

## Chapter XVII: Pluralization of Families

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### Abstract

The vast majority of the world’s population lives the majority of their lives within family units, of all shapes and sizes. The driving question of the chapter is how can societies support conditions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that allow families to flourish, and at the same time, promote individual agency, equality and dignity. Two interlocking questions follow from this: first, how can societies support families’ important functions -- caregiving, human development, and belonging – in order to promote the dignity, life opportunities, and risk protection of family members? Second, as they support these functions, how can societies minimize socioeconomic and other inequalities and domination that families often reproduce, within and between them? The first part provides the context for discussing families, including boundaries between families and other institutions; historical trends; contemporary challenges; legal recognition of; and socio-economic context of, families. Part two focuses on relations *within* families: between partners; adult-child relations; aging family members; and other adults. Part three provides policy recommendations. We recommend, in addition to equitable laws, a two-fold state role to ensure

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flourishing families: first, transfers that ensure an income floor for families with dependents; and second, publicly funded services to ensure a healthy balance between production and reproduction.

## **Introduction**

The family is an institution central to individual wellbeing because it provides caretaking, human development, economic interdependency and affiliation. The boundaries of which groups constitute families are conceptually murky, in part because family forms have varied enormously over time and location. We take as a simple conceptual definition that families are closely-knit social groups bounded by relations of locally recognized kinship that are based on expectations of reciprocity, obligation and obedience<sup>4</sup>. Families are usually, but not always, based on forms of blood lineage and/or stable bonding and dwelling, often intergenerational and often, albeit not always, involving the reproduction and caring for offspring at some point in the life cycle. At best, families may provide their members with a space where persons are loved and nurtured, love and nurture back, and are able to flourish to their fullest potential. At worst, families may grapple with severe material deprivation or be settings for neglect, abuse and inequality in power relations, stunting the ability of their members to flourish as human beings. Families are also a site of potential struggle and conflict.

This leads to the key question of this chapter: How can societies support conditions that allow families to flourish and at the same time promote individual agency, equality and dignity?<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The authors of the chapter debated these conceptual distinctions, and some were critical of the implied public/private boundary between states, markets and family, rather seeing the family, market and state as mutually constitutive.

<sup>5</sup> The authors debated about which words to use here. Initially the choice of the team was autonomy and dignity, but some authors felt the first term reflected Western values.

Two interlocking questions follow from this: first, how can societies support families' important functions—caregiving, human development, and belonging—in order to promote the dignity, life opportunities, and risk protection of family members? Second, as they support these important functions of families, how can societies minimize the socioeconomic and other forms of inequality and domination that families often reproduce, both within and between families? The quest in this chapter is to assess the empirical evidence in support of the best ways to achieve these goals. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part provides a broad context for discussing families. First, it identifies boundaries between families and other spheres or institutions; second, it outlines historical trends; third, it outlines contemporary challenges (which will then be discussed in-depth further in the chapter); fourth, it discusses the legal recognition(s) of families, both regarding partners and offspring; and fifth, it discusses the socio-economic context of families. Part two focuses on relations *within* families. The discussion is divided into four sections: first, relations between partners; second, adult-child relations; third, aging family members; and fourth, other adults within families. Part three provides policy recommendations.

## **1. Conceptual boundaries: families, markets, communities and states**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The ways that families function are deeply and importantly affected by their interaction with other societal spheres/institutions and practices.<sup>6</sup> The most important of these are markets, the state, and the community (encompassing religious organizations, charities, trade unions, NGOs, and so forth). The ways in which the interactions between families and these other

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<sup>6</sup> Authors debated whether to use institutions or spheres in this context. Noting both allows for different perspectives.

spheres/institutions are structured affect families' ability to perform their critical functions in a manner that supports equity and human dignity (Eichner 2010). These interactions in turn affect the distribution of social risks and opportunities among men and women, rich and poor, educated and non-educated, children, adults and older people, and able-bodied and disabled.

In general, it is accepted in Western mainstream literature that these spheres are governed by different norms. Interactions within families are governed by norms of reciprocity and obligation, and often with children, obedience. Interactions in the market, in contrast, are governed by principles of competition, self-interest, and free exchange. Of course, this distinction between market, family and state logics does not mean, either, that agents in families lack self-interest, or that bargaining does not take place in families, but that the explicit rules of the game regarding how this bargaining and conflicting interests are solved are different from those governing the market and other spheres. Religious and charitable organizations, on the other hand, also embody distinct norms (addressed in Chapter 16).

