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ROADMAP TO A CARING ECONOMICS: BEYOND CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

Riane Eisler, JD, PhD (hon.)

Abstract:

Our unprecedented technological, economic, and environmental challenges call for thinking that goes beyond capitalism and socialism, both of which were developed in early industrial times. This article outlines a caring economics or *partnerism* that supports not only human survival but also human development. It proposes a full-spectrum economic map and economic policies needed at this time when many jobs are being replaced by automation. It looks at issues generally ignored in the conversation about a new economics, such as intra-household resource allocation, the devaluation of women and the 'feminine,' and the view that caring for people, starting in early childhood, is merely reproductive rather than productive work. It examines economic systems in the larger context of societies orienting to either end of the domination-partnership social scale, showing the interaction between social values and economic priorities. It describes new metrics that, unlike GDP and GNP, demonstrate the economic value of caring for people and nature, and proposes other steps toward a caring economics as the basis for a more humane and sustainable future.

Keywords: economics, children, post-industrial, caring economics, women, domination, partnership, capitalism, socialism, values, metrics, intra-household resource allocation, gender discrimination, quality of life, human infrastructure

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Today we increasingly hear about a new economics. However, economic policy is still framed primarily by capitalist or socialist theory. This paper starts from a different perspective. It proposes that when we think of a new economics, we think of children.

What kind of economic policies and practices are needed so that all children are healthy, get a sound education, and are prepared to live good lives? What kind of

economic system helps - or prevents - children from expressing the capacities that make us fully human: consciousness, empathy, caring, and creativity?

Addressing these questions is the point of departure for designing an economic system that promotes not only human survival but full human development: a caring economics or *partnerism* (Eisler, 2007).

BEYOND CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

When children are the starting point for a new economic paradigm, we move beyond both capitalist and socialist theory. This does not mean discarding everything from capitalism and socialism, as we need both markets and central planning. But to effectively address our unprecedented economic, environmental, technological, and social challenges requires that we go deeper, to matters that conventional economic theories ignore.

Both capitalism and socialism came out of early industrial times, and we are now well into the post-industrial age. So on that count alone, those theories would be antiquated. But there is an even more fundamental problem: both capitalism and socialism fail to include in their definition of “productive work” (Marx & Engels 1960; Smith, 1937) the work of caring for people, starting in early childhood, and caring for our natural environment.

Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx ignored the vital importance of nature’s life-sustaining activities; for them, nature exists to be exploited. As for the life-sustaining activities of caring for people starting in childhood, they considered this ‘women’s work’ - merely ‘reproductive’ labor, and not part of their ‘productive’ economic equation (Marx & Engels, 1960; Smith, 1937; Eisler, 2007). Though strongly criticized by feminist economists, this distinction between ‘productive’ and ‘reproductive’ labor has been at the core of both capitalist and socialist thinking (Elson 1991; Norton & Elson 2002; Hennessy, 2003; Kabeer, 2003).

The focus of both capitalist and socialist theory is on the exchange of goods and services in the market (which Smith extolled and Marx excoriated). Consequently, in curricula taught to this day, the domain of economics consists of only three sectors: the market economy, the government economy, and, more recently, the illegal economy.

This old economic map (Figure 1) fails to include the three life-sustaining economic sectors: the household economy, the natural economy, and the volunteer economy.

