

Can care help conceptualise place futures? Exploring the potential of care as an analytical framework for understanding place qualities

Rebecca Staats

Affiliation: Department of Conservation, University of Gothenburg
Email: rebecca.staats@conservation.gu.se

Abstract

This paper explores how the concept of care can structure an analytical framework for understanding place qualities. Care is burgeoning as a major concept within the humanities and social sciences. Given its growing application in planning, it is timely to reflect on what the care concept contributes to understanding places and their possible futures. Following a review of the scholarly literature, this paper proposes an analytical framework based around five characteristics of care: (1) objects of care; (2) caring actors; (3) care practices, (4) care motivations; (5) care relations. The final part of the paper reflects on the potential of the care concept for imagining possible place futures.

Keywords

Care; place; futures; analytical framework

Full text

1. Introduction:

The future of the places we engage with – whether, to live, work, visit or use more indirectly concerns us on both personal and professional levels. A plethora of challenges: uncertainties brought by changes in climate, economy and social patterns destabilise long term planning goals. At the same time, planning efforts are asked to meet the needs of a diverse range of stakeholders. In this challenging planning climate, there is a clear need to reflect on and discuss how to cultivate place futures. A range of existing scholarship seeks to address this question, proposing an impressive range of methods and approaches to deliver sustainable futures. However, such efforts are plagued by the fact that the goals and underlying assumptions of how to realise place futures are not clear but at times undermine and contradict each other.

In this paper I use the term place futures to describe in a broad way all the things a place may come to be – whether by design or as a gradual unfolding of incremental, everyday practices. It is a deliberate choice in order to remain unaligned with the conceptual baggage carried by more established terms such as local development or place making. In writing about place futures, I recognise that the motivation for taking action in a place is often explicitly connected to realising a particular future. However, I also recognise that futures of places unfold without (or despite) deliberate interventions, motivated rather by a sense of connection to or concern about a place (Healey 2023). Finally, I use the term place futures to shift the focus from a particular end goal to provide space for seeing that sometimes futures aren't about change, but can equally be about maintaining and sustaining. After all, even a state of sustainability needs maintenance (Ringel, 2021).

It is also necessary to elucidate my perspective on what constitutes a place. Although theoretical definitions of place abound, in this paper I borrow the term ‘place qualities’ from Healey (2018) to refer to the constituent features of places. This is a relational understanding that casts places as ‘loosely-structured assemblages of people and other species, material objects and meanings, action arenas, physical forms and flows, possibilities and memories, emotional attachments and moral values, connected to other times and spaces through complex and multiple webs of relations’ (Healey, 2018, p. 67). This paper is not about any one specific place, but rather explores how the concept of care can contribute to how we understand places and conceptualise their possible futures.

Before examining what contribution care might make to how we conceptualise place futures, it is first necessary to review current approaches to cultivating place futures in theory and practice. To this end, the first section of this paper reviews some of the major strategies and approaches to delivering sustainable place futures and classifies the major assumptions on which they are founded. Drawing from the need to broaden our gaze and nuance our understanding beyond these assumptions, the second part of the paper reviews care literature to consider the utility of the care concept to planning. Drawing from this literature, I use five characteristics of care to structure an analytical framework for understanding place qualities. The final part of the paper reflects on the potential of the proposed framework and concludes with some broader thoughts about how care can help to conceptualise other possible place futures.

2. Categorising approaches to place futures

There are two core assumptions that underly approaches to place futures in planning theory and in practice. The first is the assumption that specific futures for places can be created or made. These approaches are characterised by goal-directed action, such as the socio-economic regeneration of a place through the construction of a new museum, or an improvement in social cohesion through a city branding initiative. By contrast, the second assumption rejects the notion of achieving predefined goals, arguing instead that places unfold or emerge over time. These two broad areas of literature are explored below.

2.1 Making futures

There is a plethora of terms that are used in the literature to describe approaches based on the idea of making or creating the future. This making perspective is founded on what Dupre (2019, p. 103) calls a ‘determined before-after temporality’. That is, action in the place is taken with a predetermined idea of what the future should be after the intervention. This is not surprising, given the long history of planning to realise desired ends through socio-spatial interventions (Allmendinger, 2017).

One common term that describes structured approaches to realising place futures is place-making. Although poorly defined (Dupre, 2019; Courage, 2021a), place-making is generally recognised as an interdisciplinary field that has particular prominence within the fields of spatial and strategic planning and design, often within an urban development context. Examples of the types of activities structured place-making projects employ include the creation of a sense of place or belonging through the development of place images; physical interventions in space;

and creative initiatives (Dupre, 2019; Courage, 2021b). The wide range of activities that fall under place-making in the literature reflects a lack of consensus over what place-making is and may involve (Strydom, Puren and Drewes, 2018). Much of the regeneration literature also falls into this category, with focus ranging from waterfronts (Jones, 2017) to heritage assets (Wincott, Ravenscroft and Gilchrist, 2020).

Another common term is place branding. Likewise poorly defined (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2010; Vuignier, 2017), place branding can be broadly understood as an approach to spatial governance (Van Assche, Beunen and Oliveira, 2020). Place branding initiatives differ in scope, from projects that emphasise city uniqueness and value using built heritage resources (Guzijan, 2018) to strategies for recovering after natural disaster (Gotham and Irvin, 2018).

