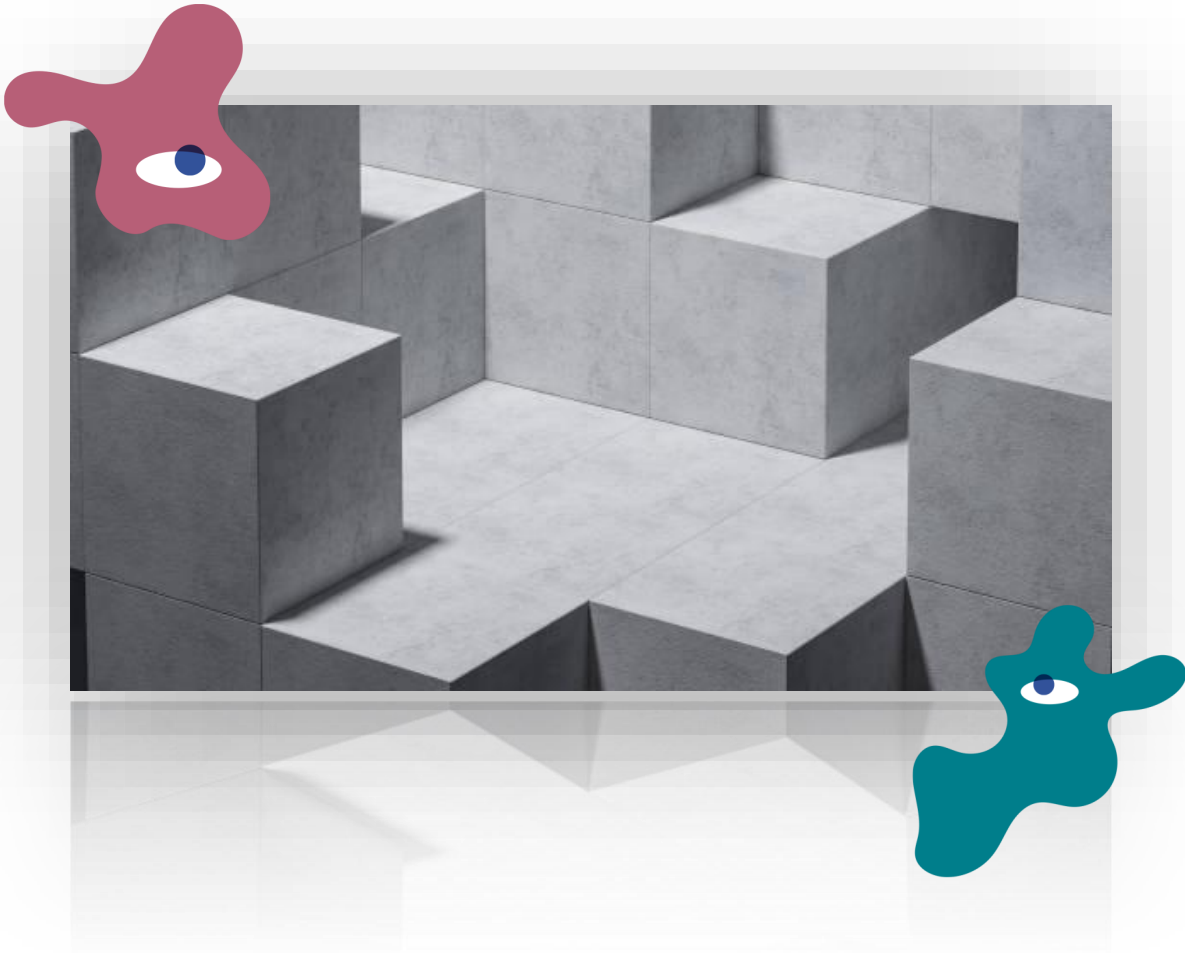Oemar van der Woerd

Caring networks:
Disentangling a governance order
in-the making

Caring in a network society

- Inducing actors to network is increasingly prioritised in healthcare reforms

- The **reconfiguration** of working patterns and boundaries

- How a *generic* network logic with great expectations work out in reality for healthcare management, policy and practice