The state, with legally binding and authoritative actions, has a special role to play in how the relationship between families and other institutions is organized (Eichner 2010; Przeworski 2003). The state performs three basic tasks, all of which affect families: regulating the behavior of individuals and institutions; the collection of resources from individuals, families and organizations through taxation; and the distribution and allocation of resources in the community (Filgueira 2007). First, how the state recognizes and regulates families – including marriage and divorce laws, reproductive rights, child custody laws, and inheritance laws – profoundly affects how families are structured and the ways that they accomplish their tasks. This includes laws that limit (or conversely link) religious canons to family life and behavior (like permitting civil marriage or conversely sharia law). Second, state taxation limits the degree to which individuals can pool their assets and resources within families and pass them along to the next generations.

Furthermore, whether and how the state distributes a broad range of goods and services deeply affects how families function. These three tasks and how these tasks interact with families form the basis of much of our discussion in the next sections.

We have seen massive advances in material wellbeing and human development across the world over the past decades. Global GDP per capita has doubled in just fifteen years, and infant mortality rates have declined in almost half in the past 25 years, from 63 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990 to 32 deaths per 1000 live births in 2015 (WHO 2015). At the same time, socioeconomic inequalities within societies have increased worldwide in the last 30 years,<sup>7</sup> and the benefits of these massive advances have been very unequally distributed, both across countries and regions, and across socioeconomic classes, ethnic groups, and family types within countries. Usually we think of states and markets as the critical drivers of distributional inequalities. Yet, families also play a large role, one that is often neglected. We tend to see families on the receiving end of inequality trends, rather than in the driver's seat. Of course families are affected by these inequalities (physical and financial assets, educational achievement, social capital), but it is also important to bear in mind that they strongly shape them, also affecting inequalities between and within families.

One key feature of state regulation relating to families deserves special consideration: how states respond to the social opportunities and social risks that recur across all human societies, and for which families are often on the front lines. The growth of the welfare state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most expansively in advanced industrialized countries, but to varying extents also in developing countries, is, of course, related to the challenges represented by these social

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<sup>7</sup> Whether inequality has increased on a global level is contested; however, there is no doubt that it has increased at the country level. The apparent paradox is because lower income countries have been closing the wealth gap with developed countries, especially when we consider China and India. Thus overall inequality might have decreased since the average Chinese is today closer in terms of income to, say, the average European. But within its borders Europeans, Americans and Chinese people are more unequal.

risks that befall individuals and families, including illness, disability, maternity, unemployment, and old age and death of the breadwinner(s), all important to the material security of families. With the expansion of welfare states in the second half of the twentieth century, combined with the gradual democratization of family relations, state transfers, tax policies and services have also sought to implicitly or explicitly shape families, and in doing so, have reinforced certain kinds of families over others; influenced socio-economic differences between families; and influenced the division of paid and unpaid labor between family members, especially mothers and fathers.

In the remainder of this section, we provide an overview of current trends.<sup>8</sup> We then review two critical areas where families are changing because of market, state and community transformations: first, those that relate to the recognition and regulation of the changing landscape of family forms; and second, the dynamics that shape relations among family units.

## **1.2 Challenges in the pluralization of families today**

Families in most of the world must be understood in the context of the gender inequality that has historically sustained and regulated family relationships and regimes, in which adult males dominated and held the levers of political, economic and social power over their children and spouses. This was the case in the codified traditions derived from Anglo-American common law, Roman law, classical Islamic law, and the customary law of many sub-Saharan and Asian societies.

From the 1960s onwards especially, increasing pressures have eroded the strength of male domination in Western states and in parts of Asia. Five major shifts have driven the transformation of family regimes in this era: a) the withering of most civil and

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<sup>8</sup> We provide an overview of historical trends in the longer, web-based version of this chapter.

political legal discrimination of women both in the market place and state structure/public and private spheres, b) the increasing control of women over their reproductive capacity led by technological and cultural change, c) legal and policy transformations and change in social practices and social structure which brought about radical changes in fertility patterns, divorce and new family arrangements, d) the incorporation of a growing share of women into the paid wage labor market, and e) the rising belief that women should be treated equally with men. Prominent scholars have made the case that a “stalled” or “incomplete” revolution (Hochschild 1989; Esping-Andersen 2009) has occurred in this era regarding gender, work and the family, essentially because while most women changed, most men and the state have not fully adapted to these changes.