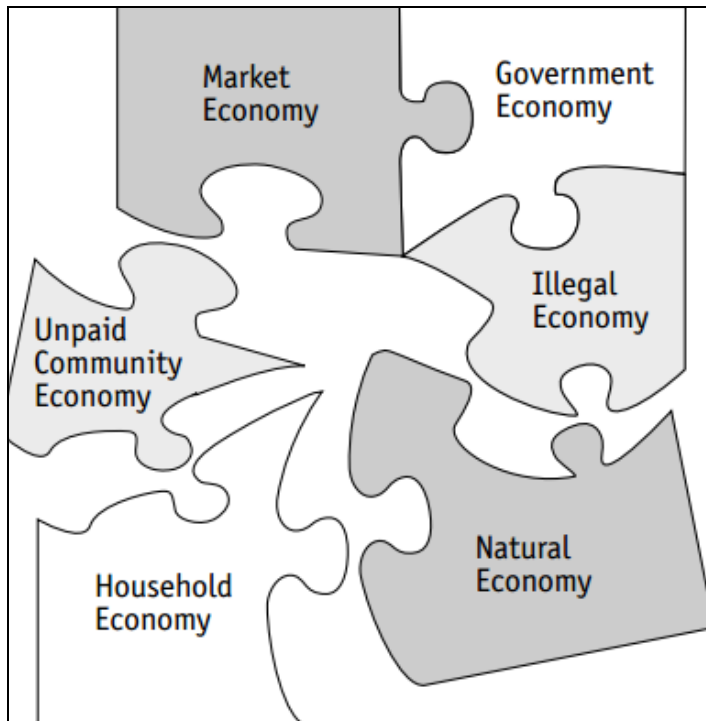


Figure 1. Old Economic Map

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The limitation of economics to goods and services that change hands in the market not only ignores that there would be no workforce if it were not for the three life-sustaining economic sectors of the household, natural, and volunteer economy. It also ignores that the work of caring for people and for nature has economic value.

To build a truly new economics requires a *full-spectrum* economic map that includes these sectors and gives visibility and value to the most essential human work: the work of caring for people, starting in early childhood, and caring for our natural environment (Figure 2).

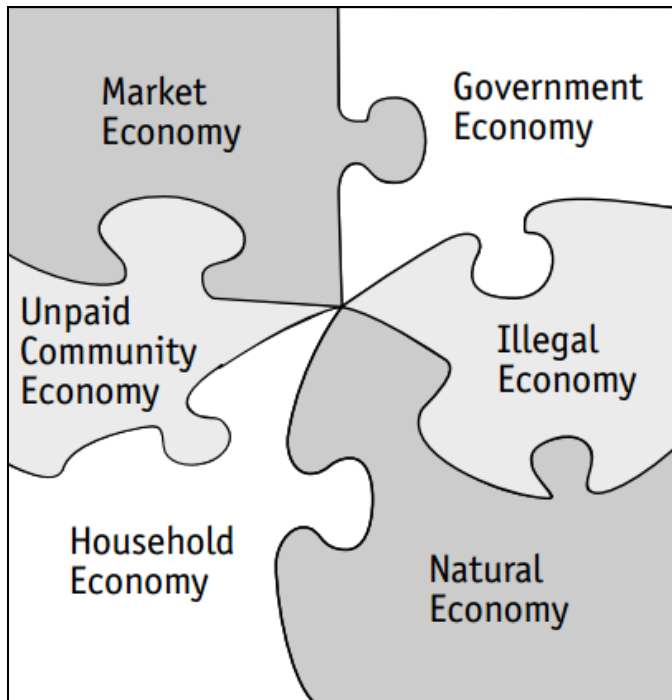


Figure 2. New Economic Map

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This leads to another vital matter ignored in conventional economic courses and discussions. This is that economic systems do not arise in a vacuum: they are influenced by, and in turn influence, the larger social system in which they are embedded.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF ECONOMICS

Both capitalism and socialism were attempts to improve people's economic situation (Marx & Engels, 1960; Smith, 1937). Adam Smith believed that his economic proposals would lead to the greater good of all (Lux 1990; Martinelli & Smelser 1990). Karl Marx

wanted to assuage the terrible poverty and exploitation of workers of early industrial capitalism. But while capitalism did help to enlarge the middle class, and socialism brought peasants and workers out of extreme poverty, neither system worked out as their progenitors had hoped.

To understand the inadequacies of both theories, as well as the failures of their real-life social applications, requires looking at their social contexts. It also requires that we go beyond conventional social categories such as socialist vs. capitalist, religious vs. secular, rightist vs. leftist, Eastern vs. Western, industrial vs. postindustrial (Eisler, 2007).

All our conventional social categories only describe a particular feature of a social system, such as location, ideology, or level of technology. None tells us what kinds of relations - including economic relations - a particular social system supports.

