing crisis. Since crisis is inevitable, however, perhaps we can just prepare to handle it with a modicum of good humour.

To give care is to be attentive to the needs of others, to take responsibility for others being able to live well, and to step into the effort of caregiving unselfconsciously, so it is made visible and joyous. To receive care is to acknowledge relationship, to be open to others' strengths, to reject autonomy-fetish and recognize the value of those who care for you. This includes the trees, grass, fish, peat bogs, ocean plankton, farmers, insects, janitors, earthworms, grandparents, bats, soil, mechanics, checkout clerks and nurses. And all the rest.

I began this journey of inquiry with an uneasy feeling that the way we teach ourselves to behave "at work" could be having a detrimental effect on our ability to live well together on our planet. This thesis has given shape to my concerns by linking our pursuit for a managerialist ideal within organizations to the devaluing of care, the rise of isolation and inequality, and the loss of our whole selves: messy, connected, interdependent, helping each other to live in the world "as best as possible."

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Appendix 1: Sample of Articles from *Harvard Business Review*, ordered chronologically
See Appendix 2 for bibliographic reference format.

Year	Title	Author	Issue & page
1923	A Theory of Industrial Conduct and Leadership.	Williams, W.	*1(3), 322-330.*
1932	Testing for ability in management.	Coffman, P. B.	*10(3), 269-279.*
1934	The scientific study of the industrial worker.	Whitehead, T. N.	*12(4), 458–471.*
1944	A machinist looks at management.	Sabsay, N.	*22(2), 249–255.*
1946	Wanted: Mature Managers.	Selekman, B. M.	*24(2), 228-244.*
1949	The meaning of scientific management.	Anderson, E. H.	*27(6), 678–692.*
1952	The Executive Neurosis.	McMurry, R. N.	*30(6), 33–47.*
1953	Opportunities for women at the administrative level.	Fuller, F. M. & Batchelder, M. B.	*31(1), 111–128.*
1956	How to Identify Promotable Executives.	Randle, C. W.	*34(3), 122-134.*
1956	Successful Wives of Successful Executives.	Warner, W. L., & Abegglen, J. C.	*34(2), 64-70.*
1956	Permission to Think.	Whitehead, T. N.	*34(1), 33-40.*
1956	Human Relations Theory - a progress report.	Whyte, W. F.	*34(5), 125-132.*
1958	Reappraisal of Appraisals.	Kelly, P. R.	*36(3), 59-68.*
1958	Criterion for Emotional Maturity.	Saxenian, H.	*36(1), 56-68.*
1960	Organizational Effectiveness Under Stress.	Argyris, C.	*38(3), 137-146.*
1961	Problems in review: Do You Want A Weak Subordinate?	Ward, L. B.	*39(5), 6-22, 179-189.*
1963	Praise Reappraised.	Farson, R. E.	*41(5), 61-66.*
1964	Problems in review: What Helps or Harms Promotability?	Bowman, G. W.	*42(1), 6-26, 184-196.*
1964	The power to see ourselves.	Brouwer, P. J.	*42(6), 156-165.*
1965	Problems in review: Are women executives people?	Bowman, G. W., Worthy, N. B. & Grayser, S. A.	*43(4), 14-28, 164-178.*
1965	Engineer the job to fit the manager.	Fiedler, F. E.	*43(5), 115-122.*
1965	Problems in review: The case of the punctilious president.	Hansen, J. J.	*43(6), 160-176.*
1965	The Dynamics of Subordinacy.	Zaleznik, A.	*43(3), 119-131.*
1966	Interpersonal barriers to decision making.	Argyris, C.	*44(2), 84-97.*
1970	Assessment centers for spotting future managers.	Byham, W. C.	*48(4). 150-168.*

