

## *Access: Critical exploration of equity in higher education*

### **Special issue: Radical disruptions: Regenerating care-full academic norms**

For this Special Issue of *Access: Critical exploration of equity in higher education* we invite articles that engage with care and carers in academic cultures. We draw on Joan Tronto's definition of care as 'the set of activities by which we act to organize our world, so that we can live in it the best way possible' (Tronto, 2009: 14). We also follow Kathleen Lynch's (2009) approach, in adopting an encompassing definition of carers which includes those providing care to children, parents, friends and other members of their family and community. We acknowledge the multifaceted dimensions and manifestations of care, including in terms of physicality, emotions, feelings and organisational labour, as well as its intersectionalities, for example with gender, class, race or disability. Indeed, research highlights how being a carer in academia can be a particularly fraught experience for minoritized groups and for those for whom 'care of the self' is rendered necessary, for example because of illness or disability (Burford and Hook, 2019).

As the emergence of the pandemic has shed light on the troubled relationship between academic and care work, shifting the attention from the experiences of carers to the centrality of care work in and out of academia appears timely. Indeed, while research on caregivers has explored the social in/justices experienced by this group, this continuing focus also risks constructing caregivers as the problem and caring responsibilities as a burden. This take on carers also obscures how care work can be generative and transformative on an individual, kinship and broader societal level.

Academia is a place in which in/equalities around knowledges, practices and identities associated with care are actively produced through institutionalised forms of mis/recognition. Academic cultures epitomise a number of well-known tropes and binaries and, as such, offer a rich, heuristic lens to capture how social norms feed into processes of exclusion and inclusion. In particular, classed and racialised forms of masculinity are usually embedded in discourses of excellence. These discourses can marginalise or, even, exclude care work and those associated with it, and demand its invisibility. In intersection with some identity markers, care-based identities can compromise one's association with academic excellence (Moreau, 2016). In a context where quality and diversity have historically been construed as antagonistic, carers and groups who do not align neatly with the figure of the 'bachelor boy' (Edward, 1993) risk being constructed as 'space invaders' (Puwar, 2004) who dilute and/or pollute the elitism or purity of academic cultures. This calls for contributions adopting an intersectional and fine-grained approach to care/rs in academia and elsewhere, and exploring how care plays out in complex ways in the re/production of identities and in/equalities (Hook et al., 2022). Yet, and maybe more optimistically, we aim to explore ways that academic culture can enable creative response and a queering of conventional linear building of academic careers for carers.

While the policy intervention linked to Covid-19 has shed some light on some form of care work, other forms have remained hidden or misrecognised (Fraser, 1997). Recent research shows, for example, that some dimensions of care giving (e.g. emotional) and some types of caring responsibilities (other than the parenting of young, healthy, abled children) are marginalised. Claiming an identity as a caregiver risks further marginalising those who are already marginalised because of their positioning within the dominant race, gender and sexual order, while others may strengthen their privileges through such identity claims (see, e.g., Moreau and Robertson, 2019). This Special Issue seeks to engage in the silences and processes

of misrecognition which frame the contemporary debates about care in academia. Likewise, it also calls for a consideration of conventional constructions of care work often embedded in higher education policy narratives. Thus, we are interested in exploration of care work in its attachments to in/visibility and mis/recognition as well as to how care work is generative on a societal, institutional and individual level – for example through the development of new skills, life ambitions, and intra and intergenerational relationships. We also seek to capture how discourses of care work and carers intertwine with dominant ideologies, e.g. neoliberal discourses which commodify and marketize equity agendas (Ivancheva et al., 2019) as well as conservative agendas which push for the recruitment of international students, yet demonise migrants and stop them from traveling with their kins to their country of destination (Tsegay, 2022). We are also interested in looking at ruptures, such as moving away from special measures under Covid-19, challenging individualised, deficit discourses which construe care as a burdensome commodity. Last but not least, we seek contributions which ‘usualise’ academic norms which are care-full and radical.

For this Special Issue, we invite papers exploring questions of ‘care’, ‘caring’ and ‘care work’ in the context of higher education. Some of the questions the Special Issue’s editorial team seeks to engage with include:

- How are carers and care work rendered in/visible in academic settings and what does in/visibility do to care/rs?
- How are various forms of care work and various types of carers mis/recognised and how do such mis/recognition intersect with other identities?
- How can care work be generative on an individual, institutional or societal level? What are the affordances of care work and how does care work enable academia to operate?
- How do new and old ideologies construe carers and care work, e.g. the leaderist turn, the rise in far-right politics and xenophobia, the neoliberal appropriation of equity issues, etc.?
- Which new norms have emerged from the disruption caused by the pandemic and related policy intervention and how are these displacing the hierarchies of care work?

We acknowledge that the academic canon reiterates the carefreeness of intellectual thinking and positions excellence as out of reach for marginalised groups (Moreau and Galman, 2021). Conventional forms of academic writing in particular can be exclusionary. Linked to this, we welcome pieces in a diversity of formats, including journal articles, dialogues, interviews, poetry and artwork.

### **Special Issue Editors**

Dr. Genine Hook, Casual Academic, Southern Cross University, NSW, Australia - [genine.hook@scu.edu.au](mailto:genine.hook@scu.edu.au)

Prof. Marie-Pierre Moreau, Professor in Sociology of Education, Work and Inequalities, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK. [marie-pierre.moreau@aru.ac.uk](mailto:marie-pierre.moreau@aru.ac.uk)

### **Submitting an abstract**

To submit an abstract (approx.. 250 words) please email [ceehe@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:ceehe@newcastle.edu.au) or register/log-in to submit through the journal system. Instructions can be found on the about page.

## Special Issue timetable

Deadline for abstracts	1 February 2024
Decision on abstracts	8 February 20234
Submission of draft papers	31 May 2024
Review back to authors	30 June 2024
Submission of revised papers	31 August 2024
SI publication	October/November 2024

## References

- Burford, J. and Hook, G 2019, Curating care-full spaces: doctoral students negotiating study from home, *Higher Education Research & Development*, vol. 38 no. 7, pp. 1343–1355.
- Hook, G. Moreau, M.P & Brooks, R (eds.), 2022, *Student carers in higher education: Navigating, resisting and redefining academic cultures*, Routledge, London.
- Ivancheva, M., Lynch, K & Keating, K 2019, Precarity, gender and care in the neoliberal academy. *Gender, Work & Organizations*, vol. 26, pp. 448–462.
- Moreau, M.P 2016, Regulating the student body/ies: University policies and student parents, *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 42, no. 5, pp 906–925.
- Moreau, M.P. & Galman S.C 2021, Writing/drawing care-based equity into practice: A research- and art-based collaboration about caring responsibilities in academia [Special Issue], *Access: Critical Explorations of Equity in Higher Education*, vol. 9. no. 1, pp. 59–73, <https://novaajs.newcastle.edu.au/ceehe/index.php/iswp/article/view/163>.
- Moreau, M.P. & Robertson, M 2019, ‘You scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’? Support to academics who are carers in higher education, *Social Sciences* [Special Issue: Family and Work: Parental Leave and Careers], available online: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/8/6/164>.
- Puwar, N 2004, *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Berg, Oxford.
- Tronto, J 2009, *Moral boundaries. A political argument for an ethic of care*, Routledge, New York.
- Tsegay, S. M. 2022, 'Hope Springs Eternal: Exploring the Early Settlement Experiences of Highly Educated Eritrean Refugees in the UK', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 121255.