

EuroMemorandum Annual Workshop 2023  
27-28 September 2023, University of Parthenope - Napoli

Final Plenary

## The Crisis of Social Reproduction in the EU

### Emerging Policy Perspectives from Feminist Economics Debates on Care

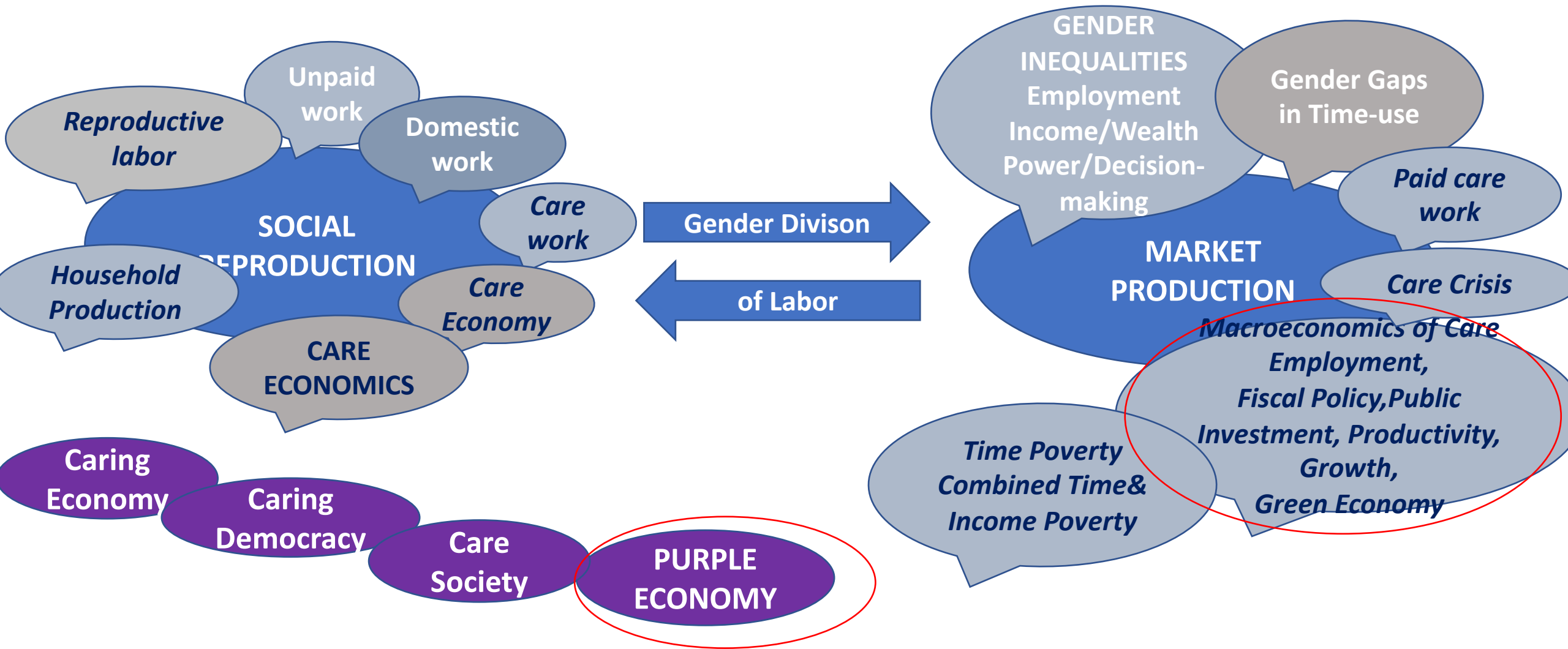
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# Evolution of Discourse from Social Reproduction to Care



# The Care Economy?

Production of goods and services necessary for physical, social, emotional wellbeing of children, elderly, ill, disabled as well as of healthy, prime-working age adults, including self-care; so as to allow them to function at a socially acceptable level of capability, comfort and safety.\*

