

# Gender and Agency: 'Care' as a Facilitator for Social Change

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**Abstract.** The notion of 'care' represents a significant expanse of women's lives that has remained unacknowledged and has been treated with contempt within the existing capitalist and patriarchal context. Moreover, it has been predominantly associated with the home-based reproduction arena, signifying oppression, and neglecting it as a capacity. This workshop intends to repurpose the language arising from the experiences of 'care' – from a feminist perspective – as an agency to critically inform theoretical and practical discourse of design that operates on non-hierarchical, informal, network-oriented participatory logics. Although socially engaged design is related to well-being and care yet is often ignored as feminist approach that highlights its significance in design practice. This workshop seeks to identify concepts on how the participants perceived and experienced 'care' at three different scales: micro (individual), meso (regional) and macro (global) concerning aspects of inclusion, respect, and alternate ways of thinking, collaborating, participating, and designing. A conceptual framework will be developed using participatory design methods to identify critical elements to inform design agency and recognize the overlapping relationships between them that engender flexibility for its adaptation within different contexts. This co-created knowledge will contribute towards creating a conceptual framework that can extend beyond the workshop; one that is based on a flexible structure that (1) promotes social inclusion and collectiveness, besides an individualistic and hierarchical structure; (2) generates human capacities guided by social values rather than economic inter-ests; (3) increases society's engagement and its members' role in inclining towards participation and action; (4) encourages participants for further collaborations to foster informal horizontal productive models. Post-workshop documentation and outcomes analysis is intended through a journal article about re-thinking co-design strategies from feminist capacities.

Further, this will eventually contribute and strengthen a broader discussion on the possibility of informing alternate design cultures from a non-patriarchal lens.

**Keywords:** Gender studies · Agency · Care · Alternative futures · Social design