The new social categories of *partnership system* and *domination system* describe the core configurations of societies that support two very different kinds of relations - from intimate to international. The domination system supports relations of top-down rankings: man over man, man over woman, race over race, religion over religion, nation over nation, and man over nature. The partnership system supports relations of mutual respect, accountability, and benefit. And the degree to which a time and place orients to either end of the partnership-domination social scale affects every social institution - from the family, education, and religion to politics and economics (Eisler 1987, 1995, 2007, 2017).

DOMINATION SYSTEMS

The core configuration of the domination system consists of top-down rankings in the family, state, and/or tribe, maintained by physical, psychological, and economic control; the ranking of the male half of humanity over the female half, and, with this, the devaluation by both men and women of anything stereotypically considered

feminine; and a high degree of culturally accepted abuse and violence – from child- and wife-beating to pogroms, terrorism, and/or chronic warfare.

If from this new perspective we re-examine the critique of capitalism as unjust, violent, and exploitive, we see that it is in reality a critique of the structures and relationships inherent in domination systems - be they ancient or modern, Western or Eastern, feudal, monarchic, or totalitarian. Long before capitalist billionaires amassed huge fortunes, Egyptian pharaohs and Chinese emperors lived in almost unimaginable luxury while their 'subjects' barely survived. Indian potentates demanded tributes of silver and gold while lower castes often starved. Middle Eastern warlords pillaged, plundered, and terrorized their people. European feudal lords killed their neighbors and oppressed their subjects. In all these pre-capitalist times and places, the gap between haves and have-nots was astronomical, and the mass of people lived in abject poverty. In short, all these are examples of rigid domination systems.

From this new perspective, we can also see that Smith developed capitalist theory in a time when rankings of domination were still generally accepted. The ranking of 'superiors' over 'inferiors' was still the general norm: kings were to rule their 'subjects,' men were to rule women and children, and 'superior' races were to rule over 'inferior' ones. While Marx's theories came out of times when there were already organized challenges to these rankings, they too reflected and perpetuated assumptions inherent in domination systems, including the ranking of men and 'masculinity' over women and anything considered 'feminine,' such as caring, caregiving, and nonviolence.

Moreover, when Marx's theories were applied in the former Soviet Union and China, they were in cultures where rigid top-down rankings backed by fear and force had long been the norm. So while these two large-scale modern applications of socialism alleviated some economic disparities, they were authoritarian and violent, and hardly egalitarian.

I saw this inequality first hand in 1984 when I visited the Soviet Union as a U.S. delegate to Nordic Women for Peace, which marched on both Washington DC and Moscow to promote nuclear disarmament. Despite the efforts of our Soviet hosts to keep us from contact with ‘ordinary’ Russians, I could not help seeing how stark these inequalities were. While most Russians lived in overcrowded small flats, we stayed in a luxury hotel’s royal suite with gilded furniture and a grand piano in its foyer. While most Russians lacked the most basic consumer goods, the showcase stores for foreigners had full shelves, and we and the Soviet officials who hosted us drank champagne and ate caviar.

Nor did either of these regimes protect our natural environment any more than capitalist nations did. In fact, their environmental records are atrocious, as evidenced by disasters such as Chernobyl in the USSR and strip mining, air pollution, and other environmental calamities in China.

From the perspective of the partnership-domination social scale, none of this is surprising. In both the Soviet Union and China, socialism was imposed in cultures that oriented closely to the configuration of the domination system, in which top-down rankings maintained by fear and force had long been the norm and where women and the ‘feminine’ were held in low regard. Indeed, feminism was outlawed in the former Soviet Union and has yet to gain a foothold in China.

While the United States and other Western societies have in some respects moved more toward the partnership side of the social scale, they too retain a powerful domination heritage. Moreover, this forward movement has been punctuated by increasingly severe regressions to domination, politically as well as economically (Eisler, 2007, 2017)

Indeed, neo-liberalism can best be understood in the context of movement back to the domination side of the social scale. Neoliberal rhetoric is about freedom rather

than control, but what this really means is for those in control to be free from government regulations so they can do what they want.

