

Social Reproduction, Gender Inequality and Economic Growth

Elissa Braunstein, UNCTAD & Colorado State University

Rachid Bouhia, UNCTAD

Stephanie Seguino, University of Vermont

Key question

How do care and social reproduction interact with gender inequality in the labor market to determine economic growth and development?

The paper

1. Theoretical macroeconomic model → “Social reproduction regimes”
 - Demand and growth
 - Supply and the distribution of social reproduction
2. Empirically estimate the model (principal component analysis)

The macroeconomics of social reproduction: *Some preliminaries*

Social reproduction

Time and commodities it takes to produce and maintain the labor force



Human capacities

Dynamics: Two time horizons

1. Daily aspects of social reproduction that raise current productivity
2. Long-term investments that raise future productive capacity and contribute to current demand

The Demand Side: Economic Growth

Gender equality
in the labor market → Growth

Depends on the impacts on
aggregate demand and profitability


Some structuralist macro preliminaries

- Say's Law doesn't hold
- Firms function with excess capacity: Economies are demand-constrained
- Macro problems stem from lack of investment and aggregate demand
- Distribution of income plays a central role in aggregate demand, investment and growth

The Demand Side: Economic Growth

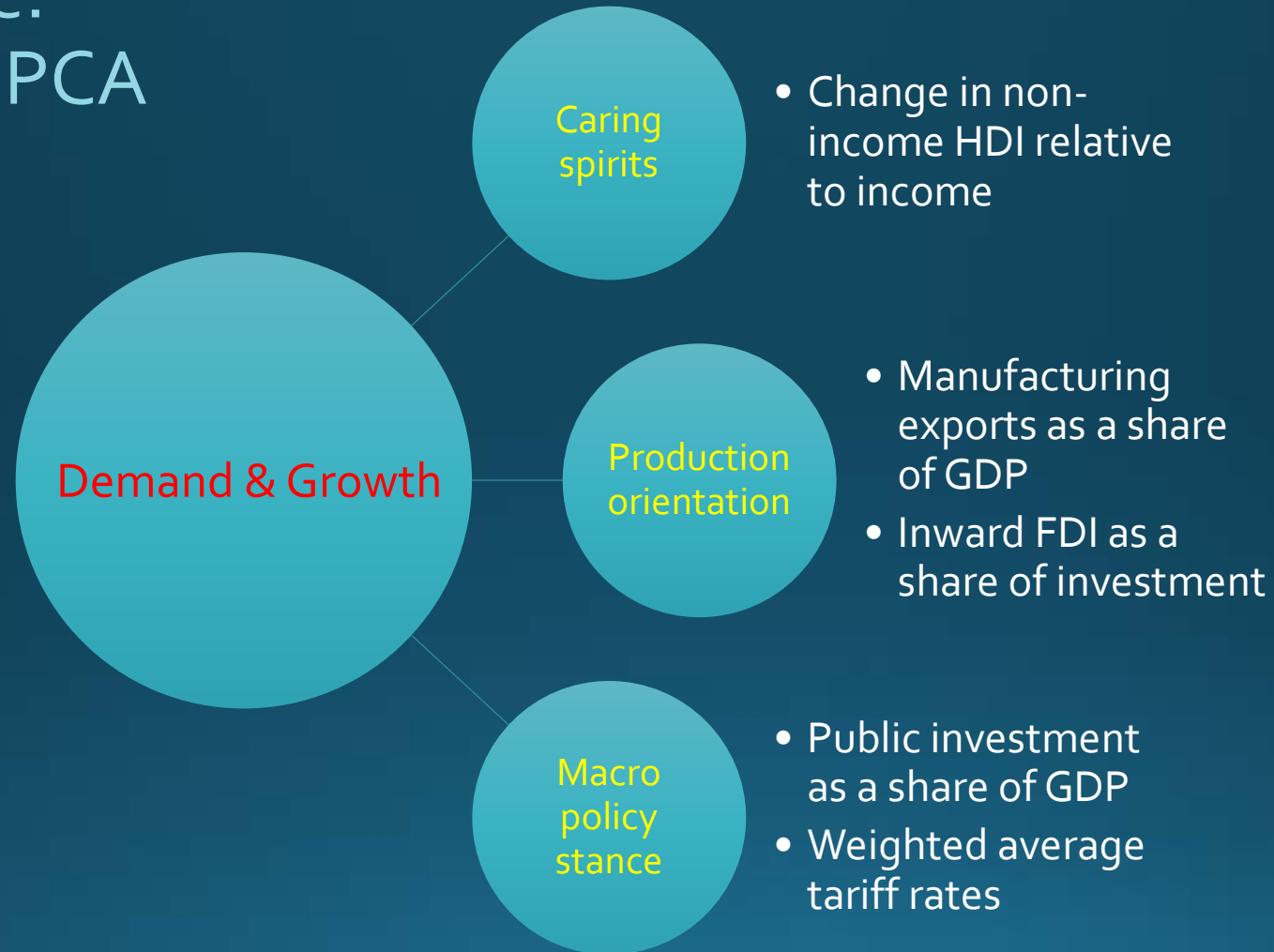


Depends on the impacts on aggregate demand and profitability



Stylized types of economies		
	Wage-led/ altruistic	Profit-led/ individualistic
<i>Relationship between gender equality in the labor market & growth</i>	Positive	Negative
Characteristics		
<i>Caring spirits</i>	Strong	Weak
<i>Production orientation</i>	Domestic	External
<i>Macro policy stance</i>	Developmental, employment-oriented	Geared to managing openness