Another common approach to achieving predefined place futures is culture-led development. This body of scholarship seeks to use cultural resources to attain various kinds of local development. It ranges for instance from investments in “capital C” cultural institutions such as museums (Heidenreich and Plaza, 2015), efforts to attract the “creative class” (Florida, 2003) and mobilisation of heritage assets for socio-economic development (Della Lucia and Segre, 2017; Kähkönen and Lähdesmäki, 2019).

The structure of these projects, by whichever term, also differ. Some are more formalised, with an emphasis on common processes (Alwaer and Cooper, 2019), whilst others focus on informal initiatives such as DIY urbanism (Krishnamurthy, 2018). Initiatives may be both individual and collective in nature (Dupre, 2019; Mengi, 2020), and are at times understood as a democratic process (Strydom, Puren and Drewes, 2018). In general, place-making initiatives are following a participative trend where inclusion and participation of the local community is important, and much literature is dedicated to community centric, collaborative processes (Strydom, Puren and Drewes, 2018; Mengi, 2020; Courage, 2021a). This at times includes an emphasis on everyday elements of place-making (Dyck, 2005; Platt, 2021; Vitiello and Willcocks, 2021). The same is true in place branding, where scholars see the need for inclusive, bottom-up processes (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010; Inch and Florek, 2010; Trueman *et al.*, 2010; Brown, 2018; Lucarelli, 2018a; Warnaby, Koeck and Medway, 2018). The importance of local participation is likewise recognised in culture-led development (Sacco and Crociata, 2013).

Whilst the pursuit of a desired future state unites the otherwise diverse body of literature above, the actual goals of these approaches differ widely. Goals of place-making include the improvement of public spaces and community life (Krishnamurthy, 2018); social and spatial justice (Borrupt, 2021; Courage, 2021a); environmental sustainability (McKeown, 2021); and economic development and growth (Lima and Jones, 2021). Place branding likewise shares a strong goal orientation (Guzijan, 2018) for economic development (Campelo, 2017), spatial development and physical place making (Therkelsen, Halkier and Jensen, 2010; Oliveira, Van Assche and Beunen, 2021). Place branding efforts may also aim at social inclusion (Eisenschitz, 2018) and community cohesion (Stoica *et al.*, 2021).

Although these approaches clearly aim to improve the future of places in social, economic and ecological ways, there have been a number of criticisms levelled at such initiatives. Place branding in particular has been critiqued as contributing to a neo-liberal transformation of society (Friedmann, 2016; Eisenschitz, 2018; Lucarelli, 2018b) that needs to address issues of power and inclusion (Vuignier, 2017; Kavaratzis, Giovanardi and Lichrou, 2018; Medway, Warnaby and Byrom, 2021). The metrics focus of place branding may also lead it to be a reductive process (Medway *et al.* 2021) that leads to a greater homogenisation of places (Lichrou, Kavaratzis and Giovanardi, 2018).

More generally there is critique of the very idea that places can be “made”. These critics argue that places are never new constructions, but rather evolutions of what they were before. The next section reviews literature advocating this perspective.

2.2 Emerging futures

Although the majority of literature falls into the category of goal-oriented approaches outlined above, there is a sizable body of literature that advocates for a different approach to place futures. Rather than setting out with any particular future in mind, or a goal to change the place in some measurable way, scholars in this body of literature argue that place futures emerge in an unplanned way.

To understand this perspective it is useful to review Rauws, de Roo and Zhang’s (2016) critique of goal-based planning and its underlying conception of reality. They (2016, p. 244) identify two paradigms of planning: a ‘command and control’ factual reality where ‘planners are...viewed as creators of place...based on facts and predictions’, and a communicative planning approach where reality is agreed and consensual. Both paradigms are critiqued for understanding reality as a ‘fixed product in time’ (Rauws, de Roo and Zhang, 2016, p. 244). In their view, such an understanding limits the capacity of planning to respond to uncertain and complex planning contexts, and remains in opposition to more emergent, adaptive and autonomous behaviours (Rauws, de Roo and Zhang, 2016, p. 244). To move beyond this linear perspective in planning, they propose that planners need to ‘explore alternative views on reality and different ways of guiding spatial transformations’ which recognise processes of emergence and employ a relational understanding of space and time (Rauws, de Roo and Zhang, 2016, p. 244).

One alternative perspective is a non-linear planning reality in which direct causal relationships between variables of change are lacking, and where change occurs through the interaction of a system and subsystems and their contextual environment (de Roo, 2012, pp. 142; 151). This perspective emphasises the role of time, where, in contrast to the static perspectives underlying goal-oriented planning, present ‘a world in flow, full of discontinuous change’ (de Roo, 2012, p. 135). This alternative notion of reality underlies post-structuralist planning perspectives that focus on ‘processes of becoming’; poststructuralist planners are interested in processes of change rather than predefined end goals (Boonstra and Rauws, 2021, p. 7). Indeed, in what Boelens and de Roo (2016, p. 43) identify as a ‘planning of undefined becoming’, the ultimate goal is not known beforehand. Rather ‘uncertainty prevails’, and futures ‘co-evolve’ through the reciprocal interaction of actors and their surroundings, and is shaped by specific historical-spatial contexts (Boelens and de Roo, 2016, pp. 43; 48). A core feature of this perspective is the view that meaning is multiple and relational – this means that ‘even notions of a good, just or sustainable society, are never closed but always open’ (Boelens and de Roo, 2016, p. 44).