Neoliberal policies are designed to reconsolidate wealth and power in the hands of those on top (Harvey, 2005, 2011). Its mantra of “trickle-down economics” was basically a return to the ‘traditional’ order in which those on the bottom were to be content with the crumbs dropping from their masters’ opulent tables. Neoliberal policies’ heavy investment in armaments fit with the domination system’s use of force to impose or maintain control. The neoliberals’ alliance with the religious right reinforced another core component of domination systems: a ‘traditional’” male-headed family in which the ranking of one half of humanity over the other half is deemed normal and moral, and children learn that it is very painful to question orders, no matter how unjust.

With this ranking of male over female, neoliberalism conformed to another distinguishing feature of domination systems: contempt for the ‘soft’ or stereotypically ‘feminine.’ For people who adhere to neoliberal economics, there is never enough money to fund government programs designed to care for people, such as health care, childcare, and aid to poor families.

PARTNERSHIP SYSTEMS

The partnership system has a very different configuration. Its core elements are a democratic and egalitarian structure in both the family and the state or tribe; equal partnership between women and men; and a low degree of violence because it’s not needed to maintain rigid rankings of domination.

Nordic nations such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland are the contemporary countries that have moved most closely to the partnership side of the partnership-domination continuum. They have more equality in both the family and the state; a higher status of women (approximately 40 percent of their national legislators are female); and

concerted efforts to leave behind traditions of violence: they pioneered the first peace studies and the first laws prohibiting physical discipline of children in families, and have a strong men's movement to disentangle 'masculinity' from its equation with domination and violence (Eisler, 2007).

In accordance with their more partnership-oriented social configuration, these nations have government-supported childcare, universal health care, stipends to help families care for children, elder care with dignity, and generous paid parental leave. These more caring policies, in turn, made it possible for these nations to move from extreme poverty (famines in the early 20th century) to societies with a generally high standard of living for all.

While they are not ideal societies, Nordic countries do not have the huge gaps between haves and have-nots characteristic of domination-oriented nations. They have low poverty and crime rates and high longevity rates. They are also the world's most literate nations, as measured by both behaviors and supporting resources such as library and computer availability (McKenna & Miller, 2016).

Nordic nations also pioneered environmentally sound industrial approaches, such as the Swedish "Natural Step." Not only that, some of the first experiments in industrial democracy came from Sweden and Norway, as did studies showing that a more participatory structure, in which workers play a part in deciding such basic matters as how to organize tasks and what hours to work, can be extremely effective (Haug, 2004).

Moreover, Nordic nations have a long history of business cooperatives - jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises that, as one of their guiding principles, have concern for the community in which they operate. These cooperatives have also been heavily involved in renewable energy projects.

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

The Nordic nations' success has sometimes been attributed to their relatively small and homogeneous populations, and in Norway's case to rich supplies of fossil fuels. But small, homogeneous societies such as some oil-rich Middle-Eastern nations, where absolute conformity to one religious sect and one tribal or royal head is demanded, have large gaps between haves and have-nots and other inequities characteristic of domination systems.

So we have to look at other factors to understand why Nordic nations moved out of poverty and developed a prosperous, more caring and equitable economic system in a relatively short time. When we do, we see that what made these nations successful was that moving toward the partnership configuration made it possible for them to become what they sometimes call themselves: "caring societies." And one of the core components of their more caring democracy and economy, in contrast to the domination system, is equality between the male and female halves of humanity.

Women have occupied the highest political offices in the Nordic world. Along with this higher status of Nordic women came a higher valuing of the 'soft' or stereotypically feminine - in both men and women as well as in social and economic policy. Accordingly, both men and women in these nations have voted for universal health care, generous paid parental leave for both mothers and fathers, and other policies that give value and visibility to the work of caring for people and nature. Moreover, their more caring economics has translated into their high investment in aid to poor nations all over the world.

This takes us back to where we started: the need to restructure economic systems in ways that go beyond the old capitalism vs. socialism debate. When societies move toward the partnership side of the partnership-domination social scale, women and the 'feminine' are not devalued, and this benefits not only women but also men and children of both genders.