Midway into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is possible to identify new trends and features that to differing degrees question the previous hierarchical arrangements:

- New family arrangements have emerged that depart from the heterosexual nuclear family that dominated the past century. In many countries, cohabitation, same sex conjugal relations, single-female headed households, as well as other family forms have gained cultural and legal acceptance. Yet, in most countries, legal recognition of these different family forms still lags behind the pace of change and negatively affects their viability and stability. This is addressed in Part 1.4.
- Rates of conjugal relationships have decreased, and significant numbers of those that develop have become less stable. This is particularly true for lower-income families. The breakdown of conjugal relationships negatively affects children by reducing stability, lessening adults’ ability and opportunity to engage in caregiving of them, and decreasing adults’ financial resources to invest in them. This breakdown also decreases the benefits of caregiving and affiliation among adults. We address this throughout the chapter.

- Fertility rates have been reduced and fertility has been postponed by the combined effects of access to technology, laws, and mores that give women and girls increased control over reproduction. Yet financial obstacles to reproductive autonomy remain in many countries, and access to abortion continues to be legally restricted. Further, inequality in fertility patterns and lowest-low fertility scenarios illustrate the double challenge of democratizing reproductive control and allowing for a better balance between productive and reproductive behavior. This is addressed in Part 2.1.
- Within families, conjugal relations in the Western and most of the non-Western world have become more gender-egalitarian and flexible, with broader entry and exit options and a more equal distribution of rights regarding asset control, lineage recognition and power. This is addressed in Part 2.1. The sexual division of paid and unpaid labor in families is characterized by the following trends:
  - Overall, women have made clear gains in labor market participation and economic autonomy during the last half century. Yet women in many regions have been left behind on these measures, and even the advances hide significant inequalities along socio-economic lines.
  - In industrialized Western societies, the gap in the distribution of non-paid labor and care work among men and women has decreased considerably, although significantly more in some countries than others. In no country, though, has it been eliminated. In most of the developing world, care and housework remain heavily the responsibility of women, limiting their ability to enter the labor force.
- Within families, intimate partner or familial violence has around the world become problematized, due especially to efforts by women's movements, although progress

has been spotty over-all and completely absent in some countries. This is addressed in Part. 2.1.4.b.

- The legal regulation of the parent-child relationship has in most countries shifted from a model of parental, especially paternal control, to a model largely directed at the “best interests” of the child. At the same time, parent-child relationships are marked by increasing efforts to prepare both boys and girls for success in the market as adults. This is addressed in Part 2.2.
- There is a worldwide trend towards aging societies, produced by the confluence of reduced mortality and fertility together with life expectancy increases. The proportion of the world’s population aged 60 years or over is expected to double from about 11% to 22% between 2000 and 2050 (WHO 2016; UN 2002). While most developed nations have had decades to adjust to shifting age structures, the ageing of the respective populations in many other regions is taking place very rapidly, often within a single generation. This is addressed in Part 2.3.
- Extended households (horizontal and vertical) remain an important part of family landscape in the developing world, but are slowly being eroded. This is addressed in Part 2.4. Transnational families are also becoming more prominent (addressed throughout).

In sum, the changes taking place are providing more opportunities than ever before for relations based on mutual respect and dignity among family members. At the same time, civil and political remnants of gender-inegalitarian orders remain in many countries, affecting reproductive rights, marriage and divorce regulations, and the ability to protect oneself from violence. In light of our driving question—how can societies support conditions that allow families to flourish and

at the same time promote individual autonomy, equality and dignity?—we turn to examining family recognition and relations among family units.

### **1.3. Legal recognition(s) of families**

Globally, the large majority of adults marry or live in a consensual union at some point in their lives. According to UN data covering the decade of the 2000s for 159 countries, in the overwhelming majority of countries, 80% of women and men had been married or in a consensual union by the time they reached their late forties (UNDESA 2011: 2).

In the middle of the twentieth century, the dominant family form worldwide was the heterosexual marital family, in some regions supplemented by extended families. The legal regulation of families both responded to and enforced this dominance by granting married couples legal rights. In contrast, other family forms remained outside the scope of legal protections and were often criminalized.