**Household Production:**  
**16.4 billion hrs/day**  
**(≈2 billion full-time jobs)**  
**25% performed by men**  
**Northern Europe: 45%**

UNPAID Work

Household Production

Volunteer and Community Work

Care Work for the Environment

Rural work such as fetching water/firewood, food production/processing for self-consumption\*

PAID Work

**381 million workers**  
**11.5% of global employment**  
**2/3 are women**  
**Europe&CA: 20% of employment**  
**3/4 are women**

Health Care incl. Long-Term Care

Education incl. Early Child Care and Education

Social Services

Domestic Services

Personal Services

\* Himmelweit 2007; source: UNW-ILO Ilkkaracan 2021

# Extended Definitions: Care Economy, Caring Labor → Social Reproduction

- Beyond individuals/households care to also entail

CARE for

- Community Wellbeing
- Nature and Ecological Wellbeing
- Wellbeing of all living species

***Joan Tronto (2013), Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice***

*Care as “everything we do to maintain, continue and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible.*

*That world includes (not only) our bodies, ourselves (but also) our environment,  
all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.”*

# Crisis of Care, Crisis of Social Reproduction

- ***Decreasing willingness and ability of people to care, erosion of caring norms*** (Himmelweit 2007)
  - ***Growing imbalances within and across societies in access to care*** (Floro 2012)
    - through overwhelming **prioritization** of the use of resources towards meeting the requirements of market production over those of social reproduction
  - ***Emerging care gaps in long-term care in aging societies; the unmet care needs in the face of health shocks and the increasing pressures on care under the climate change as indicators of a care crisis*** (UNDP - HDR 2015)
    - + *global pandemic(s), migration crisis, natural disasters*
- Investing in Care → not only for equality but also for building resilience against shocks*

# PURPLE ECONOMY

- Appeals to the widely used concept of *'the Green Economy'*
- Uses *Purple* → symbolic color of women's movements in some countries

a catchphrase capturing the vision of a *gender equal* and *caring* economic order

- *European Women's Lobby: Purple Pact – A Feminist Approach to the Economy*
- *International Women's Rights Action Watch IWRAW-AP (Malaysia); Women for Women's Human Rights (Turkiye)*

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES** (*Ilkkaracan 2023*):

1. Warns against the trade-off's between the objectives of gender equality and caring.
2. Rests on simultaneous perspectives of care givers and care receivers.
3. Emphasizes the complementarities of a Purple Economy with other economic and social objectives beyond gender equality and caring: ALSO WITH SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT ECONOMIC ORDER.

# PURPLE ECONOMY – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Warns against the trade-off's between the objectives of gender equality and caring.

- A Caring Economy → ???? → A Gender Equal Economy
  - *part-time, flexible work for women; pensions for women in full-time homemaking; universal basic income*
- A Gender Equal Economy → ???? → A Caring Economy
  - *Employer subsidies for women's employment, support to women's entrepreneurship*
  - McKinsey Global Institute Reports: *Trillions of dollars* can be added to global GDP if women were to access the same employment patterns (rates, hours and wages) as men
  - *What happens to billions of hrs of unpaid care work?*

2. Rests on 2 guiding principles of **simultaneous perspectives of caregivers and care receivers**:

- Equality in **care giving** through co-responsibility
  - Between private households and the state; **between women and men**
- Equality in **care receiving** through universal access to quality care
  - Independent of work-life balance of employed people
  - Equal access to QUALITY care across children, elderly, disabled

# PURPLE ECONOMY - – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3. Emphasizes the complementarities of a Purple Economy with other economic and social policy objectives beyond gender equality and caring:

- *Jobs generation and unemployment reduction*
- *Poverty alleviation, eliminating intersectional inequalities (not only gender but by class, origin, ...)*
- *Human capital and Productivity enhancement*
- *Sustainable, inclusive and resilient economies*