Such a post-structuralist perspective has been applied in a place-making context by Dovey (2010). Writing against a concept of place as ‘static’, or subject to deliberate place-making efforts, Dovey (2010, p. 3) argues that places should instead be understood as being in ‘states of becoming’. Platt and Medway (2022, p. 105) likewise critique the idea of ‘interventionist’ place-making, employing a post-structuralist perspective to emphasise the ‘ongoing, always emerging, and never finished presence of the urban placemaking’. This illustrates a different underlying assumption about how place futures come to be – they unfold from the ‘middle’ and are always in process, rather than having clear before and after states driven by predefined goals.

2.3 Differing positions: navigating approaches to place futures

The exploration of literature above shows that there are different assumptions when it comes to understanding how place futures come to be. Whilst they fall into two broad categories (structured and emergent), there is a further complication: the goals and methods of attaining place futures also differ. To further complicate matters, a tendency for disciplinary silos makes full sharing of knowledge difficult. Many scholars point to this problem, arguing that the ‘intent and outcomes’ of placemaking may be ‘wholly different and in opposition’ (Courage, 2021b, pp. 4–5). That such differences can undermine the best efforts of practitioners involved in cultivating place futures is clear in the following statement from Legge (2021, p. 391):

‘I have never met anyone involved in city-making who does not want to make good cities that support happy and healthy citizens. Of course, we all do this through a different lens. The planner focusses on systems of land use and connectivity, the transport engineer believes that making it fast and easy to get around makes a good city; the architect via beautiful buildings, the social planner through equitable access to services and amenity, the landscape architect will use nature as their tool. Our professional expertise is our strength, but it can also be our limitation – if all we have is a hammer, then all we see are nails (Maslow, 1966)...It is often the differences in professional priorities and in the range of scales involved in place planning that create the most significant barriers to successful placemaking.’

In short, there is a lack of agreement about how (and if) particular place futures should be cultivated. To address this challenge, and building on the metaphor in above, I argue that a different pair of glasses is required; a lens that will help us see the qualities of places more holistically. We need different conceptual glasses in order to ask different questions: what matters in places, and to whom? What motivates action in places? How might we arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between place qualities, and learn to see beyond boundaries and foci conditioned by fields of expertise and norms of practice? The next section of the paper explores the potential of the concept of care to provide such a lens.

3. Possibilities of care

Care is burgeoning as a major concept within the humanities and social sciences. Developed originally from feminist scholarship within traditional care contexts, care is increasingly being mobilised as a concept for thinking and analysing in contexts including science-technology studies (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), heritage studies (Veldpauw and Szemző, 2021) and planning (Davoudi, 2023). Within these contexts the uses of care are diverse, ranging from speculative thinking to identifying practices of care. Given its growing application in planning and fields relevant to place futures more broadly, it is timely to reflect on what the care concept contributes to understanding places and their possible futures.

The next section of this paper reviews current understandings of care in the literature. Drawing from this scholarship, I use care to develop an analytical framework for identifying place qualities. This lays the foundation for a reflection on what other parts of the care concept may be helpful in conceptualising possible place futures.

3.1 Current understandings of care

A review of the care literature indicates that it is a rapidly emerging field. Although common agreement about the scope and meaning of the concept is lacking, it is possible to identify three broad themes: care as a conceptual model, care as practice, and care as a way to foreground relationality. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but often intersect.

3.1.1 Care as a conceptual model

One major way the care concept is utilised in the literature is as a conceptual model. Literature using care in this way spans fields as diverse as nursing (Cloyes, 2002) to the green humanities (Bernau, 2023). The review identified three major uses of care as a conceptual model.

3.1.1.1 Care as a model for thought/action

Care here is used to reframe or rethink through already recognised issues and challenges. This includes, for instance, reframing heritage conservation as a practice of care in order to broaden understandings of the outcomes of conservation (Veldpauw and Szemző, 2021), and exploring expressions of care in hedgerows in order to think through landscape maintenance practices in times of ecological crisis (Bernau, 2023).

3.1.1.2 Speculative care

Used speculatively, care provides a way to imagine alternatives to the current status quo. A widely cited perspective is articulated by Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) who uses care speculatively to question how we might live 'as well-as-possible' in more-than-human worlds. Speculative perspectives arise in critique of certain existing conditions, such as Jacobs and Wiens's (2023, p. 12) interest in the possibilities of care for creating possibilities to live 'in refusal of systems that perpetuate social and ecological injustices'.

3.1.1.3 Care as a critical lens

Care is also employed as a critical lens for analysing contemporary problems. Examples include efforts to further understanding of the problems facing urbanisation (Gabauer *et al.*, 2021), for addressing fast paced societal change (Dyck, 2005) or considering the skillsets required for transitioning to low carbon futures (Carr, 2023).