At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century, other family forms have increased. Some of this phenomenon has been driven by rising rates of marital dissolution. While divorce and separation are still relatively rare statistically, according to UN data, globally they have increased from 2% of adults aged 35 to 39 in the 1970s to 4% in the 2000s, being much more common in developed than in developing countries (UNDESA 2011).

Meanwhile cohabitation without marriage has mushroomed in many Western countries, including several northern European countries, the United States, some Latin American countries, and in the Caribbean. It has increased to a lesser extent in Africa and is still relatively unusual in Asia (UNDESA 2011). In addition, same-sex couples have become increasingly visible in the

West, although less so in most countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, many of which continue to criminalize same-sex relationships.<sup>9</sup>

In North America, Latin America, Western Europe, and South Africa, among others, there has been a steady increase in the share of households headed by a sole adult (either because they are never-married, separated, divorced or widowed), and particularly, female-headed households (Vespa et al. 2013; Euromonitor 2014; Cienfuegos 2014). Remarriage rates, nonetheless, tend to be high for both men and women. Data for 15 OECD countries for 2006-08 reveals that between 20% and 28% of all marriages are remarriages (UNDESA 2011:3).

Globally, the large majority of adults also have children, although the number of children per parents—that is, the fertility rate—has declined (UN Population Division 2012; Agrillo & Nelini 2008). Combined with the increase in households headed by a sole adult and by remarried adults, developments in DNA testing and reproductive technology have made distinctions between social and biological parenthood both increasingly possible and visible. Therefore deciding on what standards to use to determine parentage has become increasingly important.

The available data suggest that adults do better on a number of measures of wellbeing when they have supportive family relationships. (Hewitt et al. 2010; Wyke & Ford 1992). Further, in general children do better when raised in a stable home with two parents (see section 17.3). This said, a variety of relationships can contribute to adults and children’s wellbeing. For example, a recent study found that couples in stable cohabitating relationships experience many of the benefits that married couples experience (Mernitz & Dush 2016). While marriage itself to a modest extent appears to contribute to the stability of the relationship (Brown & Booth 1996), and stronger feelings of subjective wellbeing (Dush & Amato 2005), nonmarital relationships in some countries are more stable than marital relationships in others (Cherlin 2010). Additionally,

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<sup>9</sup> Variations exist in non-Western countries with increasing recognition in South Africa, Taiwan, and Japan.

differences in societal norms among countries have been shown to contribute to the varying levels of wellbeing between unmarried and married cohabitants. Cross-national studies indicate that the gap in wellbeing between unmarried cohabitants and married cohabitants (dubbed the “cohabitation gap”) is greater in countries where cohabitation between unmarried people is less accepted and less common (Soons & Kalmijn 2009), as well as countries with more traditional gender and religious beliefs (Lee & Ono 2012).

Some countries have made significant headway in supporting families as they exist, rather than families as they continue to be imagined. Progress in this area has been patchy. Some legal systems remain exclusively focused on the heterosexual marital family. Others have broadened their definition of family in some respects but still inadequately recognize some types of families. This section considers the legal recognition of these emerging family forms, both with respect to relationships between adults and parent-child relationships.

### **1.3.1 Relationships among adults**

As relationships among adults have increasingly diverged from the model of heterosexual marriage, especially in western countries, cohabiting couples have increasingly been recognized with distinct rights, while marriage rights have been extended to same-sex couples. This section considers the legal recognition of both forms of relationships, as well as the continuing issues raised by polygamous marriage.

#### **1.3.1.a Unmarried Cohabiting Couples**

Since the 1980s the marriage rate (for formal unions) has been declining globally.<sup>10</sup> Especially western countries have seen a high rise in the rates of couples cohabiting without marriage as the practice has become more acceptable as both a step and alternative to legal marriage (Mintz, 2015). Indeed, in Latin American countries, South Africa, and Sweden, more children are born outside of marriage than within it (IRSTI 2016).

Until the late twentieth century, many countries, including the United States, criminalized nonmarital cohabitation and refused to enforce claims between unmarried cohabitants after the relationship ended (Sutherland 2012; Garrison 2008).