## **Applied Empirical Policy Simulations on Investing in Care**

- Care services sector has the highest employment multiplier
- Hence the greatest potential for generating a higher number of jobs per Euro invested than spending on other sectors
- + greater potential for decreasing socioeconomic inequalities and alleviating poverty

*ILO 2018; Ikkaracan, Kim & Kaya 2015; 2019; Antonopoulos and Kim 2010; 2012; de Henau et.al. 2016, 2017; Zacharias, et.al. 2019*

*ILO-UNW Policy Tool on Investing in Care (2021)*



# Four Pillars of a Purple Economy

## Universal Social Care Infrastructure



*Accesible and Quality*

*Healthcare*

*Education*

*Care Services*

for children, youth, elderly,  
disabled and ill;

**PURPLE JOBS**

## Labor Market Regulation for work-life balance

with equal gender incentives  
towards

**Dual earner, dual carer families**



Care leave, flexible work, **shorter  
work weeks**, decent pay and  
work conditions for care  
workers, elimination of gender  
discrimination in labor markets

## Time-saving Physical Infrastructure for Rural Communities



Improvements in rural water,  
energy, transport  
infrastructure to reduce  
indirect care work;  
green investments in  
sustainable agriculture and  
rural production

## Enabling Macroeconomic Environment

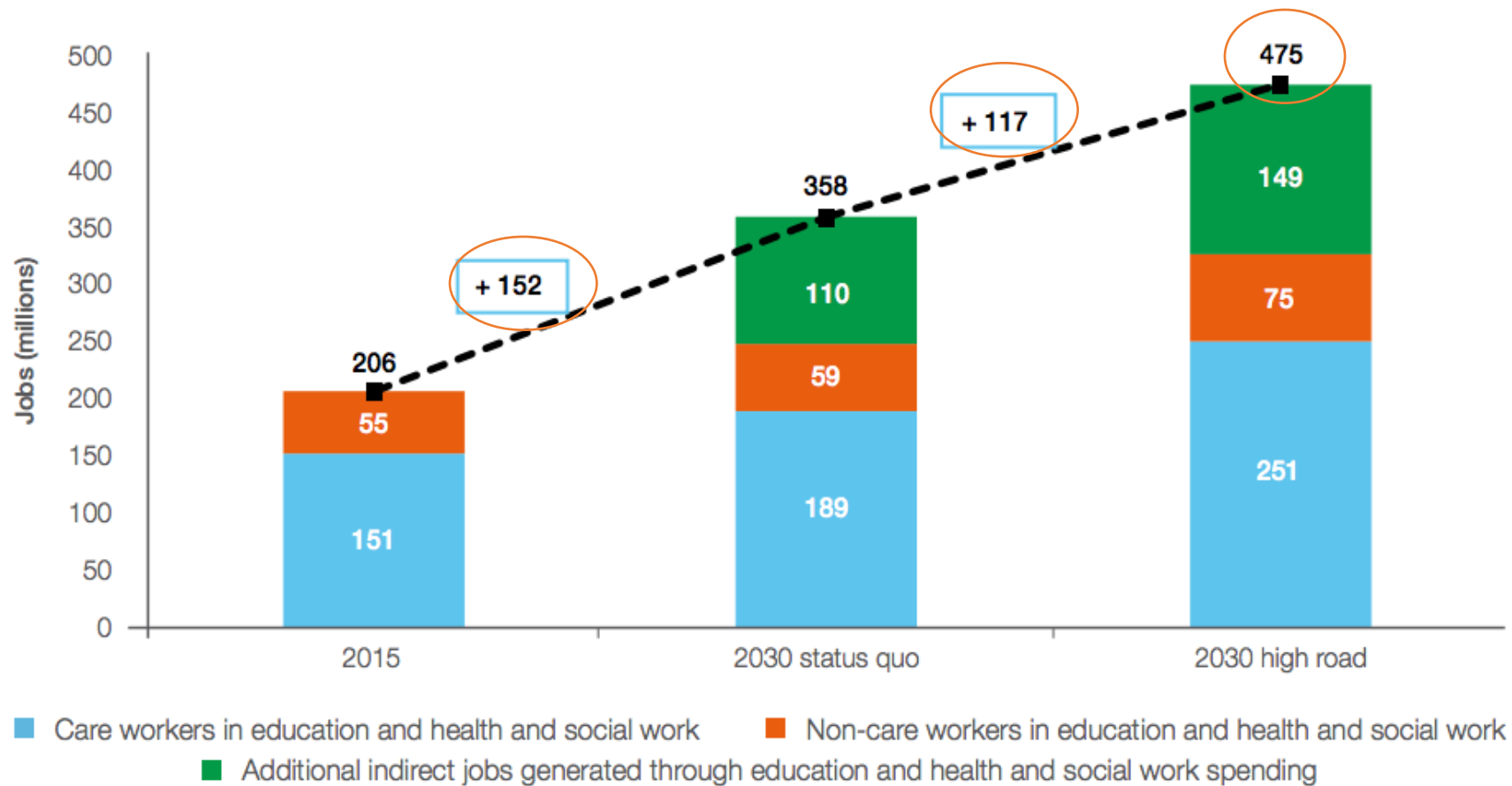


Decent jobs generation,  
inclusive, sustainable and  
resilient economy as the  
priority objectives of fiscal,  
monetary and industrial  
policy;  
growth only as one of the  
tools to achieve these  
objectives

# Investing in Social Care in 45 Countries, complying with SDGs by 2030

## Future Jobs Creation

**Figure 5.11. Total care and related employment – 2015 vs. 2030 status quo and high road scenarios**



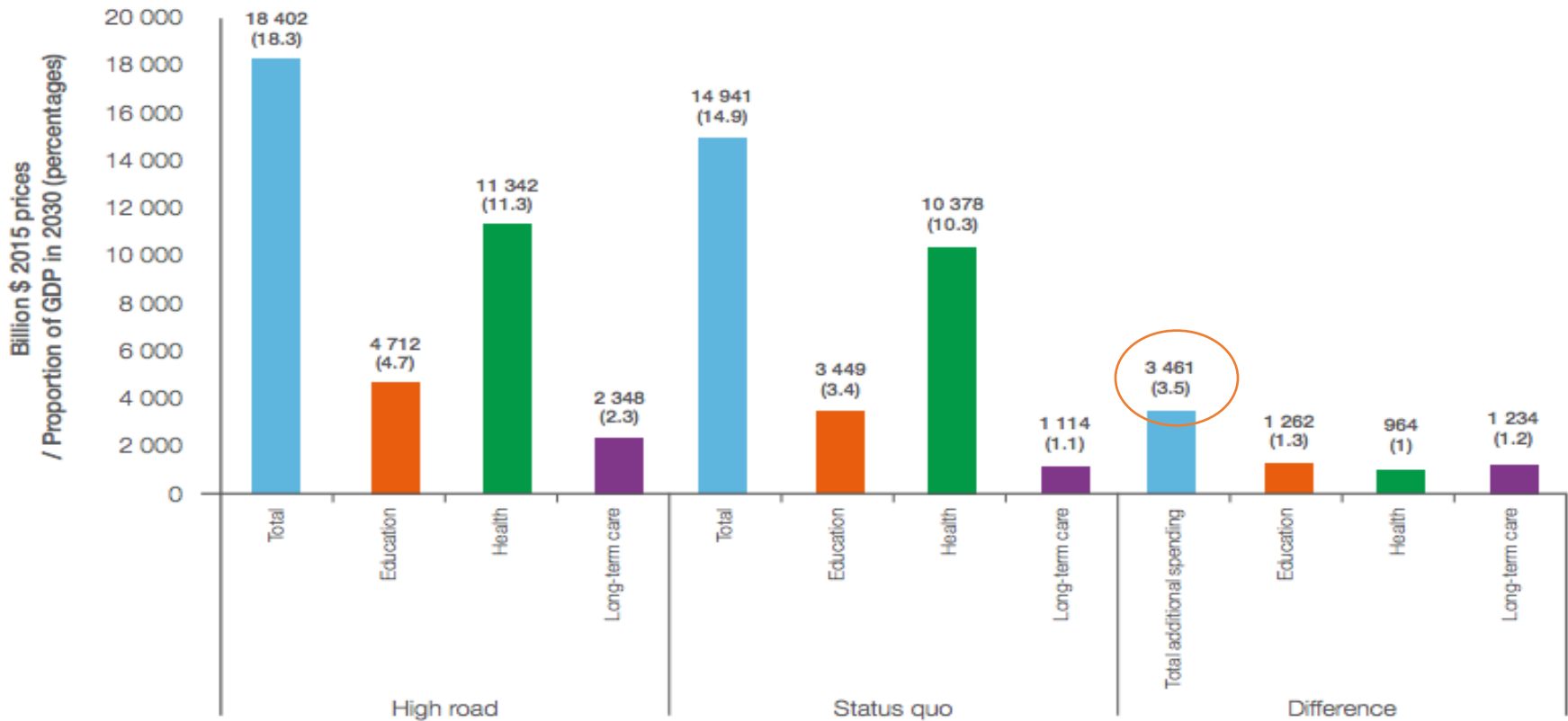
Note: For 2015, ILO calculations based on labour force and household survey microdata.