- **Caring networks:** networked arrangements that consist of ties between *multiple* actors
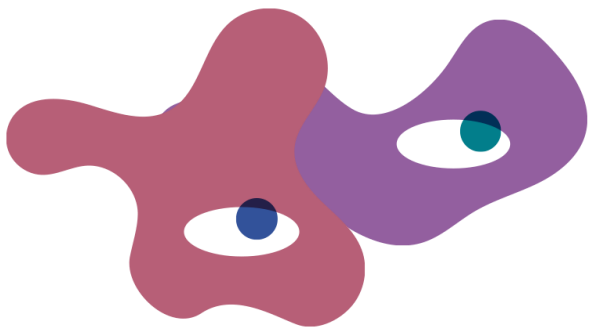
From networks to network*ing*

- An empirical deficit within network and management scholarship for '**everyday actions and interactions**'

Two main assumptions in theory:
1. Networks are *placeless* and *context-free*
2. Networks are *bounded entities*

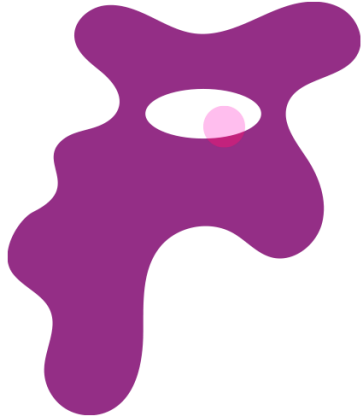- Societal and scientific impact: a practice-based understanding of caring networks
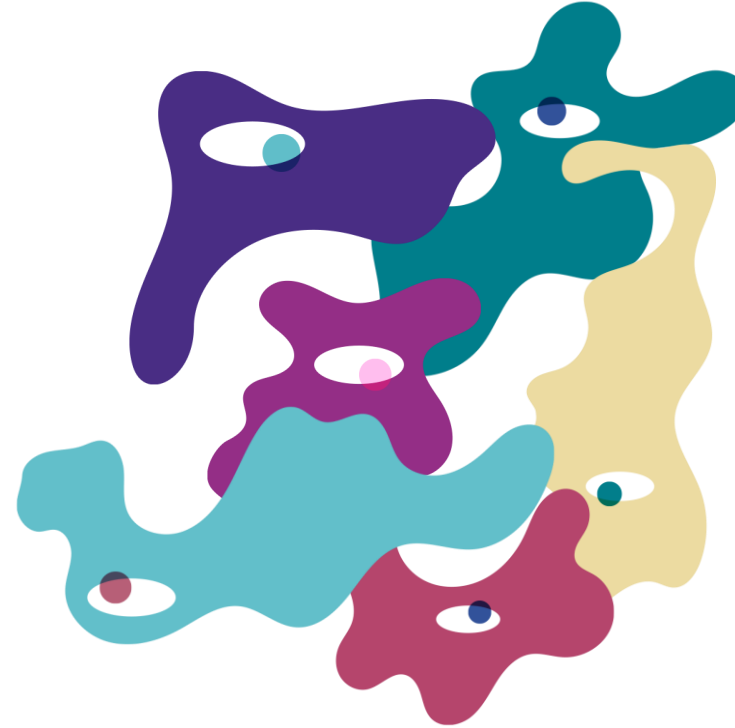
Research question

How does networking unfold in the everyday actions and interactions of affected actors, and with what consequences for their role and work?

'The network'

- A governance structure
- Actors as static objects
- Abstract and recognizable

Network*ing*

- Governing practices
- Actors as situated subjects
- Real-life understanding

Healthcare managers

Board rooms
Network meetings

Network coordinators

The network researcher

A multi-sited ethnography
Dutch older person and hospital care

Policymakers

(Medical) professionals

Shop-floors
Organizational meetings

Rounds of interviews
Participant observations
'Shadowing'
'Paper trail' of documents

Policy halls
Conferences
Regional gatherings

Cases of networking

1. **Hospital directors**: how to manage (through) a network of collaborations? Public Management Review

2. **A network platform:** how does this work for participating actors? International Journal of Integrated Care

3. **Network-building:** how to build a regional network over time? Public Administration

4. **Mediating policy figures:** how to mediate a regional policy discourse? (Social Policy & Administration)

5. **Health policy reform:** how to construct caring networks as a governance object? Policy & Politics