In most of the Western world, albeit not in the East or Middle East, states have eased bans on cohabitation and gradually increased rights and protections for unmarried couples during the last two generations. This change in policy recognized several facts. First, ignoring such relationships legally did little to reduce the escalating rates of non-marital cohabitation. Furthermore, this approach failed to support important caretaking and affiliation functions that these families could otherwise provide, and often unfairly advantaged one member of the couple if the relationship ended. Finally, with marriage increasingly concentrated among wealthier couples in western countries, laws benefiting only marriage risked funneling benefits to those who needed them least.

In some western countries, private rights have been accorded to couples based on their living together for a particular length of time. For example, many western countries at the relationship's dissolution now give non-marital cohabitants some rights to property accumulated by either partner during the relationship. In New Zealand, Croatia and much of Latin America, non-marital cohabitants who live together for several years have the same property rights as

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<sup>10</sup> According to Mintz (2015: 169), the marriage rate has fallen since the 1980s in countries accounting for 87% of the world's population.

married couples, although sometimes these have to be registered to receive them (Akin 2003; Jakovac-Lozic 2000; Deere & León 2001). These laws have been spurred in large part by the recognition that the financial costs of such break-ups are not equally shared by both members of the couple; instead the partners who perform more caretaking—generally women—tend to be disproportionately harmed financially at the relationship’s end. (Blumberg 2001).

Fewer Western countries have thus far provided public rights and benefits to unmarried couples during the relationship, although this appears to be changing. Canada now provides for parity of some federal benefits between married and cohabiting couples. It has also revised both tax and old-age pension rules so that the same standards apply to married and “common-law” partners (Bala 2000). Further, most western states now protect non-marital cohabitants under domestic violence statutes. This protection is particularly important in light of research that reveals that unmarried women are sometimes at greater risk for abuse by intimate partners than are married women (Tjaden & Thoennes 2000).

Other countries allow unmarried couples to enter into alternative formal statuses. Domestic partnership statuses, which were often developed as a marriage alternative for same-sex couples now serve as an alternative status for opposite-sex couples as well, with similar or lesser rights compared to marriage. For example, France adopted civil unions in 1999, granting a broad range of benefits. Unlike marriage, this status is easy both to enter and exit—no marriage ceremony or divorce required. Today, there are two such civil unions for every three marriages (Sayare & Boem 2010).

In Latin America, the incidence of consensual unions has been on the rise in concert with their growing legal recognition, so that in most countries these mostly have the same rights as legal marriages (Garcia & Oliveira 2011). Many, perhaps most, Muslim majority states allow for a form of *ex post facto* recognition to marriages that comply with the requirements of Islamic law

in establishing marriage, even if accompanying such measures with the prospect of penal sanctions for the avoidance of legal procedures. In regard to ‘unofficial’ (unregistered) marriages in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, public disquiet appears to have centered not so much around people marrying without the knowledge of the state, but at young persons (mostly females) marrying without the knowledge of their families, ‘secret marriages’ that are perceived to violate *shari`a*’ and state law (Hasso 2011).

### **1.3.1.b Same-sex relationships**

The regulation of same-sex relationships has also been transformed in Western countries during the last half century. Until the mid-twentieth century, most countries criminalized same-sex behavior. These criminal prohibitions were largely rescinded in Western countries in the latter half of the twentieth century, or early in the twenty-first. Currently, no criminal prohibitions remain in Europe, North America, and Latin America. Further, a growing number of these countries have also allowed same-sex couples to enter domestic partnerships, and then in many countries to get married. The Netherlands became the first country to recognize same-sex marriage in 2001, and at this point, most developed countries and several Latin American countries recognize it (Pew 2013). Studies have shown that same-sex marriage stabilizes relationships, and increases the wellbeing of both adults and children in these families (Wight et.al 2013; Badgett 2011).

A number of the countries that do not allow same-sex couples to marry offer an alternative domestic partnership status only for same-sex couples (Pew 2013). Studies show that same-sex couples enter these alternative statuses at far lower rates than they enter into marriage.

These trends are not uniform. Currently, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner, 70 countries continue to imprison citizens because of their sexual orientation, and five others – Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen – punish homosexuality with the death penalty. (BBC World News 2014) South Africa is the only country outside of the West that allows same-sex marriage.