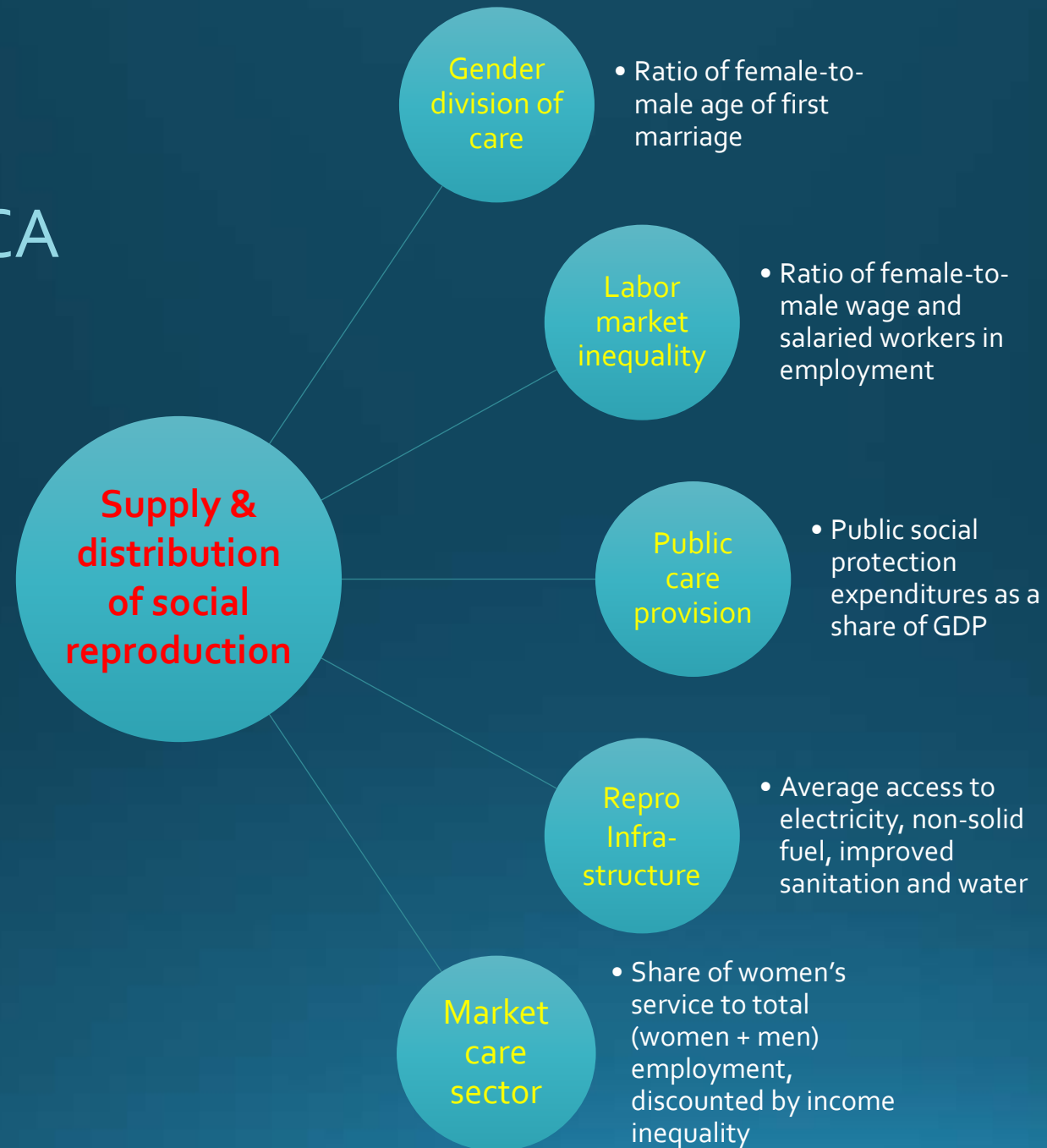
Demand side: Data for the PCA



The supply side: Distribution of social reproduction

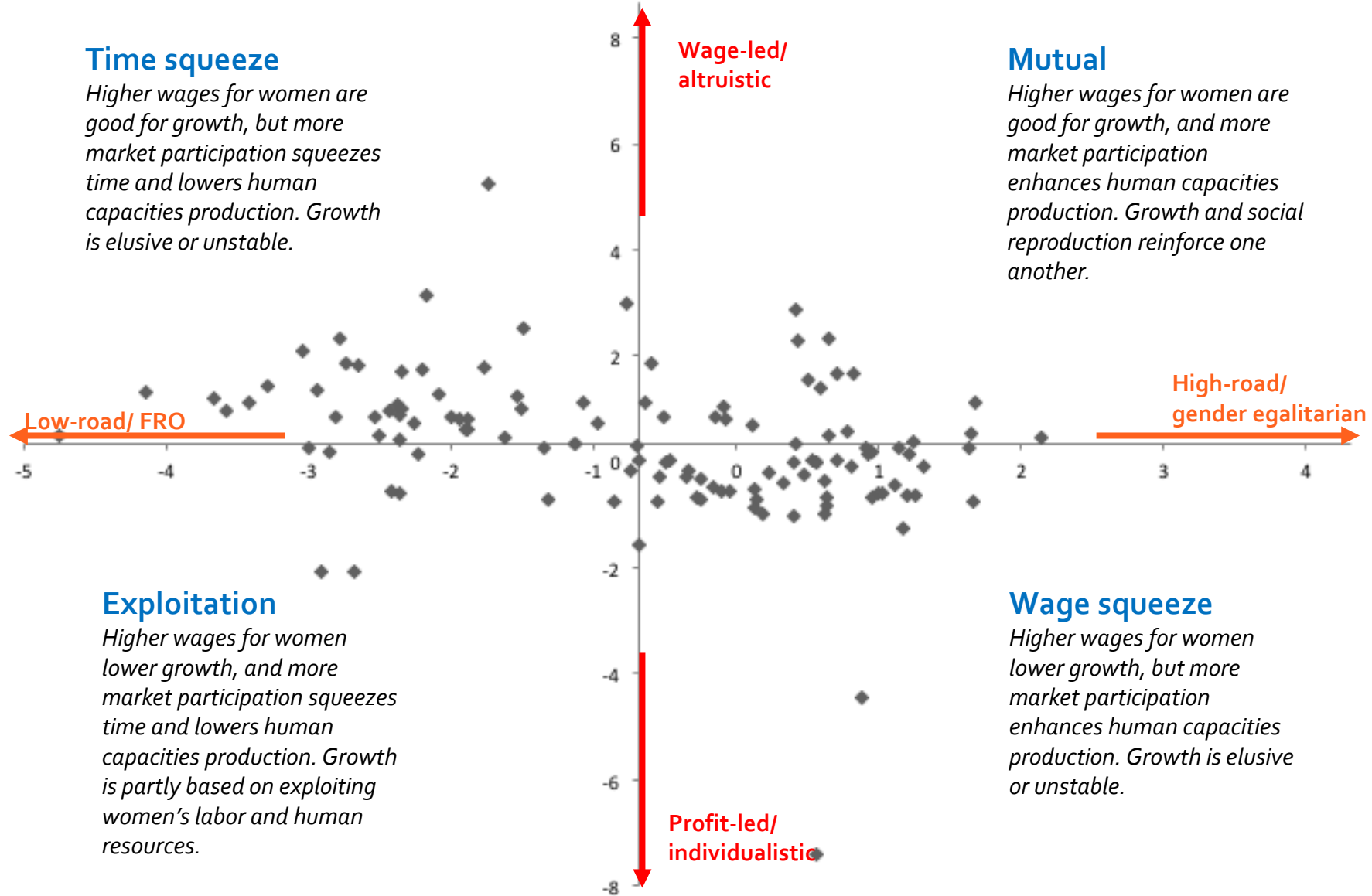
	Stylized types of economies	
	High-road/gender egalitarian	Low-road/feminization of responsibility and obligation
<i>Time and financial costs of social reproduction</i>	Equitably distributed among women, men and the state	Women shoulder disproportionate share of the costs
<i>Effects of increased female labor force participation on human capacities production</i>	Increase	Decrease
Characteristics		
<i>Unpaid care work</i>	Sharing between women & men	Low participation by men
<i>Public provision for care</i>	Strong	Weak
<i>Market care sector</i>	Extensive & high quality	Limited &/or low quality
<i>Labor market gender inequality</i>	Low	High
<i>Reproductive infrastructure</i>	Extensive	Limited