3.1.2 Care as practice

Care is also referred to in the literature as a set of practices. This is often not separate from drawing on a conceptual understanding of care, and in most instances complements it. The types of care practices that are included in the literature differ widely. They include the more traditional domains of care work in health and dependency contexts within domestic and institutional settings (Tronto, 1998; Cloyes, 2002; Dyck, 2005; José, 2016). More recently however care is being taken up to embrace a wider range of acts of taking care – of humans (Dombroski *et al.*, 2023), more-than-humans (van Dooren, 2014; McConnell, 2023) and their wider environments (Till, 2012; Veldpauw and Szemző, 2021; Woodhead, 2023). It is worth noting that these categories of what is looked after are often blurred, and care for one area is often seen as bringing benefits for others (Bartel, Hine and Morgan, 2020).

One area that emerges from the literature is an understanding of maintenance and repair as forms of caring practice. These concepts appear for instance in the widely cited definition of care by Tronto and Fischer as 'a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain,

continue, and repair our world' (Fischer and Tronto, 1990 in Tronto, 1998, p. 17). Maintenance is a practice of keeping something the way it is – necessary for instance in the context of growing things such as hedges (Bernau, 2023) or to arrest decay, such as in the context of cultural heritage preservation (Veldpaus and Szemző, 2021). Although maintenance is often discussed in the same context as repair, the concepts are ultimately different. Carr (2023) points to the different temporalities of the two practices, seeing maintenance as anticipatory action required to prevent something happening in the future. Repair on the other hand is retrospective, seeking to restore order following breakdown (Carr, 2023, p. 226). It is important to note that decisions about how and what is maintained are informed by underlying values – for instance, “mow and blow” landscape maintenance may value crop yield over socio-ecological relations (Jacobs and Wiens, 2023, p. 9), or prioritising tidy hedgerows through mechanical trimming may harm biodiversity (Bernau, 2023).

3.1.3 Care and relationality

A key feature of the care concept is its focus on relationality. Evident in the care literature is the notion that all care is relational – care is not an action that occurs on its own but rather always in relation to others – care is always interdependent, it is “care-with” (Tronto, 2013). Whilst much of the care scholarship focusing on relationality has drawn attention to more-than-human relationships (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Dombroski *et al.*, 2023; Jacobs and Wiens, 2023; McConnell, 2023), other scholars seek to recenter human intentionality in regards to care (Huijbens, 2023).

3.1.4 Normative and non-normative trends

Care is often employed to make a normative argument. Some of this literature emphasises the politico-ethical obligation to care (van Dooren, 2014; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Jacobs and Wiens, 2023). Others use care to critique neoliberal practices (Gabauer *et al.*, 2021; Kopitz, 2022) drawing particularly from Tronto’s (2017) argument for care as an alternative ontology to neoliberalism. Although acknowledging the body of care literature in this vein, this paper does not take such a normative position.

3.1.5 Care in planning

It is clear that care is becoming an important concept in a planning context. Although not explicitly theorised, Healey (2018: 67) uses the care concept to discuss a relational approach to place governance. This understanding lays the foundation for explicating that people care about different qualities of place, necessary for a place-based politics and improved place governance. Healey (2023) further utilises care in her analysis of citizen-led planning initiatives for local development in Wooler, England. Here again, care is not explicitly theorised, but rather functions to illustrate how collective care about place and its current challenges mobilised action in the form of self-organisation and citizen-led initiatives. It becomes clear that care shows where different community actors have a shared interest or concern (they “care about” an issue) and that this becomes mobilised in action (“care for”). The caring efforts are in some way about shaping the future of the place, aiming at different forms of local development through grassroots activity.

Other uses of care in the planning scholarship emerges out of dissatisfaction with neoliberal planning contexts and desires to imagine different possible futures. Davoudi (2023) introduces care as an ethical, relational and political concept that he uses to discuss a prefigurative planning approach. A critique of the underlying assumptions of the neoliberal system underlies his

argument, seeing prefigurative planning as a way to negate given assumptions and imagine alternatives to the status quo. Although not fully defined, Davoudi points to relations of (un)care as underlying prefigurative planning in everyday spatial practices.

Gabauer et al (2021) also employ the concept of care to examine the production of urban space through (un)caring practices and relationships. In doing so, they position care as practice, relation and ethics. In particular, they point to the need to recognise contexts of uncare produced by the neoliberal paradigm, and argue for the potential of care as an analytical scope for understanding the urbanising world. Like Davoudi (2023) and Healey (2023), they point to the importance of paying attention to everyday urban life. Furthermore, they go beyond care as a frame for analysis but see it as having potential to alter ‘social conditions’ (Gabauer *et al.*, 2021, p. 7)

I stand alongside these scholars in seeing the potential of care to further our understanding of places as complex assemblages of everyday life, shaped by the relations between people and their environments. However, unlike Davoudi (2023) and Gabauer et al (2021) I refrain from presenting a critique of current planning contexts. Instead, I stand back in order to provide a broader perspective on the different approaches to cultivating place futures. Furthermore, I draw from major trends in the care literature to propose an analytical framework for understanding place qualities, which has potential to support thinking about possible place futures. The next section of the paper introduces this analytical framework of care, before briefly reflecting on the broader utility of care in thinking through place futures.

4. An analytical framework of care

To explore how planning might benefit from the care concept, the next section of the paper proposes an analytical framework built from five characteristics of care: (1) objects of care; (2) caring actors; (3) care practices, (4) care motivations; and (5) care relations. Taken together, these characteristics have the potential to structure a more holistic understanding of place qualities.