1971	Problems in Review: Executives as community volunteers.	Fenn, D. H.	*49(2), 4-16, 156-157.*
1971	Women in management: pattern for change.	Orth, C. D., & Jacobs, F.	*49(4), 139-147.*
1972	Executives as human beings.	Bartolomé, F.	*50(6), 62-69.*
1973	The real crunch in managerial manpower.	Miner, J. B.	*51(6), 146-158.*
1974	Johnnie will be an executive, and Janie will be a….	Barnett, R. C.	*52(3), 7–8.*
1974	Made in America (under Japanese management).	Johnson, R. T., & Ouchi, W. G.	*52(5), 61-69.*
1974	Sex stereotyping in the executive suite.	Rosen, B., & Jerdee, T. H.	*52(2), 45–58.*
1978	A woman in the boardroom: An interview with Joan Ganz Cooney.	Collins, E. G. C., & Esposito, A. I.	*56(1), 77–86.*
1979	The subordinate's predicaments.	Neilsen, E. H., & Gypen, J.	*57(5), 133–143.*
1980	Managing your boss.	Gabarro, J. I., & Kotter, J. P.	*58(1), 92–100.*
1980	Management men and women: closed vs. open doors.	Josefowitz, N.	*58(5), 56–62.*
1983	Managers and lovers.	Collins, E. G. C.	*61(5), 142–153.*
1985	Executive women – 20 years later.	Sutton, C. D., & Moore, K. K.	*63(5), 42–66.*
1986	The manager: master & servant of power.	Bartolomé, F. & Laurent, A.	*64(6), 77–81.*
1987	The case of the mismanaged Ms.	Seymour, S.	*65(6), 77–87.*
1988	In Praise of Followers.	Kelley, R. E.	*66(6), 142–148.*
1988	Meetings That Work: Plans Bosses Can Approve.	Lovett, P. D.	*66(6), 38–44.*
1989	Nobody Trusts the Boss Completely--Now What?	Bartolomé, F.	*67(2), 135–142.*
1989	Business and the facts of family life.	Rodgers, F. S., & Rodgers, C.	*67(6), 121–129.*
1989	Management Women and the New Facts of Life.	Schwartz, F. N.	*67(1), 65–76.*
1990	Ways Women Lead.	Rosener, J. B.	*68(6), 119–125.*
1992	Nothing Prepared Me to Manage AIDS.	Banas, G. E.	*70(4), 26–33.*
1992	From the Classroom to the Corner Office.	Greco, R. B.	*70(5), 54–63.*
1992	Women as a business imperative.	Schwartz, F. N.	*70(2), 105–113.*
1993	The Change-Dazed Manager.	Havens, T.	*71(5), 22–37.*
1993	What Do Men Want?	Kimmel, M. S.	*71(6), 50–63.*
1993	Informal networks: The company behind the charts.	Krackhardt, D., & Hanson, J. R.	*71(4), 104–111.*