Source: Ilkkaracan and Kim, forthcoming.

Source: ILO 2018; Ilkkaracan and Kim 2019

# Investing in Social Care in 45 Countries, complying with SDGs by 2030 Additional Fiscal Spending Required

**Figure 5.12. Total care expenditure, by sector**



Source: Ilkkaracan and Kim, forthcoming.

<i>Complementarities</i>	<i>Green Economy</i>	<i>Purple Economy</i>
<p>a response to ...</p> <p>also to the economic crisis</p>	<p>the environmental crisis - sustainability of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Purple Jobs are also Green Jobs</i></li> <li>• <i>for gender equality in a green economy you need Purple interventions</i></li> </ul>	<p>the crisis of care - ty of provisioning by caring labor</p> <p><i>Purple Jobs</i></p>
<p>acknowledges that beyond consumption of commodities, human well-being depends on access to</p>	<p>healthy ecosystems</p>	<p>quality care</p>
<p>accounts for</p>	<p>the value of nature</p>	<p>the value of unpaid care work</p>
<p>organized around internalization of ... into the production and consumption patterns</p>	<p>environmental costs</p>	<p>the costs of caring labor</p>
<p>aims at elimination of ... through redistribution of costs</p>	<p>inter-generational inequalities</p>	<p>inequalities by gender, class, origin</p>
<p>calls for a reordering of priorities from consumption</p>	<p>to nature</p>	<p>to nurture</p>
<p>from GDP growth</p> <p><i>Ilkkaracan 2013; 2017</i></p>	<p>to sustainable and equitable growth (or even de-growth)</p>	

## CONCLUDING WITH POLICY INSIGHTS

1. *Interventions incentivizing/enabling/mandating **an increase in men's unpaid and paid care work time***  
*Rather than exclusive focus on decreasing women's unpaid care work*
2. *Shift dominant focus of care policies on employed care givers' needs (from enabling work-life balance) to **Care receivers' needs for UNIVERSAL and QUALITY access***
3. ***Treat Care as an important Services Sector** for achieving multiple economic/social policy targets*
  - *Make fiscal space for sufficient public investment with a social infrastructure approach*
  - *Sectoral policies*
    - *Professionalization and decent work*
    - *Innovation of new services*
    - *Explore safe spaces for increasing productivity, technological innovation, digitalization in Care Services while cognizant of any trade-offs with quality and inclusions*

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