In presenting this framework, I build on the efforts of scholars such as Tronto (2017) to unpack the care concept. Tronto (2017) identifies five phases of care, which explains the shift from caring *about* something (a noticing of needs) to caring *for* something (practices of delivering and receiving care). Tronto’s (2017) understanding of care is also caring *with*, in relations with others. The framework articulated below approaches care in a different way. Instead of identifying phases of care, the proposed framework functions as a tool for mapping the qualities of a place, and their interrelationships, in a broad way. Such a holistic understanding is a prerequisite for conceptualising possible place futures, and has potential to extend the lenses through which we currently conceptualise place futures.

It should be noted that this framework is intended to be applied to places in particular. As Tronto (2017, p. 33) notes, care ‘is always contextual and, as a result, non-essentialist...focusing on care requires much attention to the precise details of the situation’. Accordingly, this framework has greatest utility when applied to places in specific moments in time and space.

4.1 Care characteristics for analysing place qualities

(1) Objects of care

The first characteristic of care that has utility in structuring analysis of place qualities is the recognition that there are different objects of care. By object of care, I mean that for which care is given. It is evident from the care literature that a wide range of people, non-humans, material objects, and physical environments can be objects of care. Furthermore, the selection of what is worthy of care is underpinned by socio-cultural and professional values (Healey, 2018; Harrison, 2020; Bernau, 2023). Identifying that for which care is given is applied in a heritage studies context by Veldpaus and Szemz  (2021) to question which histories, stories and aspects of the historic environment are preserved through the practice of heritage conservation. I propose that such a technique has utility more broadly in identifying the widest possible spectrum of place qualities that receive care, including people, material things, activities, intangible qualities, and the physical environment.

In particular, broadening what we identify as objects of care can provide a way to break out of specific lenses shaped by fields of expertise that condition what is seen as valuable in places and worthy of carrying into the future. Given the implication of values in determining objects of care, such a broadening also widens our understanding of the values at stake in cultivating place futures.

(2) Caring actors

The second characteristic of care useful to this analytical lens is the recognition that the capacity to care about and for qualities of place is not restricted to experts (be they planners, place branders, heritage managers or other professional actors) but rather open to anyone who engages with place, including the full range of civil society. Although most of the time it is actors who are explicitly involved in efforts to realise place futures (for example city planners and self-organised citizen groups) that receive analytical attention, the growing body of evidence for the importance of everyday practices shows that even actors who are not part of deliberate efforts to realise place futures nonetheless play a role in the way place futures unfold (Carr, 2023). Furthermore, a focus on caring actors opens up the possibility to consider the role that more-than-human actors play in unfolding place futures (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Dombroski *et al.*, 2023).

(3) Care practices

It is clear from the literature that there are different ways to care about place futures. Practices of care range widely, from looking after elderly people to trimming hedgerows (Tronto, 1998; Bernau, 2023). It is also evident from the first part of the paper that different fields of expertise endorse different practices for realising place futures. Incorporating an analysis of care practices into the framework provides a way to identify these practices and see where they may be conflictual or complementary. Furthermore, examining care practices shows that care is not universally “good” or “good for all” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), and that care for one thing might be at the expense of another (van Dooren, 2014). Like care objects, care practices are motivated by different values, and through their implementation give rise to different possible futures.

(4) Care motivation

In order to nuance our understanding of place qualities it is necessary to examine the motivations behind why care is given, and ask what end does giving care seek to achieve? Like objects of care, care motivation is related to values. However, where objects of care is mainly care *about* something, care motivation is what shifts it into care *for* by motivating a practice or action of care. Such an interrogation can enrich our understanding of places by allowing us to identify where different actors care for the same object, but for different reasons. As such it has potential in identifying value conflicts in place.

(5) Care relations.

An important contribution that care can bring to understanding place qualities is its focus on relationality. Many scholars point to the fact that there is an interdependence of care not only between human actors, but also the objects they care for (Tronto, 2017; Gabauer *et al.*, 2021; Davoudi, 2023; Jacobs and Wiens, 2023). This is particularly important in nuancing our understanding of the factors that shape the selection of objects of care and how actors work together (or not) to care for them. Furthermore, knowing and thinking are themselves ‘inconceivable without a multitude of relations that also make possible the worlds we think with’ (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012, p. 2). Recognising the wider relations – such as norms of professional practice - that condition our approach to place futures can help us to identify and reflect upon the types of place futures that are considered desirable and possible.

5. Discussion: what do we gain when we use care?

The notion of using care to structure analysis is not new. Indeed other scholars also use care to understand the complexities of place (Healey 2023; Gabauer et al 2021). However, the framework proposed above differs in that it provides a structured approach that is explicitly derived from characteristics of the care concept present in previous scholarly work. In this way it contributes to development of the care concept in a planning context.

In addition, the proposed framework has potential to address the problem identified in the first part of this paper: that a lack of shared understandings and different goals, assumptions and practices can oppose and undermine efforts to cultivate place futures. In this sense I follow from Dyck (2005, pp. 235–6) in recognising the potential of care in ‘chipping away at sub-disciplinary borders’ and realising ‘analyses that can bring together the economic, political, social and cultural in understanding the rapid changes of contemporary society’. Employing care as set out in the analytical framework above can facilitate a structured and nuanced identification of place qualities and the values and relationships underlying their care. As such care provides the possibility to broaden our understanding of which qualities of place are important in the realisation of place futures beyond approaches conditioned by specific fields of expertise and norms of practice.