1993	Whatever happened to Rosie the Riveter?	Nichols, N. A.	*71(4), 54–62.*
1993	Retrospective Commentary.		*71(3), 156.*
1995	Managing People Ten Essential Behaviors.	Tagiuri, R.	*73(1), 10–11.*
1997	Will She Fit In?	Magretta, J.	*75(2), 18–32.*
1997	Workplace Equity.	Maruca, R. F.	*75(6), 15–17.*
1997	Human resources: does friendship improve job importance?	Ross, J. A.	*75(2), 8-9.*
1998	What Makes a Leader?	Goleman, D.	*76(6), 93–102.*
1998	The Set-Up-to-Fail Syndrome.	Manzoni, J.-F., & Barsoux, J.-L.	*76(2), 101–113.*
1999	A Report Card on Diversity: Lessons for Business from Higher Education.	Bowen, W. G., Bok, D., & Burkhart, G.	*77(1), 138–149.*
1999	The Toxic Handler: Organizational Hero - and Casualty.	Frost, P., & Robinson, S.	*77(4), 96–107.*
1999	The Toxic Handler. [Response letter].	Moysey, S. P.	*77(5), 174.*
2000	Why Should Anyone Be Led by You?	Goffee, R., & Jones, G.	*78(5), 62–70.*
2000	Winning the Talent War for Women: Sometimes It Takes a Revolution.	McCracken, D. M.	*78(6), 159–167.*
2001	What a Star--What a Jerk.	Cliffe, S., Rowe, M., McKenzie, C., Jordan, K., & Waldroop, J.	*79(8), 37–48.*
2001	Followership.	Goffee, R., & Jones, G.	*79(11), 148.*
2001	Primal Leadership: The Hidden Driver of Great Performance.	Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A.	*79(11), 42–51.*
2001	In Praise of Middle Managers.	Huy, Q. N.	*79(8), 72–79.*
2002	Dear White Boss….	Caver, K. A., & Livers, A. B.	*80(11), 76–81.*
2002	The People Who Make Organizations Go--or Stop.	Cross, R., & Prusak, L.	*80(6), 104–112.*
2002	Leading in Times of Trauma.	Dutton, J. E., Frost, P. J., Worline, M. C., Lilius, J. M., & Kanov, J. M.	*80(1), 54–61.*
2002	The Exercise of Power.	Livingston, J. S.	*80(5), 136.*
2002	Change the Way You Persuade.	Williams, G. A., & Miller, R. B.	*80(5), 64–73.*
2003	How (Un)Ethical Are You?	Banaji, M. R., Bazerman, M. H., & Chugh, D.	*81(12), 56–64.*
2003	Care for the Little Guy.	Baum, H.	*81(1), 45.*
2003	Fear of Feedback.	Jackman, J. M., & Strober, M. H.	*81(4), 101–107.*
2003	King of the Mountain.	Kanter, R. M.	*81(3), 144.*
2004	Understanding “People” People.	Butler, T., & Waldroop, J.	*82(6), 78–86.*
2004	Do Women Lack Ambition?	Fels, A.	*82(4), 50–60.*

2004	Presenteeism: At Work -- But Out of It.	Hemp, P.	*82(10), 49–58.*
2004	Coaching the Alpha Male.	Ludeman, K., & Erlandson, E.	*82(5), 58–67.*
2004	Leading by feel.	Mayer, J. D., Goleman, D., Barrett, C., Gutstein, S., Boyatzis, R., Goldberg, E., Jung, A., Book, H., Goffee, R., Gergen, D., Harman, S., Lalich, J., George, W., Thomas, M. T., Bartz, C., Takeuchi, H., Stone, L., & Heifetz, R.	*82(1), 27-37.*
2004	The Maternal Wall.	Williams, J. C.	*82(10), 26–28.*
2006	The Nice Guy.	Edelman, R., & Hiltabiddle, T.	*84(2), 21–31.*
2007	Inner Work Life.	Amabile, T. M., & Kramer, S. J.	*85(5), 72–83.*
2007	What Your Leader Expects of You and What you should Expect in Return.	Bossidy, L.	*85(4), 58–65.*
2007	Off-Ramp--or Dead End?	Esarey, S., Haslberger, A., McGrath, M., Matthias, R., Maricich, R. J., & Sevin, E.	*85(2), 57–69.*
2008	How the Best of the Best Get Better and Better.	Jones, G.	*86(6), 123–127*
2008	Hothead Habit.	Moyer, D.	*86(12), 136.*
2009	Smile, Don't Bark, in Tough Times.	O'Connell, A.	*87(11), 27.*
2009	Why Repressing Emotions Is Bad for Business.	Shapiro, D.	*87(11), 30.*
2009	How to Be a Good Boss in a Bad Economy.	Sutton, R. I.	*87(6), 42–50.*
2010	The Long-Term Effects of Short-Term Emotions.	Ariely, D.	*88(1/2), 38.*
2010	Women in Management: Delusions of Progress.	Carter, N. M., & Silva, C.	*88(3), 19–21.*
2010	Debunking Four Myths About Employee Silence.	Detert, J. R., Burris, E. R., & Harrison, D. A.	*88(6), 26.*
2010	The Boss as Human Shield.	Sutton, R. I.	*88(9), 106–109.*
2011	The best advice I ever got.		
2011	Surviving Twin Challenges--At Home and Work.	Beard, A.	*89(1/2), 164–166.*
2011	The Paradox of Excellence.	DeLong, T. J., & DeLong, S.	*89(6), 119–123.*
2011	The Cure for Horrible Bosses.	Kanter, R. M.	*89(10), 42.*
2011	Can Nice Guys Finish First?	Pfeffer, J., Goldsmith, M., & Kessler, R. C.	*89(12), 131–135.*
2011	Challenge The boss or Stand Down?	Sasser, W. E., Pfeffer, J., & Falcone, P.	*89(5), 137–145.*
2011	Two Shots for Her, Just One for Him.		*89(6), 30.*