• Long-term situated engagement
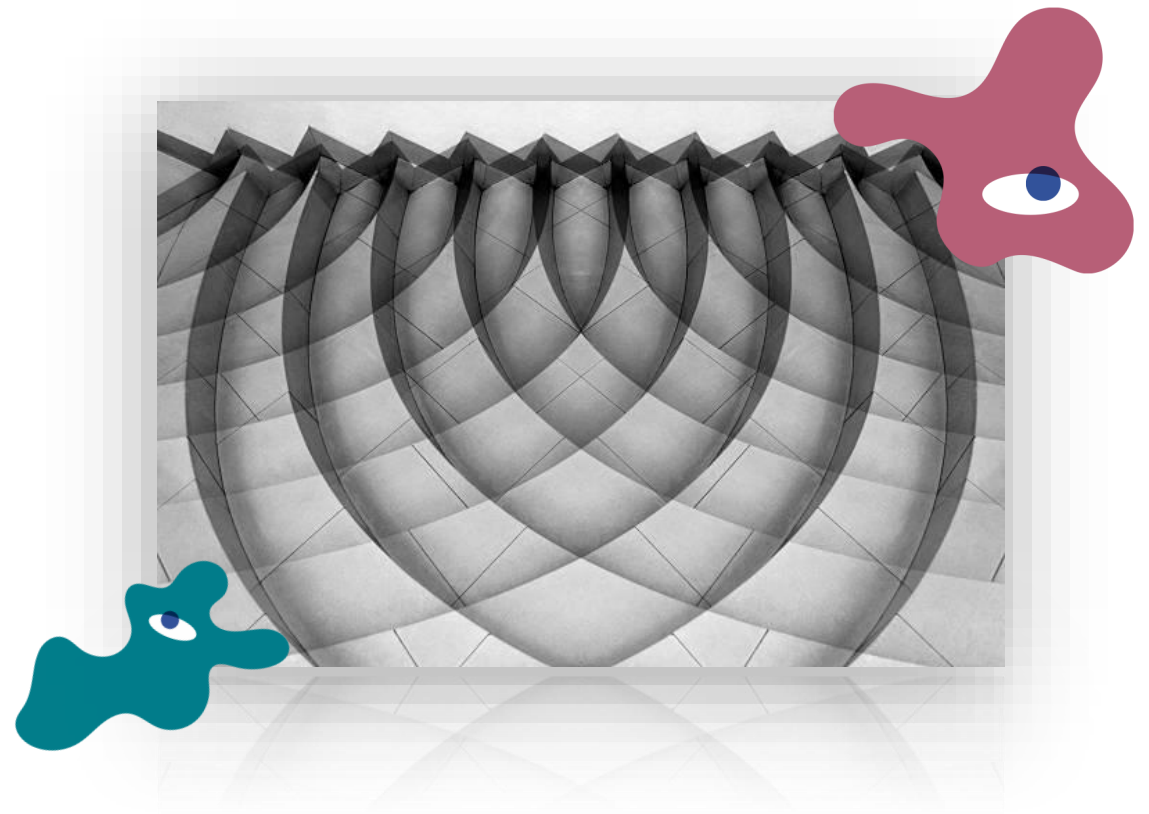
• Abductive logic of analysis

Caring networks

1. Multiple
2. Ongoing
3. Place-based
4. Multi-layered
5. Multi-purpose

Caring networks

1. **Multiple**
2. Ongoing
3. Place-based
4. Multi-layered
5. Multi-purpose

Networking is no standalone activity, but tied with many nodes of multiple networks

"[Networking] clashes with the responsibility I have for this organization. (...) I will never retain this position if the hospital is not doing well in financial terms as a result of multiple network involvement."
Hospital director

Caring networks

1. Multiple
2. **Ongoing**
3. Place-based
4. Multi-layered
5. Multi-purpose

Networking has no clear stop, but requires continuous work while navigating tensions

"I believe networking is central to our work, but it's added on top of regular care provision, requiring a lot of evening hours and many negotiations . (...) It's not yet an integrated part of my profession."
Medical professional