Supply side: Data for the PCA



Social reproduction regimes, 2008-2015

Developing countries

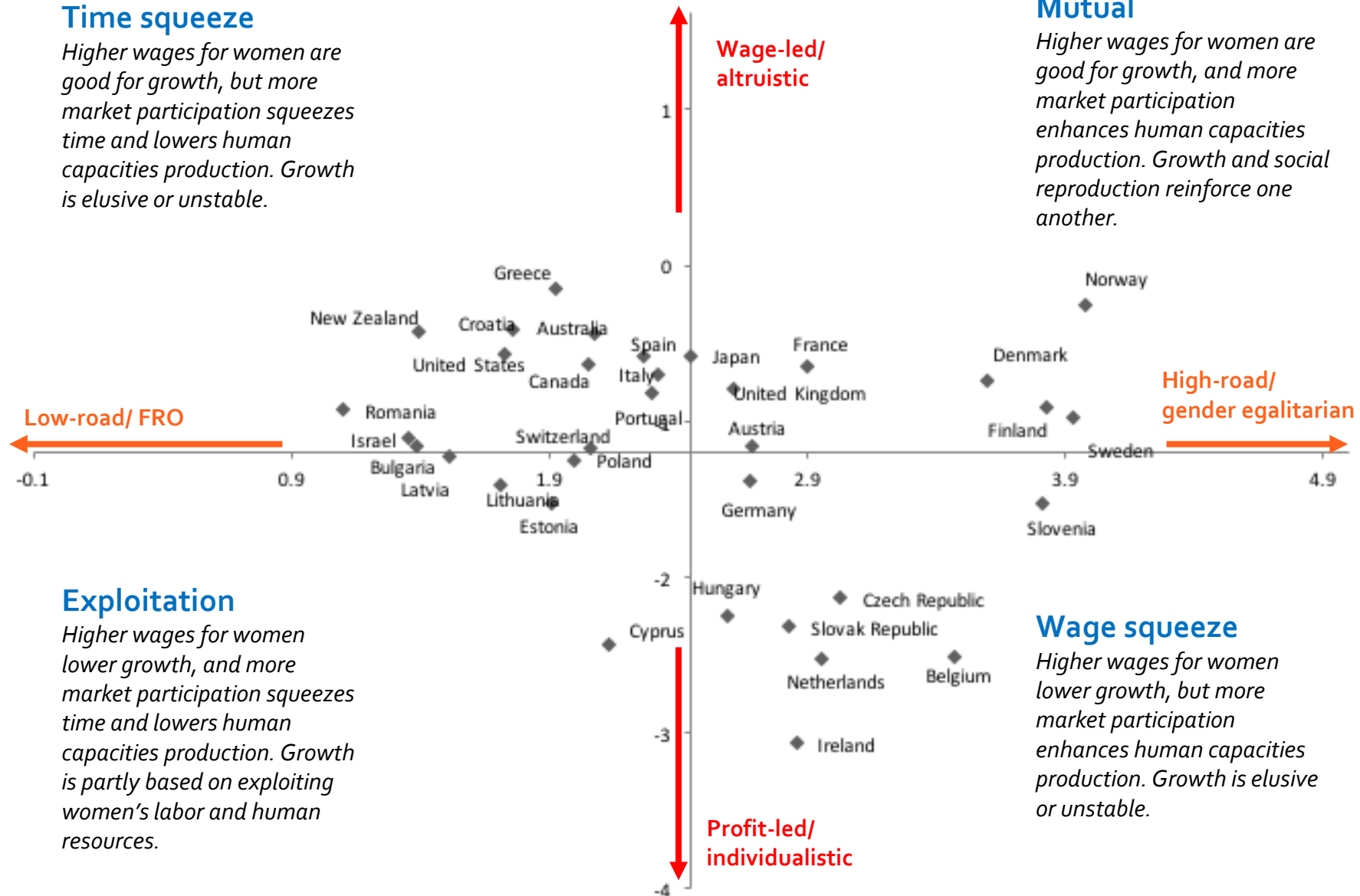


Developed countries

Social reproduction regimes, 2008-2015

Time squeeze

Higher wages for women are good for growth, but more market participation squeezes time and lowers human capacities production. Growth is elusive or unstable.



Mutual

Higher wages for women are good for growth, and more market participation enhances human capacities production. Growth and social reproduction reinforce one another.

Low-road/ FRO

High-road/
gender egalitarian

Exploitation

Higher wages for women lower growth, and more market participation squeezes time and lowers human capacities production. Growth is partly based on exploiting women's labor and human resources.

Wage squeeze

Higher wages for women lower growth, but more market participation enhances human capacities production. Growth is elusive or unstable.

Profit-led/
individualistic

Time paths of social reproduction regimes, 1990-2015