2011	Why Fair Bosses Fall Behind.	Wiesenfeld, B. M., Rothman, N. B., Wheeler-Smith, S. L., & Galinsky, A. D.	*89(7/8), 26.*
2011	Why Fair Bosses Fall Behind: Interaction.	Wiesenfeld, B. M., Rothman, N. B., Wheeler-Smith, S. L., Galinsky, A. D., Morris, M., Perdue, J., Jordan, J., Venkatasubramanian, P., Basso, R., & Zunguze, S.	*89(9), 20.*
2012	Inventing HBR.	Kirby, J.	*90(11), 84–88.*
2012	Nice Guys Finish Poorer.		*90(12), 26.*
2012	Why Bossy Is Better for Rookie Managers.	Sauer, S. J.	*90(5), 30.*
2012	Will Working Mothers Take Your Company To Court?	Williams, J. C., & Cuddy, A. J. C.	*90(9), 94–100.*
2013	Connect, Then Lead.	Cuddy, A. J. C., Kohut, M., & Neffinger, J.	*91(7/8), 54–61.*
2013	In the Company of Givers and Takers.	Grant, A.	*91(4), 90–97.*
2013	Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers.	Ibarra, H., Ely, R., & Kolb, D.	*91(9), 60–67.*
2013	Power, Capriciousness, and Consequences.	Pfeffer, J.	*91(4), 36.*
2013	The Price of Incivility.	Porath, C., & Pearson, C.	*91(1/2), 114–121.*
2013	Women in the Workplace: A Research Roundup.		*91(9), 86–89.*
2014	IDEO's Culture of Helping.	Amabile, T., Fisher, C. M., & Pillemer, J.	*92(1/2), 54–61.*
2014	Employees Who Feel Love Perform Better: Interaction.	Barsade, S., O'Neill, O. M., Florentino Sierra, F., & Fahim Farhad, C.	*92(4), 21.*
2014	Manage Your Work, Manage Your Life.	Groysberg, B., & Abrahams, R.	*92(3), 58–66.*
2014	Women, Find Your Voice.	Heath, K., Flynn, J., & Holt, M. D.	*92(6), 118–121.*
2014	Coaching the Toxic Leader.	Kets De Vries, M. F. R.	*92(4), 100–109.*
2014	Hacking Tech's Diversity Problem.	Williams, J. C.	*92(10), 94–100.*
2015	Even Women Think Men Are More Creative.	Adams, K.	*93(12), 30–31.*
2015	Get the Boss to Buy In.	Ashford, S. J., & Detert, J.	*93(1/2), 72–79.*
2015	Why We Love to Hate HR...and What HR Can Do About It.	Cappelli, P.	*93(7/8), 54–61.*
2015	How Power-Hungry Bosses Keep Their Power.		*93(5), 24–25.*
2016	Manage Your Emotional Culture.	Barsade, S., & O'Neill, O. A.	*94(1), 58–66.*
2016	We Just Can't Handle Diversity.	Burrell, L.	*94(7/8), 70–74.*