In addition to its utility in structuring an understanding of place qualities, the care concept has further potential in conceptualising the kinds of place futures that are possible or permissible. Harrison (2020) recognises that different practices realise specific futures. The first part of the paper identified two broad approaches to cultivating place futures – structured, goal oriented approaches and post-structuralist emergent ones. Care can help us to think through other possibilities. For instance, maintenance is commonly identified as a practice of care (Bernau, 2023; Carr, 2023; Dombroski *et al.*, 2023). Focussing on maintenance can help shift the point of focus in efforts to cultivate place futures. Rather than striving to achieve particular goals, or

manage emerging transitions, care can help us to see where change is less of a driving factor; sometimes what is needed is a maintenance of what already is.

6. Conclusion

This paper has explored the utility of the care concept in a planning context through proposing an analytical framework structured by five characteristics of care. A brief reflection on other qualities the care concept may help us see, such as place futures centered around maintenance rather than change suggests further potential for the development of the concept in a planning context. Further work is required to test the proposed analytical framework and explore further benefits of applying care in conceptualising place futures.

List of references

Allmendinger, P. (2017) *Planning Theory*. Third Edition. London: Palgrave.

Alwaer, H. and Cooper, I. (2019) 'A Review of the Role of Facilitators in Community-Based, Design-Led Planning and Placemaking Events', *Built Environment*, 45(2), pp. 190–211. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2148/benv.45.2.190>.

Bartel, R., Hine, D.W. and Morgan, M. (2020) 'Human engagement in place-care: Back from the wilderness', in R. Bartel et al. (eds) *Rethinking Wilderness and the Wild*. London: Routledge, pp. 145–164.

Bernau, A. (2023) 'Hedgerow Poiesis', *Emotions: History, Culture, Society*, 7(1), pp. 119–144. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1163/2208522x-02010185>.

Boelens, L. and de Roo, G. (2016) 'Planning of undefined becoming: First encounters of planners beyond the plan', *Planning Theory*, 15(1), pp. 42–67.

Boonstra, B. and Rauws, W. (2021) 'Ontological diversity in urban self-organization: Complexity, critical realism and post-structuralism', *Planning Theory*, 20(4), pp. 303–324. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095221992392>.

Borrupt, T. (2021) 'Preface: Disatrous forces, accidental actions, and grassroots responses', in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 67–71.

Brown, J. (2018) 'A service ecosystem approach to representing a place's unique brand', in M. Kavaratzis, M. Giovanardi, and M. Lichrou (eds) *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 51–69.

Campelo, A. (2017) 'The state of the art: from country-of-origin to strategies for economic development', in A. Campelo (ed.) *Handbook on Place Branding and Marketing*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 3–21. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gu/detail.action?docID=4882086>.

Carr, C. (2023) 'Repair and care: Locating the work of climate crisis', *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 13(2), pp. 221–239. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/20438206221088381>.

Cloyes, K.G. (2002) 'Agonizing care: care ethics, agonistic feminism and a political theory of care', *Nursing Inquiry*, 9(3), pp. 203–214. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1800.2002.00147.x>.

Colomb, C. and Kalandides, A. (2010) 'The "be Berlin" campaign: old wine in new bottles or innovative form of participatory place branding?', in G. Ashworth and Kavaratzis, Mihalís (eds) *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions*. Cheltenham, UK; Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 173–190.

Courage, C. (2021a) 'Introduction: What really matters: moving placemaking into a new epoch', in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 1–8.

Courage, C. (2021b) 'Preface: The radical potential of placemaking', in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 219–223.

Davoudi, S. (2023) 'Prefigurative planning: performing concrete utopias in the here and now', *European Planning Studies*, 31(11), pp. 2277–2290. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2023.2217853>.

Della Lucia, M. and Segre, G. (2017) 'Intersectoral local development in Italy: the cultural, creative and tourism industries', *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 11(3), pp. 450–462. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCTHR-03-2016-0032>.

Dombroski, K. *et al.* (2023) 'Cultivating commoners: Infrastructures and subjectivities for a postcapitalist counter-city', *Cities*, 143, p. 104635. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104635>.

van Dooren, T. (2014) 'Care (Living Lexicon for the Environmental Humanities)', *Environmental humanities* [Preprint]. Available at: [https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Care-\(Living-Lexicon-for-the-Environmental-Dooren/a3d9ce926759e0e1729c22de86c69740b10660b9](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Care-(Living-Lexicon-for-the-Environmental-Dooren/a3d9ce926759e0e1729c22de86c69740b10660b9) (Accessed: 3 January 2024).

Dovey, K. (2010) *Becoming places: urbanism/architecture/identity/power*. London; New York: Routledge.

Dupre, K. (2019) 'Trends and gaps in place-making in the context of urban development and tourism: 25 years of literature review', *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 12(1), pp. 102–120. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-07-2017-0072>.

Dyck, I. (2005) 'Feminist geography, the "everyday", and local-global relations: hidden spaces of place-making*', *Canadian Geographer*, 49(3), pp. 233–243.