A few countries are even increasing prohibitions on same sex relations. In 2013, India's Supreme Court reversed a 2009 order decriminalizing homosexual acts and reinstated a 153-year-old colonial-era law deeming a same-sex relationship an "unnatural offense" punishable by a 10-year jail term (Koushal v. NAZ Foundation 2013). In 2014 Nigeria passed the Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act, which criminalized all forms of same-sex unions regardless of where the union was entered, with strong support from the Nigerian people (Adebanjo 2015).

### **1.3.1.c Polygamous marriage**

Polygamy (commonly practiced as polygyny, the marriage of one man to multiple women) is banned in many regions of the world. However, at the national level, it is still legal or generally accepted in 33 countries, 25 in Africa and 7 in Asia. Further, polygamy is accepted or legal for some groups in 18 additional countries in Africa and 21 in Asia. In a study of 26 countries that permitted polygamy, between 10 per cent and 53 per cent of women aged 15-49 had cowives (UNDESA 2011:4). The vast majority of the countries in which it is permitted are Muslim-majority.

Protecting the autonomy and equality of women in polygamous marriages has proven so challenging that several human rights organizations, including the United Nations Human Rights Committee, have declared polygamy a form of human rights abuse, and a number of African

countries have declared polygamy illegal in recent years. Yet some critics of polygamy advocate an incremental restrictive approach to encourage the social and economic decline of the institution (WLUMML 2003). The African Protocol of Women's Rights takes a middle position, endorsing monogamy but also protecting the rights of wives in polygynous marriage (Banda 2014). A minority of states in which polygamy is allowed accord wives some limited protections through requiring the consent of existing wives to new marriages, and providing some property and support rights to wives.

### **1.3.2 Parent-Child Relationships**

During the last half century, legal regimes have also transformed the way they regulate parent-child relationships. At the middle of the twentieth century, laws determining paternity were largely governed by the marital presumption, which conferred paternity on the husband of the mother. With the advent of DNA testing toward the end of the twentieth century, laws have reckoned with how to weigh claims to paternity based on biology against paternity claims based on marriage to the mother.<sup>11</sup> Because of the higher rates of non-marital births, countries have increasingly provided routes to establish paternity for children born outside of marriage. For example, the 1978 European Convention on the Legal Status of Children Born out of Wedlock, mandates the establishment of voluntary paternal affiliation procedures. Further, with the advent of Assisted Reproductive Technologies, countries have grappled increasingly with how to determine parentage in an age where social and biological parenthood can diverge.

One parentage issue that has engendered much debate concerns the parenting rights of gays and lesbians. Until fairly recently, openly gay and lesbian couples were penalized in child custody determinations and were prohibited from adopting. Accumulated research now

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<sup>11</sup> In the U.S. case, see for example Michael H. v. Gerald D.

establishes that children raised by same-sex parents do as well as children raised by opposite-sex parents on relevant measures of wellbeing (See Perrin & Seigel 2013). Based on this evidence, most Western countries have repealed or at least rolled back these laws in recent years. All countries that recognize same-sex marriage allow adoption by married same-sex couples. However, some countries that do not allow same-sex marriage continue to deny full joint or step-child adoption by same-sex couples. Most Asian and African countries still prohibit such adoptions, with the prominent exception of South Africa.

Another important change in recent decades is the emphasis on providing children the right to care from both parents. While children born out of wedlock traditionally did not have the same rights to support and care from their father that children born within a marriage were given, during the last half century, most countries have firmly decreed that such children be treated equally with children born to married couples.<sup>12</sup> When it comes to the significant number of non-marital children who are born to parents in an existing, cohabiting relationship (McLanahan 2003), most countries have moved to a legal model in which the parents are accorded the same parenting rights and duties as married couples. The current challenges center instead on how to ensure that children whose parents are not in intact relationships are accorded the same opportunities for relationships, financial support, and stability that married parents offer. We discuss the details of adult-child relations in Part 2. 3.

#### **1.4. The socioeconomic context of families**

Families enclose resources within their boundaries. They do so because family membership implies both legitimate claims over other family members' resources as well as

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<sup>12</sup> For the United States, see for example *Levy v. Louisiana* (1968); *Johnston v. Ireland* (1987). Chile was among the last countries in Latin America in 1998 to equalize the rights of children born in and out of wedlock.

obligations to transfer resources to other family members. These claims and obligations are both legally and culturally enshrined, through norms and customs.<sup>13</sup>

Resources can include material (money and property) as well as non-material resources (human capital, social capital, time devoted to care and service). Laws of inheritance, the obligation to care for off-spring (both in terms of material welfare and nonmaterial well-being), obligatory transfers among spouses, in some societies the obligation to care for the elderly, and in many societies the legal or de-facto pooling of resources among spouses, legally enshrine these principles of family solidarity, reciprocity, and obligation.