Caring networks

1. Multiple
2. Ongoing
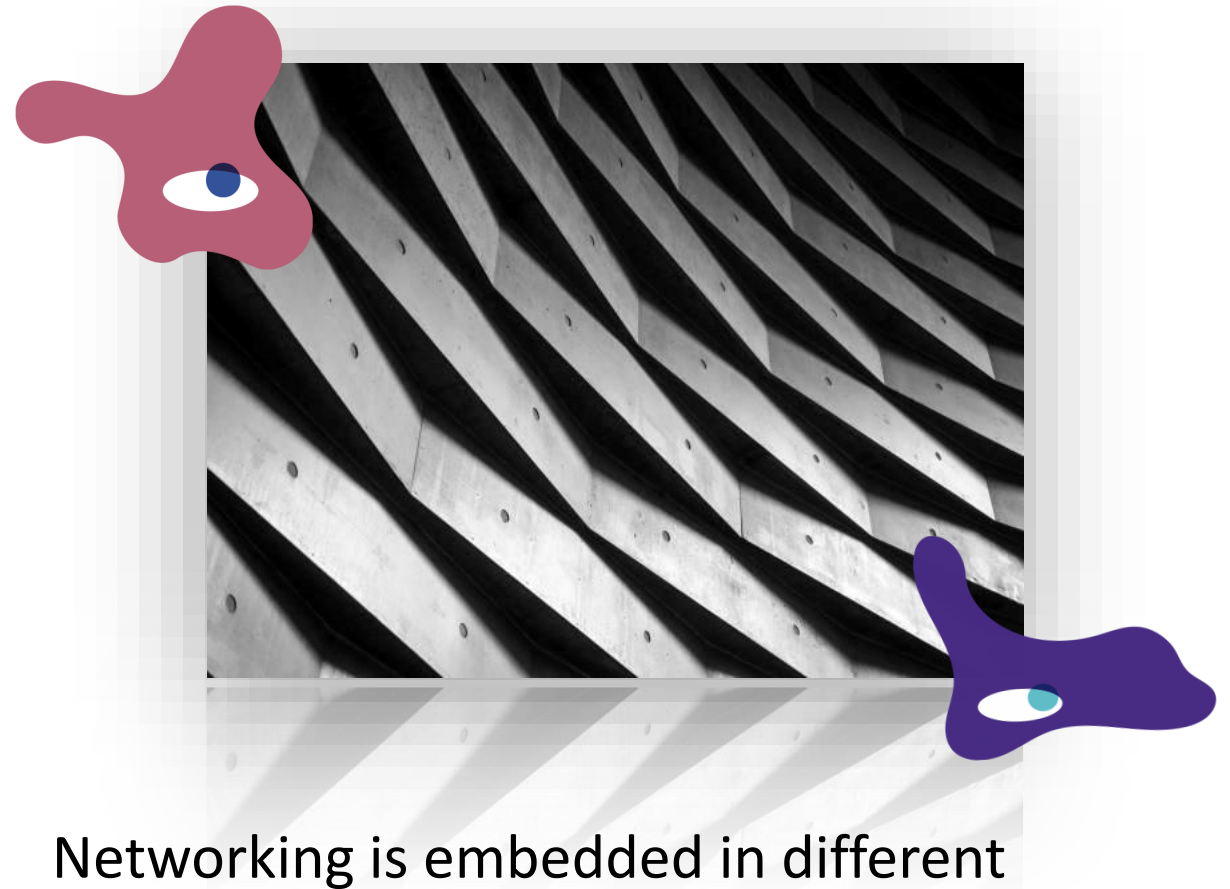3. **Place-based**
4. Multi-layered
5. Multi-purpose

Networking is situated; it cannot be decoupled from the sociocultural and institutional context

Network coordinator: *"We should first discuss similar network initiatives in the region. (...) Should we merge this project with others because of overlap?*

Older person care manager: *"We have to move from paper to collective action!"*

Caring networks

1. Multiple
2. Ongoing
3. Place-based
4. **Multi-layered**
5. Multi-purpose

Networking is embedded in different organizational and policy levels

"*I am like a linking pin, but my role is somewhat hidden. I connect regional actors with 'The Hague' and explore alternative routes to build regional networks in a fragmented system that is hindering.*"
Regional policy advisor