2016	Consistent Abuse Beats Unpredictability.		*94(6), 28–29.*
2016	The Softer Side of Performance.	Ignatius, A.	*94(1), 14.*
2016	Do You Hate Your Boss?	Kets de Vries, M. F. R.	*94(12), 98–101.*
2016	The Limits of Empathy.	Waytz, A.	*94(1), 68–73.*
2017	Could Your Personality Derail Your Career? Don't Take These Traits to the Extreme.	Chamorro-Premuzic, T.	*95(5), 138–141.*
2017	Do You Hate Your Boss?: Interaction.	Sabin, N. S.	*95(2), 21.*
2017	When Technical Skill Beats Emotional Intelligence.		*95(3), 36.*
2018	Women Benefit When They Downplay Gender.	Torres, N.	*96(4), 30–31.*
2019	When a Colleague Is Grieving.	Petriglieri, G., & Maitlis, S.	*97(4), 116–123.*
2019	For Women in Business, Beauty Is a Liability.	Wieckowski, A. G.	*97(6), 34–35.*
2020	Should You Hide Your Emotions at the Office?		*98(4), 21–22.*
2022	How to Sell Your Ideas up the Chain of Command.	Burris, E.	*100(1), 139–143.*

Appendix 2: Sample of Articles from *Harvard Business Review*, bibliographic reference format

See Appendix 1 for chronological order.

Adams, K. (2015). Even women think men are more creative. *Harvard Business Review*, *93*(12), 30–31.

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Appendix 3: Codes Used in Text Analysis

Code	**Comment**
Care of self	Idea of self-care, self-preservation, avoiding danger
Care-for work	Care for the organization or for the job and the product itself.
Care-general	Mention of care in general: support, need for others, caring services (e.g., day care), etc.
Care-home	Care provided outside the workplace, at home
Care-HR	Care provided to employees through formalized HR processes
Care-in-organization	May be evidence of work in an organization that can be considered to be care, OR, a lack of care within organizational life.
Care-instrumental	Indicates care that is performative, or ends-oriented only, but seems lacking in, or stripped of, relational value.
Care-labour	Assessing concept of care labour vs. care work
Care-negative	Added in 2016. The downside of care.
Care-PH1-about	Tronto's first phase of care: caring about
Care-PH2-for	Tronto's second phase of care: caring for
Care-PH3-caregiving	Tronto's third phase of care: caregiving
Care-PH4-receiving	Tronto's fourth phase of care: receiving care. Included: dependence (a state of receiving care), self-reliance (the condition of not needing to receive care)
Care-relational	A passage that particularly indicates the relational aspect of care
Case study	Type of article
Compassion / empathy	Mention of this type of emotionality
Compensation	Specific mention of $ pay.
Competition	Specific mention of competition, or indication of people needing to compete in the workplace (or society) in order to achieve personal benefits. In some cases, opposite to care.
Conformity	Indicating ways in which managers adapt themselves to "fit" in the organization, or are expected to.
Culture	Mentions of general society culture, or, organizational culture
Effectiveness / competence	Indication of ways in which people successfully accomplish work or goals, or are perceived to do so
Efficiency	Doing more with less in general, or specific use of word
Efficiency OF emotion	Indicates expectation that emotion will hamper efficiency, or more generally, where the two are considered in relationship to each other
Embedded sexism	Sexism within the managerial discourse, which would not be perceived by the author/editor as such
Emotion-general	Any mention of emotion, feelings, motivation related to emotion, emotional needs, etc.

Emotion-instrumental	The idea of using emotion (often emotional intelligence) for instrumental purposes. Note: Maybe the key idea of emotional intelligence is that emotion is being tilted to instrumental purposes?
Emotion-labour	Emotion that is performed for work purposes
Emotion-negative	Perception that emotionality is a negative influence (in business). Descriptions of emotion as a liability.
Emotion-positive	Representation of emotion as a positive element/attribute
Emotional intelligence	Term emerges in 1990s leadership literature
Emotional maturity	Used when "maturity" itself is specifically referenced.
Ethical, ethics, moral	Where the idea of moral obligation or responsibility surfaces; what is “right”.
Example of much discussion	Indicates topics that are much-discussed in HBR and effectively help to define it (and managerial discourse), despite not being directly relevant to my study.
Gender-female	Related to the gender identity of female
Gender-male	Related to the gender identity of male
HBR (nature of business)	Identifies built-in assumptions that seem indicative of the nature of, and audience of HBR. These might be discursive “management” themes, or more specifically related to this publication and its self-image.
Hierarchy	Mentions of hierarchy, dominance, submission, "high" or "low" positions
Historic (marking an era)	Context: content that helps define the era, either specifically (eg. post-WWII industrial "reconversion") or more generally (eg. "tradtional roles between men and women are changing").
Human element	Mention of workers/managers being "human"
Image of business/exec	Related to the way business and/or executives are perceived, or must present themselves
Imagery - graphic design	Material that is graphic.
Inequality	Specific mention of equality/inequality, or indication of ways employees are not treated equally
Invisible	Related to work, or person, not being seen (or trying to avoid notice)
Leadership-definition	Material that describes leadership, or how a leader must be
Management-definition	Material that describes management, managers, or how a manager must be
Merit	Specific mention of merit, or indication of that which is deemed to be meritous
Mystique	Indicative of self-aggrandizing or hubristic nature of business and/or management discourse
Myth / belief	Content which describes "how people think" or "what is believed", e.g., "a set of unwritten assumptions has developed about the qualifications for each step in the hierarchy"