We have empirical evidence of this - although once again it is still ignored in conventional economic and social analyses. *Women, Men, and the Global Quality of Life* is a pioneering study conducted by the Center for Partnership Studies (Eisler, Loye, & Norgaard, 1995) that compared statistical measures from 89 nations on the status of women with measures of quality of life such as infant mortality, human rights ratings, and environmental ratings. The study found that the status of women is a powerful predictor of quality of life.

Other studies also verify this relationship between the status of women and a society's general quality of life. The World Values Survey is the largest international survey of attitudes and how they correlate with economic development and political structure. In 2000 this survey focused attention on attitudes about gender. Based on data from 65 societies representing 80 percent of the world's population, it found a strong relationship between support for gender equality and a society's level of political rights, civil liberties, and quality of life (Inglehart, Norris, & Welzel, 2002).

There are many reasons for a correlation of the status of women with a higher or lower quality of life for all. One, of course, is that women are half of humanity. But the reasons go much deeper, to the still largely unrecognized dynamics of domination systems. Here are two examples:

Gender Discrimination:

Due to the international women's movement, the discrepancy in pay between women and men, as well as between professions in which males or females are predominant, is now widely recognized. But this gender discrimination is only the tip of an iceberg we have inherited from more rigid domination times.

So extreme is this gender discrimination that in some world regions, parents (both mothers and fathers) often not only give girls less health care but also feed girls less food than boys (Eisler, 2013). These practices obviously have extremely adverse

consequences for girls and women, but giving less food to girls and women also has extremely adverse impacts for the development of boys.

Children of malnourished women are often born with poor health and below-par brain development, so this gender-based nutritional and health care discrimination robs *all* children, male and female, of their birthright: their potential for optimal development. This in turn affects children's and later adults' abilities to adapt to new conditions, their tolerance of frustration, their and propensity to use violence - which in their turn impede solutions to chronic hunger, poverty, and armed conflict, and with this, chances for a more humane, prosperous, and peaceful world for all.

Intra-household Resource Allocation:

There are many other negative consequences of the patterns of intra-household resource allocation characteristic of domination systems. Indeed, we have empirical evidence across diverse cultures and income groups that points to the urgent need for looking at not only how resources are distributed among households, but within households - a subject that is still lamentably absent from economic discourse and education.

Studies show that women have a higher propensity than men to spend on goods that benefit children and enhance their capacities. Duncan Thomas (1990) reported that \$1 in the hands of a Brazilian woman has the same effect on child survival as \$18 in the hands of a man. Judith Bruce and Cynthia B. Lloyd (1997) reported that in Guatemala an additional \$11.40 per month in a mother's hands would achieve the same weight gain in a young child as an additional \$166 earned by the father.

These discrepancies reflect dominator cultural norms. Even in rigidly male-dominated cultures there are men who give primary importance to meeting their families' needs. The problem is that men in these cultures are socialized to believe it is their prerogative to use their wages for nonfamily purposes, including drinking, smoking, and gambling, and that when women complain, they are nagging and controlling.

Yet both capitalist and socialist development theories have traditionally been based on the assumption that the male head of the household will expend the resources he controls for the benefit of all family members. In addition, development aid programs still allocate enormous funds to large-scale projects in which women have little or no say, and from which poor women and children derive few if any benefits. Even most micro-lending or 'village loan' programs that target women provide only minimal amounts, often at exorbitant interest rates, and large bank loans go mainly to businesses owned by male elites or to male heads of household (Eisler, 2007).

This gender double standard, and with it the subordination of the 'feminine' to the 'masculine,' not only hurts women, it hurts us all. It hurts men in myriad ways - from the psychological pain of having to disassociate themselves from the 'soft' or 'feminine' to the economic and political consequences of devaluing and subordinating women and anything associated with them. Yet in the domination system there is no partnership alternative. There are only two perceived choices: you dominate or you are dominated.