Eisenschitz, A. (2018) 'Place marketing for social inclusion', in M. Kavaratzis, M. Giovanardi, and M. Lichrou (eds) *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 37–50.

Florida, R. (2003) 'Cities and the Creative Class', *City & Community*, 2(1), pp. 3–19. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6040.00034>.

Friedmann, J. (2016) 'Place and Place-Making in Cities: A Global Perspective', in S.S. Fainstein and J. DeFilippis (eds) *Readings in Planning Theory*. Fourth Edition. Chichester: Wiley, pp. 503–523.

Gabauer, A. *et al.* (eds) (2021) *Care and the City: Encounters with Urban Studies*. New York: Routledge. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031536>.

Gotham, K.F. and Irvin, C. (2018) 'Revitalizing the damaged brand: Place (re)branding in post-Katrina New Orleans', in M. Kavaratzis, M. Giovanardi, and M. Lichrou (eds) *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 82–95.

Guzijan, J. (2018) 'BUILDING HERITAGE AS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR OF CITY BRANDING', *САВРЕМЕНА ТЕОРИЈА И ПРАКСА У ГРАДИТЕЉСТВУ*, 13. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7251/STP1813313G>.

Harrison, R. (2020) 'Heritage as future-making practices', in *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices*. London: UCL Press, pp. 20–50.

Healey, P. (2018) 'Creating public value through caring for place', *Policy and Politics*, 46(1), pp. 65–79. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1332/030557316X14817306640776>.

Healey, P. (2023) *Caring for Place*. New York; Oxon: Routledge.

Heidenreich, M. and Plaza, B. (2015) 'Renewal through Culture? The Role of Museums in the Renewal of Industrial Regions in Europe', *European Planning Studies*, 23(8), pp. 1441–1455. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.817544>.

Huijbens, E.H. (2023) 'The Spaces and Places of the Tourism Encounter. On Re-Centring the Human in a More-Than/Non-Human World', *Humanities*, 12(4), p. 55. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/h12040055>.

Insch, A. and Florek, M. (2010) 'Place satisfaction of city residents: findings and implications for city branding', in G. Ashworth and Kavaratzis, Mihalis (eds) *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions*. Cheltenham, UK; Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 191–204.

Jacobs, S. and Wiens, T. (2023) 'Landscapes of care: politics, practices, and possibilities', *Landscape Research*, 0(0), pp. 1–17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2023.2266394>.

Jones, A.L. (2017) 'Regenerating Urban Waterfronts—Creating Better Futures—From Commercial and Leisure Market Places to Cultural Quarters and Innovation Districts', *Planning Practice & Research*, 32(3), pp. 333–344. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459.2016.1222146>.

José, J.M. (2016) 'What are we talking about when we talk about care? A conceptual review of the literature', *Sociologia*, (81), p. n/a. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7458/SPP2016816958>.

Kähkönen, S. and Lähdesmäki, T. (2019) 'Broadening the Scope of Heritage: The Concept of Cultural Environment and Scalar Relations in Finnish Cultural Environment Policy', in T.

Lähdesmaki, S. Thomas, and Y. Zhu (eds) *Politics of Scale: New Directions in Critical Heritage Studies*. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 95–109.

Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G. (2010) ‘Place Branding: where do we stand?’, in M. Kavaratzis and G. Ashworth (eds) *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions*. Cheltenham, UK; Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 1–14.

Kavaratzis, M., Giovanardi, M. and Lichrou, M. (eds) (2018) *Inclusive Place Branding | Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge. Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/books/e/9781315620350> (Accessed: 10 October 2019).

Kopitz, L. (2022) ‘Affective Architecture: Encountering Care in Built Environments’, *Krisis*, 42, pp. 29–42. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.21827/krisis.42.1.37891>.

Krishnamurthy, S. (2018) ‘Participation Caught In-Between Projects and Policies?’, in H. Sadri (ed.) *Neo-liberalism and the Architecture of the Post Professional Era*. Cham: Springer International Publishing (The Urban Book Series), pp. 229–244. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76267-8_14.

Legge, K. (2021) ‘Preface: The only thing constant is change’, in Courage, C., *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 391–393.

Lichrou, M., Kavaratzis, M. and Giovanardi, M. (2018) ‘Introduction’, in M. Lichrou, M. Kavaratzis, and M. Giovanardi (eds) *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 1–10.

Lima, J.F. and Jones, A.J. (2021) ‘Placemaking as an economic engine for all’, in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 14–26.

Lucarelli, A. (2018a) ‘Co-branding public place brands: towards an alternative approach to place branding’, *Place branding and public diplomacy*, 14(4), pp. 260–271. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-017-0085-3>.

Lucarelli, A. (2018b) ‘Place branding as political research: From hidden agenda to a framework for analysis’, in M. Kavaratzis, M. Giovanardi, and M. Lichrou (eds) *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 158–171.

McConnell, M. (2023) ‘Starting to care: making place with microbes’, *cultural geographies*, 30(4), pp. 525–537. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14744740231158604>.

McKeown, A. (2021) ‘The solution is the problem: The art of turning a threat into an opportunity by developing resilience using a Creative Placemaking critical praxis’, in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 333–345.