Needy / Weak	This code represents the indication that an individual who requires care is "needy" or "weak". It also can relate to vulnerability, the decision to place yourself in this "weaker" orientation by opening up, sharing, or asking for help. It is the opposite of "strength / toughness" in terms of standardly desirable management traits.
Notable	Anything I want to refer to later but don't really want/need to code.
Org structure	Specific or general mention of levels in the organization, divisions of labour, etc.
Pass-out of responsibility	The mechanism by which an individual achieves privileged irresponsibility
Patriarchy	Indication of masculine hegemony
Power/influence	Indication of the ability of some to manifest their will over others
Priv-Irresponsibility	Tronto's concept that some can sidestep the need to provide care, due to positions of privilege
Privilege-general	Mention in general of benefits due to position or other privileged attribute
Profit	When explicit mention of profit-motive.
Promotion / job role	Mention of formal categories of work, especially related to opportunity (develop skills, move up hierarchy, gain rewards)
Quote NOT from HBR	Marker for interesting potential quotes
Quote ref from elsewhere	From non-HBR material quoted by articles' authors, of interest
Rational	concept of rationality, of reason (esp as compared to emotion in terms of workplace attributes)
Recognition	The idea of receiving external but intrinsically-motivating reward.
Relationship	The human need for relationship - whether it entails care or not.
Social class	Explicit or implicit indication of social hierarchies, inside or outside the organization
Social resp of business	General idea that business should benefit society beyond its profit-making activities
Standardization	
Status	Indicates actions, roles, titles or other ways people are perceived as having value by others
Strength / toughness	Part of workplace (esp manager) image: opposite of needy/weak/care receiving.
Subordination (act subordinate)	Relates to the act of subordinating oneself to another.
Success	Mention of achieving goals, ambition, accomplishment, or success itself, as an implicitly-held value and purpose within organizational/managerial discourse
Superior-subordinate (hierarchy)	Deals with any aspects of relationship between individuals who are managed by / manage the other.
Task allocation	Related to, may merge with, organizational structure
Unencumbered worker	The neoliberal conceptualization of a perfect worker being always available to the organization, without constraints

Whole person	When one is constrained from acting on all of one's instincts or beliefs, when one must only be a "part" of themselves.
Women	Mention of "woman" or "female" or "women" where it is a differentiating and specifying concept
Workplace experience	What it feels like to be in a workplace, description of personal experience within workplace

Appendix 4: "The Nice Guy" case

The managerial bias towards stereotypes of "strength" looms exceptionally large in a 2006 HBR case study titled "The nice guy," and it is of particular interest due to the prevalence of care that it presents. The case tells the story of Paul, a 10-year executive at a successful and growing media company, "a good fellow who trusts people," who believes he is in line to be CEO. The central question is, "Is he tough enough for the job?" (p. 21). The case is written from the protagonist's point of view and is narrated through his stream of consciousness, which allows the reader to see behind the workplace mask and judge sentiments and concerns usually not unveiled at work. As Paul drives his morning commute, we are privy to his musings: about his wife (she didn't look well this morning), his daughter (she's already had two colds this year), his upcoming wedding anniversary (remember to buy roses), his son's baseball practice tonight (yes, I've got the equipment). He empathizes with a distracted driver who has a baby on board: "the kid's probably crying." When he calls a team member about a project, he first inquires about her sick mother. He reminisces about how his parents treated everyone with respect in their business; he remembers their patience with him as he switched majors in college "from art to sociology."