Caring networks
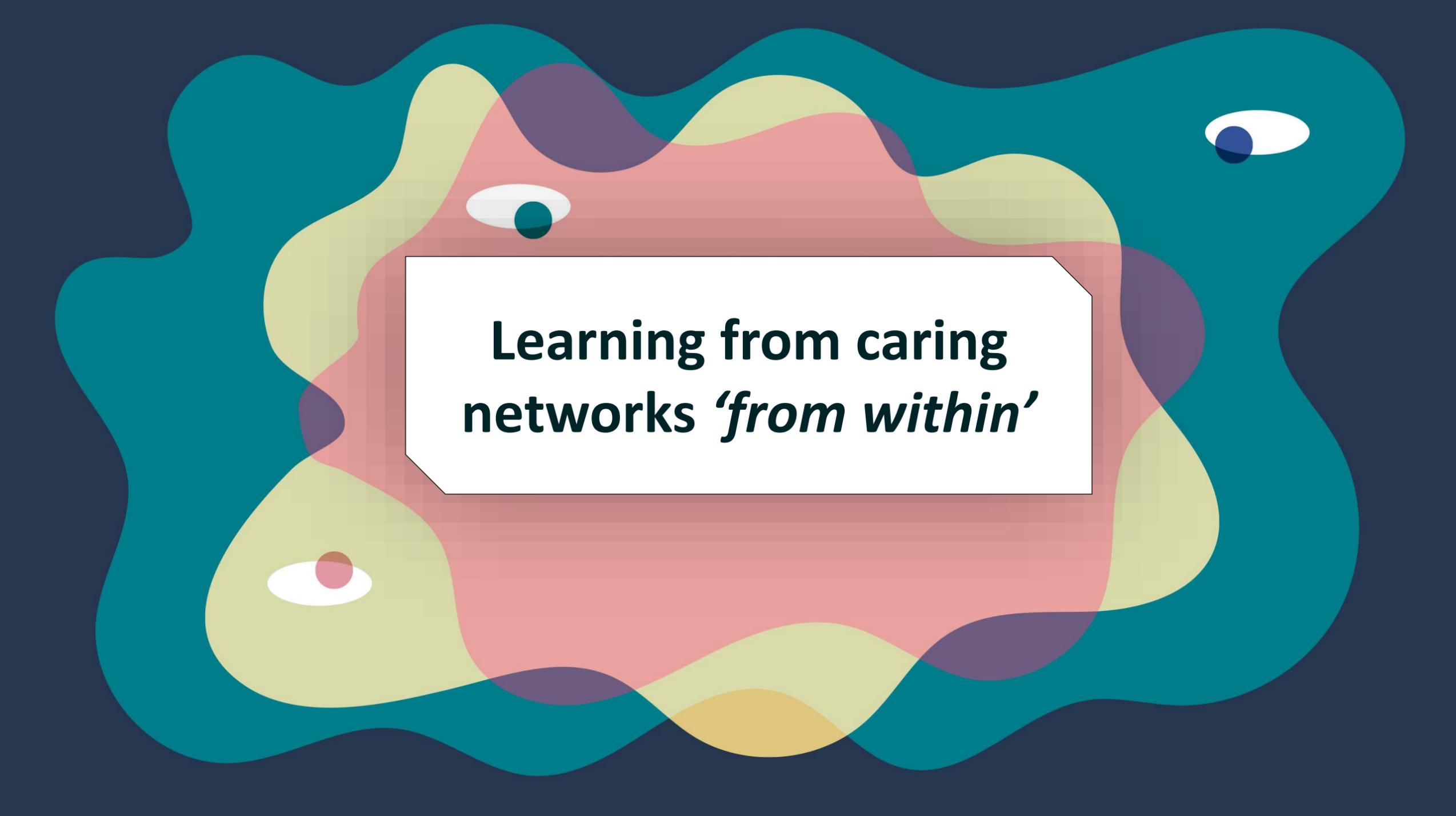
1. Multiple
2. Ongoing
3. Place-based
4. Multi-layered
5. **Multi-purpose**

Networking allows for many sensemaking possibilities for affected actors

"Over time, the network purpose expanded from clinical pathways to regional coordination <u>crossing</u> hospital care. (…) Our network is now taken more seriously during negotiations with the MoH."
Medical professional

Learning from caring networks *'from within'*

The doings, meanings and workings of caring networks

- **Networking is not a given, nor power-free, and requires pragmatic work**

- Acknowleding the mundanity of networked arrangements

- A plea against overly romanticizing network arrangements

- Impact for healthcare management, policy, practice and research

Many thanks for your attention.
Please feel free to reach out.

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The ethnography of caring networks
Disentangling a governance order in-the-making

Oemar van der Woerd

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