Medway, D., Warnaby, G. and Byrom, J. (eds) (2021) *A Research Agenda for Place Branding*. Cheltenham, UNITED KINGDOM: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. Available at: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gu/detail.action?docID=6565296> (Accessed: 7 July 2022).

Mengi, O. (2020) 'Creative placemaking revisited: exploring major drivers for the practice of making and co-creation', *International Journal of Knowledge-Based Development*, 11(3), p. 24.

Oliveira, E., Van Assche, K. and Beunen, R. (2021) 'The spatial-planning - place branding nexus: A research agenda for spatial development', in D. Medway, G. Warnaby, and J. Byrom (eds) *A Research Agenda for Place Branding*. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 67-.

Platt, L. (2021) 'Preface: The problem with placemaking', in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 143–147.

Platt, L.C. and Medway, D. (2022) 'Sometimes. . . Sometimes. . . Sometimes. . . Witnessing Urban Placemaking from the Immanence of "the Middle"', *Space and Culture*, 25(1), pp. 105–120. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331219896261>.

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2012) "'Nothing Comes Without Its World": Thinking with Care', *The Sociological Review*, 60(2), pp. 197–216. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02070.x>.

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2017) *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press (Posthumanities, 41).

Rauws, W., de Roo, G. and Zhang, S. (2016) 'Self-organisation and spatial planning: an editorial introduction', *The Town Planning Review*, 87(3), pp. 241–251. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/10.3828/tp.2016.18>.

Ringel, F. (2021) 'Future-Making in Times of Urban Sustainability: Maintenance and Endurance as Progressive Alternatives in the Postindustrial Era'. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-63003-4_6.

de Roo, G. (2012) 'Spatial Planning, Complexity and a World "Out of Equilibrium"', in G. de Roo, J. Hillier, and J. van Wezemael (eds) *Complexity and Planning Systems, Assemblages and Simulations*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 129–165.

Sacco, P.L. and Crociata, A. (2013) 'A Conceptual Regulatory Framework for the Design and Evaluation of Complex, Participative Cultural Planning Strategies', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(5), pp. 1688–1706. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01159.x>.

Stoica, I.S. *et al.* (2021) 'Place Brand Co-Creation through Storytelling: Benefits, Risks and Preconditions', *Tourism and Hospitality*, 3(1), pp. 15–30. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp3010002>.

Strydom, W., Puren, K. and Drewes, E. (2018) 'Exploring theoretical trends in placemaking: towards new perspectives in spatial planning', *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 11(2), pp. 165–180. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPM-D-11-2017-0113>.

Therkelsen, A., Halkier, H. and Jensen, O.B. (2010) 'Branding Aalborg: building community or selling place?', in G. Ashworth and M. Kavaratzis (eds) *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions*. Cheltenham, UK; Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 136–155.

Till, K.E. (2012) 'Wounded cities: Memory-work and a place-based ethics of care', *Political Geography*, 31(1), pp. 3–14. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.10.008>.

Tronto, J. (2017) 'There is an alternative: homines curans and the limits of neoliberalism', *International Journal of Care and Caring*, 1(1), pp. 27–43. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1332/239788217X14866281687583>.

Tronto, J.C. (1998) 'An Ethic of Care', *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 22(3), pp. 15–20.

Tronto, J.C. (2013) *Caring democracy: Markets, equality, and justice*. nyu Press. Available at: <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=8HL0iVr2-sC&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=info:9BdXZQbuN8UJ:scholar.google.com&ots=Lj0Mcv9hsL&sig=ksPq9aS3NFrhWlyS7P2zqG7y7BM> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

Trueman, M. *et al.* (2010) 'Mind the gap: reputation, identity and regeneration in post-industrial cities', in G. Ashworth and Kavaratzis, Mihalis (eds) *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions*. Cheltenham, UK; Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 156–172.

Van Assche, K., Beunen, R. and Oliveira, E. (2020) 'Spatial Planning and place branding: rethinking relations and synergies', *European Planning Studies*, 20(7), pp. 1274–1290.

Veldpauw, L. and Szemző, H. (2021) 'Heritage as a Matter of Care, and Conservation as Caring for the Matter', in *Care and the City*. Routledge.

Vitiello, R. and Willcocks, M. (2021) 'How the city speaks to us and how we speak back: Rewriting the relationship between people and place', in C. Courage (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 517–529.

Vuignier, R. (2017) 'Place branding & place marketing 1976–2016: A multidisciplinary literature review', *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 14(4), pp. 447–473. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12208-017-0181-3>.

Warnaby, G., Koeck, R. and Medway, D. (2018) 'Maps and tours as metaphors for conceptualizing urban place representation for marketing/branding purposes', in M. Kavaratzis, M. Giovanardi, and M. Lichrou (eds) *Inclusive Place Branding: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge, pp. 98–110.

Wincott, A., Ravenscroft, N. and Gilchrist, P. (2020) 'Roses and castles: competing visions of canal heritage and the making of place', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 26(8), pp. 737–752.

Woodhead, C. (2023) *Caring for Cultural Heritage: An Integrated Approach to Legal and Ethical Initiatives in the United Kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Law in Context). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108696463>.

Acknowledgements

This work was undertaken within the framework of the Heriland-Consortium. HERILAND is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 813883. The ongoing PhD work is funded by the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