Interwoven against this extensive character backdrop, the events of Paul's day include a number of current business issues: a negotiation with a potential client about price (they're playing hardball, we could walk away, but we really want to enter their market); how to handle the performance decline of the employee with the sick mother (some might dismiss her; he considers a leave of absence); telling a subordinate to push back on a supplier that wants to split cost overruns on a problem job (but maybe our specs were unclear, we might have to compromise); and his aspirations for growing the company. The case culminates in the current CEO telling him that, although he has many of the ingredients for the job, he "needs to get tougher and meaner" and is likely going to be passed over (in favour of the newer hire who shares the CEO's affinity for "drinking scotch together late into the night and telling dirty jokes").

This case hits the epicentre of the managerial discourse about strength, and whether it lies in business performance or performativity. Paul makes no glaring error in the business challenges he faces; he considers how to get the best prices, maintain and build client and supplier relationships, handle HR issues and build the company. Wrapped around this are highly stereotyped images of a certain male archetype: sensitive, concerned with others, empathetic, supportive. In short, a *caring* personality, focused on relationships and helping meet others' needs. It's almost comical how the styling of this "nice guy" in the HBR case seems to dog-whistle the image of his hyper-masculine antithesis: forgiving the bad driver who cut him off (crying baby) rather than erupting in road rage; looking forward to an anniversary dinner with his wife instead of stereotypically forgetting the date; attentive to his kids' wellbeing and activities instead of consigning all home responsibilities to his wife; taking the long view on the troubled employee instead of being "hard-nosed" about her current usefulness; studying "art and sociology" instead of finance or at least economics; sitting in rush hour traffic running late because he waited to see his kids and wife wake up instead of prioritizing a 12-hour workday; missing out on male bonding through scotch and ribald jokes because "that's never been my thing," rather than yucking it up with the team.

If this sounds like thinly-veiled coding for "wimp," it is not lost on at least one of the four experts who provide their analyses of the case. He writes, "Paul needs to take a good, hard look at himself in the mirror and then decide who he wants to be when he grows up. Despite all his navel gazing, it seems obvious that he doesn't understand himself very well. Instead of driving around locked up in his inner world and daydreaming… Paul really needs to go back to school and bone up on Leadership 101" (p. 30). This HBR analyst goes on to share a story from his own MBA experience, when his team won a deal-making exercise because, as captain, he exploited the weakness of "a very nice fellow… by taking advantage of his softheartedness." The other captain was embarrassed and his teammates were angry with him; the expert concludes, "I learned that business is a competitive sport for tough players – those who play it nice often fall behind. In tough times, you simply can't afford to take prisoners" (p. 30). Another HBR expert calls Paul a "worrier," the next, a "people-pleaser"; the fourth says Paul "needs to get out of his own head."

It is highly instructive, however, to examine what specifically these experts critique. All of them zero in on the single question of the previously high-performing employee who, in caring for her mother, has dropped the ball several times at work (the case says nothing about Paul's previous handling of any other HR issues); two experts also discuss Paul's relationship with his boss. None of the analysts discuss Paul's handling of the client or supplier issues – areas where the company stands to lose or gain profit, business partnerships, and market share, and where he is shown coaching subordinates to get the best deal for the company. In other words, the critique of Paul's management style, and whether he is "tough" or not, appears to be fundamentally influenced by details about his personal life and concerns, and his interior thoughts about relationships at home and work. With an analysis like this occupying a 10-page spread in management's self-proclaimed premier management journal, it's small wonder that would-be executives button up their stiff upper lip, put on their armour, prepare to "take no prisoners" and "get in the game." Even using "tough empathy" might not have saved Paul from the faux pas of revealing his whole caring self to a managerial audience.