ECONOMIC POLICY, POVERTY, AND GENDERED VALUES

Many politicians think that there should always be funding for prisons, weapons, and wars - all stereotypically associated with men and 'real masculinity.' But when it comes to funding caring for people - for child care, health care, early childhood education, and other such expenditures - they say there's not enough money.

There has been movement toward the partnership system - albeit against enormous resistance and periodic regressions. But the gendered system of valuations we inherited is still extremely resistant to change - so much so that when men embrace traits considered 'soft' or 'feminine' they are tarred with derisive terms such as "'effeminate' and 'sissy.'"

While politicians often say their goal is ending, or at least decreasing, poverty and hunger, they rarely mention that women and children are the majority of the world's poor and hungry (Gale, 2007); that even in the rich United States, woman-headed families are on the lowest tier of the economic hierarchy; and that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty rate of women over 65 is almost twice that of men over 65.

The fact that worldwide poverty and hunger disproportionately affect women is neither accidental nor inevitable. It is the direct result of political and economic systems that still have a strong dominator stamp. That even in an affluent nation like the US older women are so much more likely to live in poverty than older men is due not only to wage discrimination in the market economy, so that occupations such as childcare and family care are very low paid. It is largely due to the fact that these women are, or were, full- or part-time family caregivers, and this work is neither paid nor rewarded through Social Security or pensions (Gallagher, Robbins, & Morrison, 2014).

Policies that reward care work will go a long way toward cutting through otherwise intractable cycles of poverty. These policies will also be a good economic investment, as good care for children will ensure that we have the flexible, innovative, and caring people needed for the post-industrial workforce, since psychology and neuroscience show that whether or not these capacities develop largely hinges on the quality of care children receive (Perry, 2002; Kershaw & Anderson, 2010).

Educating and remunerating people for caregiving will also help close the 'caring gap' - the worldwide lack of care for children, the elderly, and the sick and infirm. And it will eventually lead to a redefinition of 'productivity' that gives visibility and value to what really makes us healthy and happy - and that leads to economic prosperity.

On the national policy level, we already saw how in Nordic nations caring policies played a major role in their move from dire poverty to a high quality of life for all. Other examples abound, like the enormous financial benefits from investing in parenting education and assistance shown by the Canadian Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 2003), and investing in high-quality early childhood education, as shown by follow-up studies of the U.S. Abecedarian Project (Masse & Barnett, 2011).

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The omission of caring and caregiving from mainstream economic theory and practice has caused enormous, and unnecessary, human suffering. It also led to flawed economic indicators: gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national product (GNP).

These conventional measures of economic health actually place activities that *harm* life (like selling cigarettes, and the health and funeral costs from smoking) on the plus side. Yet they give no value to the life-sustaining activities of the household economy and the natural economy. So an old stand of trees is only included in GDP when it is cut down - ignoring the fact that we need the oxygen that trees produce in order to breathe. Nor does GDP include the value of the caring and caregiving work performed in households.

In recent years, a number of GDP alternatives have been developed. However, most are still limited by the constraints of the old paradigm that fails to take into account the economic importance of the work of caring for people, starting in early childhood.

After analyzing a large number of GDP alternatives (de Leon & Boris, 2010), the Center for Partnership Studies (CPS) and the Urban Institute hosted a group of prominent economists in Washington DC to lay the groundwork for the development of Social Wealth Economic Indicators (SWEIs). These indicators were then developed by CPS and launched in 2014 (Ghosh & Eisler, 2014).

SWEIs demonstrate the substantial financial return from caring for people and nature - and the enormous costs of not doing so. Unlike other GDP alternatives, SWEIs include data from studies that quantify the value of the work of caring for people and keeping healthy home environments. For example, a 2016 Australian government publication reported that if the unpaid care work in households were included in Australia's GDP, it would constitute no less than 50 percent (Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2017).

