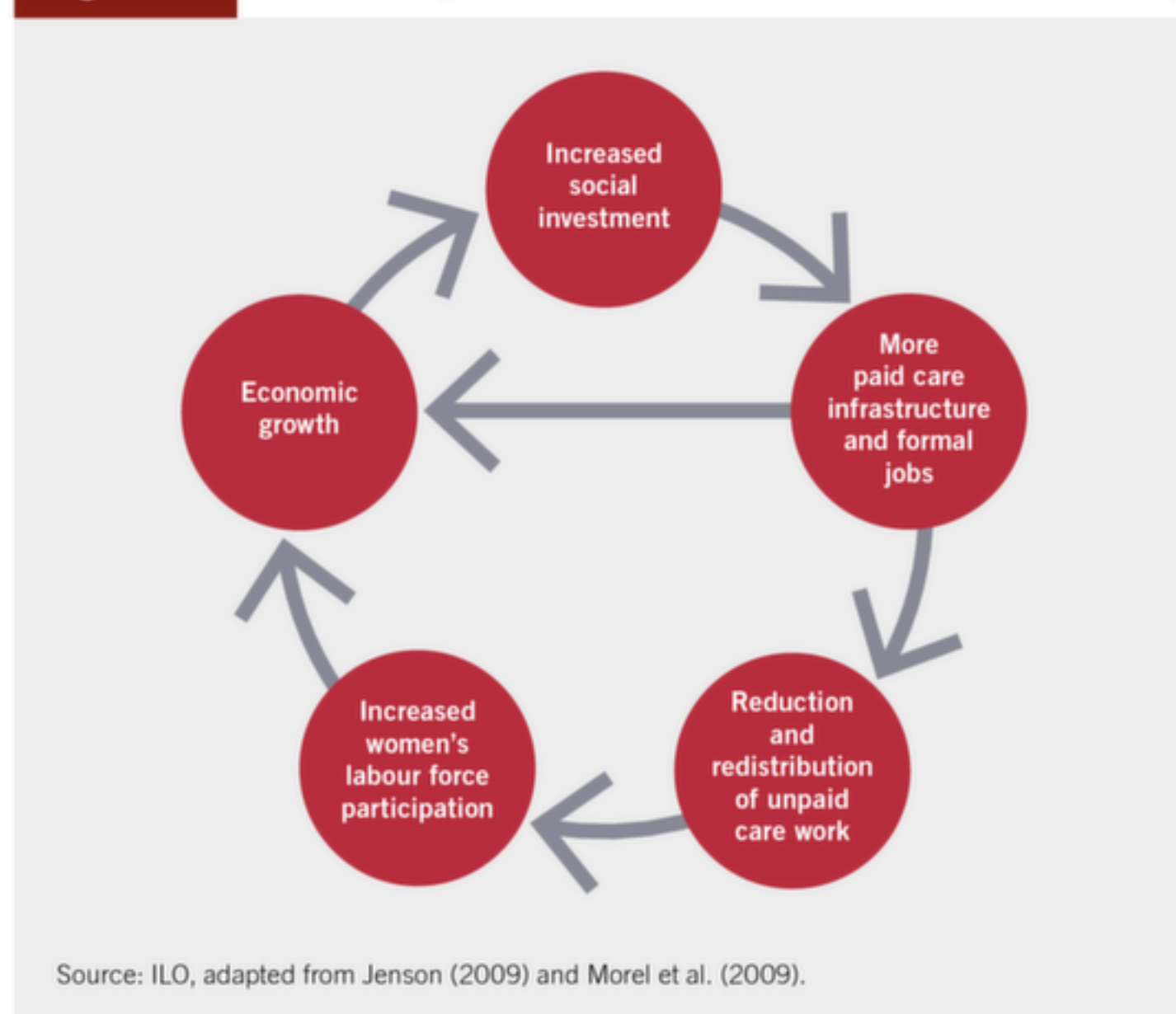


5. Creating and protecting quality jobs in the care economy

With rapidly ageing societies and growing populations, the care economy is commonly identified as one of the two main sources for future job growth in both developing and industrialized countries (the other being the green economy) (ILO, 2015r). The provision of publicly funded childcare and other social care and health-care services (including jobs in the administration of more general social protection schemes) not only increases women's access to employment, but also contributes to job creation in the service sector, which in turn replaces some of the unpaid household and care duties mostly performed by women. This social investment (namely, childcare, disability and elderly care programmes) creates a virtuous circle of redistribution and reduction of unpaid care work, along with the creation of paid work which can support economic growth, minimize the intergenerational transfer of poverty and increase social inclusion (Jenson, 2009). By promoting employment creation, social investments are particularly effective as a countercyclical measure in times of economic downturn (Morel et al, 2009) (figure 38).

Figure 38 Virtuous cycle of social investment in the care economy



Simulation studies for the United States suggest that a \$50 billion investment in the social care sector would generate 1.2 million jobs in the economy or 8 out of 10 new jobs. By contrast, the same level of infrastructure expansion in the construction sector would create 4 out of 10 new jobs (Antonopoulous et al., 2010). Similar research on Turkey estimates that the investment of 20.7 billion Turkish liras (TRY) per year (or US\$ 9.5 billion, equivalent to 1.18 per cent of GDP in 2014) would create 719,000 new jobs in the care sector (specifically, early childhood care and preschool education), compared to 290,000 new jobs in the construction and related sectors. In addition, the authors suggest that the jobs in the care sector would lead to more jobs with social security benefits, as 85 per cent of jobs in care would have benefits, compared to only 30 per cent of construction jobs (Ilkcaracan et al., 2015).

As previously discussed, cuts to public sector jobs are disproportionately affecting women and harm the essential services which sustain societies and make them thrive. In the face of fiscal adjustments, governments should safeguard and promote the provision of quality and efficient public services, which are adequately financed. Social dialogue with the active involvement of public sector workers' organizations should drive measures designed to guarantee the effectiveness and inclusiveness of service delivery and, at the same time, suitable wages and working conditions.