**Supervisor Expression of Interest**  
**MSCA - Marie Sklodowska Curie Action - (PF) Postdoctoral Fellowship 2021**

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<td><strong>Link pagina docente:</strong></td>
<td>urly.it/3c75f</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department Name:</strong></td>
<td>DASTU Department of Architecture and Urban Studies</td>
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**Research topic:**  
[https://www.polimi.it/en/scientific-research/research-at-the-politecnico/departments/](https://www.polimi.it/en/scientific-research/research-at-the-politecnico/departments/)  
SH7_4 Social aspects of health, ageing and society

**MSCA-PF Research Area Panels:**
- CHE_Chemistry
- ECO_Economic Sciences
- ENG_Information Science and Engineering
- ENV_Environmental and Geosciences
- LIF_Life Sciences
- MAT_Mathematics
- PHY_Physics
- SOC_Social Sciences and Humanities

| **Politecnico di Milano Areas:** | Cultural Heritage  
| | Smart Cities  
| | Horizon Europe Missions  
| | Health  
| | Industry 4.0  

| **Title and brief description of the Department and Research Group (including URL if applicable):** | **Care inequality: Disparities in care arrangements and access to care benefits**  
This project is carried out by the Social Policy Lab (LPS, [http://www.lps.polimi.it/?lang=en](http://www.lps.polimi.it/?lang=en)), a research unit of DASTU created in 2001. Originally focused on the analysis and evaluation of social policies and programmes, over time it has addressed broader themes related to the transformations underway in Italy and other European societies and in particular in cities. Through a variety of research, training and consulting activities, LPS focuses on social inequalities, social |
and territorial cohesion, urban policy, local welfare and welfare policies in comparative perspective, and multi-level governance, ageing and care policy. LPS encourages and promotes inter-disciplinary work, drawing from a variety of perspectives in sociology, political science and economics, based on a rigorous application of social research methods and techniques, in a constant dialogue with the core disciplines of DASTU. It is composed by 8 professors and researchers, and 6 postdoc fellows. LPS is involved in a number of European and national research projects.

**Brief project description:**

**Care inequality: Disparities in care arrangements and access to care benefits**

There has been growing interest in care inequality in recent years but, despite its importance to care research and policy and to the study of inequality more widely, it remains an under-explored area. There is also some evidence that the COVID-10 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and the risk of marginality of the weakest population. Technological innovation has also important, ambiguous effects on inequalities. This research project aims to involve researchers interested in care policy to carry out an original research on this topic.

The issue of care inequality will be addressed from different perspectives. Firstly, care practices and arrangements are not neutral to socio-economic disparities but reflect different class and income positions. Moreover, recent trends towards targeting of public services and/or expansion of market provision of care have increased the class/income-based selectivity of actual care arrangements. Secondly, access to public care benefits (both cash and in-kind) is often selective by class, income and level of needs, though to different extent in different countries and care regimes. Research on childcare services has already highlighted the existence of Matthew effects in the access to such services, while research on long term care has stressed the relevance of care poverty and inequalities in the access to public as well as market care services (such as the employment of migrant care workers, for example). The recent emergence of sharper tensions between universalism and selectivity in many care regimes (for
example, in need assessment or in the consideration of means tests in fixing the amount of benefits or fees) has also relevant impacts on care inequality. Finally, the present pandemic may have exacerbated such inequalities and caused even higher isolation of the most vulnerable persons. High mortality rates in nursing homes in some countries have shown that also quality and adequacy of care services should be taken in account in such research.

The project has therefore a specific focus on the design of care services, often provided on a local or domiciliary basis. Service design as well as technological innovation can play an important role here to foster the openness and/or limit the selectivity of care services. Specific spatial and organizational solutions can be adopted to attract vulnerable people, to make services more friendly and usable, and, in relation to older people, to prevent their institutionalization by supporting their ‘ageing in place’.

The following aspects will be considered in the research:

- Inequalities in care arrangements and practices
- Care poverty, care needs and socio-economic inequalities
- Matthew effects in the access to care services
- Eligibility rules, need assessment and selectivity in the access to care services
- Tensions between universalism and selectivity and their impact on care inequality
- Marketization and privatization of care and their effects on care inequality
- Impact of technological innovation and service design on inequalities in access to care and use of care services.
- The impact of the pandemic on social inequality and care poverty.