Unlike other GDP alternatives that only provide a snapshot of where we are (outputs), SWEIs also show what investments are needed for better outcomes (inputs). These new metrics consist of two kinds of indicators: Human Capacity Indicators (outputs) and Human Care Investment Indicators (inputs). Human Capacity Indicators measure a nation's human capacity development, with a focus on what is needed for economic success and for healthy lives, including development of our human capacities for consciousness, caring, and creativity individually, in families, and in groups and organizations. These indicators pay special attention to social equity because addressing inequity makes for a more productive, harmonious, and healthy society. Care Investment Indicators measure a nation's investment in caring for people (government at all levels, business, and nonprofit sectors) as a major determinant of human capacity development - and hence of both a nation's quality of life and economic success. In other words, SWEIs focus on a nation's human infrastructure, showing how its condition largely depends on the degree to which a nation invests in caring for it. They also show that the United States lags behind other developed nations in this investment, with negative consequences for quality of life and future economic success (Figure 3).

Social Wealth Economic Indicators: Where the U.S. Stands
<p>Human Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. has a child poverty rate that is nearly twice the OECD average. • The U.S. ranks 30th in maternal mortality rates. • Infant mortality in the U.S. is higher than all major developed nations. • The U.S. has lower enrollment rates for young children in early childhood education programs than other developed nations. • The U.S. has a higher gender gap in earnings than the OECD average (at 22%, compared to the 17.3% OECD avg.) • In the U.S., according to time use surveys, men spend more time on care work than men in other developed nations. Women spend less time on household work than women in other developed nations. • In the U.S., childcare work is one of the lowest paid occupations. • The teen birth rate in the U.S. is higher than all other developed nations, at approximately 44 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19. Switzerland has the lowest teen birth rate, at 4 births per 1,000 teens. The Nordic nations have 5-10 births per 1,000 teens. • The U.S. is one of only 12 countries running an ecological deficit larger than 4 global hectares per capita, while many other developed nations (and developing nations in Latin American and elsewhere) are running ecological reserves.
<p>Care Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. is the only developed nation with no national funding for paid parental leave. • The U.S. invests less than half as much in family benefits as other OECD nations, investing around 1% of GDP in family spending, as compared to the OECD average of 2.6%. • The U.S. invests approximately one third as much on environmental protection as the EU average. • Among major developed nations, the U.S. invests the least in early childhood care and education. • In most developed nations, long-term care (LTC) work is predominately publicly funded. The Nordic countries, along with the Netherlands, where gender norms have been replaced by more flexible gender roles where men do more of the care work, are the highest public spenders at 1.5% of GDP or higher. In the US, public spending on LTC is just above 0.5% of GDP. • Although direct care is the fastest growing job sector in the country, it is also one of the lowest-paid. The U.S. population aged 65+ is projected to grow 90% by 2030, opening thousands of jobs in the care work sector. However, currently care workers are paid about \$10 an hour. That is \$7 per hour LESS than the average wage earner in the country. To create living wage jobs, we have to revalue care and our investments in it.

Figure 3. Social Wealth Economic Indicators: Where the U.S. Stands

Adapted from <http://caringeconomy.org/where-the-us-stands/>. See also Ghosh, Indradeep & Riane Eisler. (2014). *Social Wealth Economic Indicators: A New System for Evaluating Economic Prosperity*. Pacific Grove, CA: Center for Partnership Studies, at <http://caringeconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Social-Wealth-Economic-Indicators-Full-Report-20152.pdf>

STEPS TOWARD A CARING ECONOMY

There are many ways of funding investment in our world's human infrastructure. One source is to shift funding from the often terribly wasteful investment in weapons, which could be done without risking national security. Taxes on financial speculation and other harmful activities, such as making and selling junk food, can also fund investment in caring for people and our natural habitat. The savings on the immense costs of *not* investing in caring and caregiving, such as the huge expenditures of taxpayer money on crime, courts, prisons, lost human potential, and environmental damage, are another source.

Moreover, public investments in human infrastructure should be amortized over a period of years. This sound accounting practice is used for investments in material infrastructure such as machines and buildings.

Building economic structures, policies, and practices that support caring for ourselves, others, and nature in *both* the market and nonmarket economic sectors, requires showing that these will benefit not only people and nature but also business. Studies show the cost-effectiveness of supporting and rewarding caring in the market economy. For example, companies that regularly appear on the *Working Mother* or Fortune 500 lists of the best companies to work for - that is, companies with good health care, childcare, flex time, parental leave, and other caring policies - have a higher return to investors (Eisler, 2007). Market rules - both locally and globally - can also be changed to reward caring business practices and penalize uncaring ones.

At the same time, we must accelerate the shift to partnership cultures and structures worldwide so that anything stereotypically considered 'soft' or 'feminine' - such as caring and caregiving - is no longer devalued. This is vital, because economic systems reflect, and perpetuate, underlying social values.

As noted above, changing economic indicators is another important step toward building a caring economics. This is why the Center for Partnership Studies' [Caring Economy Campaign](#), which also offers webinars and other resources to support caring policies, developed [Social Wealth Economic Indicators](#). As a next step, the Center is planning to condense SWEIs into an Index. Like GDP, the SWEI Index will consist of one number per nation, providing a quick and easy guide for policymakers.

Another important step toward a caring economics entails changing economics curricula. For example, as noted earlier, current curricula still teach future economists to make the distinction between 'productive' and 'reproductive' work, perpetuating the devaluation of the work of caring for people and for nature. As many feminist writers have pointed out, since the work involved in taking care of children, the sick, the disabled, and the elderly creates a public good, caregivers (primarily women) should be fairly compensated by society or the state (Ferguson & Folbre 1981; Folbre, 2001, 2010; Nelson, 2006; Noddings, 2002; Waring, 1988). Political scientist Paul Kershaw likewise points out that caregiving is civic work that produces public goods, and that support for this work is the most cost-effective investment a society can make (Kershaw 2005; Kershaw & Anderson, 2009).

This leads to another step toward a caring economics: linking a guaranteed income to rewarding care work. Sometimes called a negative income tax, such a government stipend was first proposed by both conservative economist Milton Friedman (1968) and liberal economist Robert Theobald (1966) because they foresaw a time when there would be 'surplus populations' without jobs. Today, this time has arrived. Automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence have already replaced millions of jobs, not only in manufacturing but in the service sector (from telephone operators to financial analysts), and predictions are that this trend will escalate exponentially as we move further into the post-industrial era. So this idea is receiving renewed attention.

But just handing out money does not lead to either economic or personal development. Nor does it reward positive behaviors and discourage harmful ones, or address the causes of chronic economic inequality. Neither does it provide people with meaningful work or the fulfillment that comes from making a contribution.

As I propose in *The Real Wealth of Nations* (Eisler, 2007) and economist Neva Goodwin details in her article in this issue (Goodwin, 2017), a more effective approach to the problems brought by new technologies that replace jobs would be government stipends that support and reward people for providing the human care that machines, no matter how sophisticated, cannot give. Governments should also fund education and training for the kind of caregiving that psychology and neuroscience show is foundational to optimal human development (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 1998; Niehoff, 1999; Perry, 2002).

This approach will not only help millions of people who would otherwise descend into poverty, and ensure that those who need it receive care; it will also lead to more fulfilled and evolved human beings. Even beyond this, by giving value to caring and caregiving, it will accelerate the shift to a caring economics and a caring society.

CONCLUSION

The technological shift into the post-industrial age is bringing enormous social and economic dislocations, and the mix of high technology and an ethos of domination of both people and nature threatens human survival. Therein lies the danger. But the failure of current thinking to meet our unprecedented technological, environmental, economic, and social challenges is also an opportunity for building a caring economics that actually meets human needs - not only our material ones but also our emotional and spiritual ones.

Economic systems are human creations. They can be changed, and both academicians and practitioners can play important roles in creating these changes. Incorporating

new thinking into research, writing, and teaching can engage the next generation in bringing these ideas to fruition. Advocating for government investment in parenting education, paid parental leave, and innovative measures such as tax credits for caregivers and Social Security credit for the first years of caring for a child are also important steps in the transformation of economics and society in a partnership direction.

All of us can be leaders in building a social and economic system guided by caring rather than uncaring values. Working together, we can help create a future of *partnerism* in which all children can realize their great potentials for consciousness, empathy, caring, and creativity: the capacities that make us fully human.

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