These laws and cultural norms that bind families together can confront or moderate socio-economic inequalities insofar as they distribute resources to household members that have no other sources for income, protection and services. Family solidarity, reciprocity and obligation can provide both material well-being and meaning to the lives of their members. In the absence of state or communal systems of protection, family solidarity and resource distribution can provide protection and resources to individuals who might otherwise be devoid of any means of subsistence. Very importantly, however, these laws and cultural norms also imply that families are a central institution in the intergenerational and intra-generational reproduction of inequality.

Families transfer resources both intra- and inter-generationally. Within generations, families reproduce inequality because they pool assets and resources (property, money, time, social capital) and enclose them among their members (be it at household level or between households of the same lineage or family). Inter-generationally they do so also through inheritance and family transfers between households. Since in most societies people with high

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<sup>13</sup> This said, it should be kept in mind that in any specific society, who counts as family or what counts as family can change depending on what is being mobilized or negotiated.

socio-economic status tend to marry each other, and vice versa, families not only reproduce but can also increase socio-economic inequalities (Esping-Andersen 2009; Mintz 2015).

Family formation and dissolution as well as variations in family arrangements are strongly correlated with social class through income and/or education differentials. In general, the poor marry less and earlier, have less conjugal stability and a larger proportion are female-headed households. Within and across countries in Latin America, the mean age is much lower and the prevalence of consensual unions is much higher among lower-income groups and those with less education (Cienfuegos 2014; Garcia & Oliveira 2011).

Given these trends, the poor are usually less able to benefit from resource pooling. They also have higher rates of fertility in almost every society in the world (Skirbekk 2008). Thus, poorer families, while contributing more to the reproduction of a given society are also the ones facing the starkest choices in terms of how to distribute scarce resources among family members. The result is that they often under-invest in their children's education, which in turn contributes to the intergenerational reproduction of inequality.

Besides the transfer of resources in daily life from parents to offspring, the key mechanism in the transmission of inequality is inheritance. Family members tend to leave their life savings, properties, and other assets to their offspring (or to other family members or friends). State regulations—especially taxes—on inheritance are thus a central instrument to curtail -or ensure- the transmission of inter-generational inequalities. Yet, there is a trend toward reducing or eliminating inheritance or estate taxes; indeed, thirteen countries or tax jurisdictions have repealed these since 2000, from Sweden and Norway, to Portugal, Macau, Russia, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Czech Republic, Lichtenstein, Brunei, Austria, Hungary, and the Slovak Republic (Cole 2015). In the United States, the estate tax exemption has grown from under US\$1 million in 2001 to almost US\$5.5 million in 2015 (Ibid.).

According to Piketty (2014), the rise in the level of economic inequality in developed countries since 1980, particularly the US, is strongly associated with policy changes on taxation and finance as well as the underlying mechanisms of capital accumulation which promote wealth divergence rather than convergence. In the context of slower economic growth, private capital accumulates faster through inheritance rather than savings, worsening further the distribution of income and wealth.

As mentioned earlier, state policies that counteract these mechanisms and provide protections from social risks for families have been essential in promoting family wellbeing. For example, without the provision of public or subsidized transfers and health and care services, the birth of a severely disabled child into a poor family portends not only exacerbated hardship for the child but potential financial ruin for the family as well.

## **2. Relations within families**

Beyond family composition, legal family recognition and the socio-economic context of family units, relations *within* families are crucial for individual and family well-being. In this section we focus on relationships among partners, between parents and children, aging family members, and among other kin. We assess the empirical evidence on how these different relations contribute to family and individual well-being, keeping in mind the goal of the chapter to identify the conditions which allow families to flourish while ensuring individual autonomy and dignity. We do so with an emphasis on how the productive and reproductive role of families and family members can be made compatible with the individual search for dignity, opportunity and protection.

## **2.1 Relationships among partners**

In much contemporary discourse, partner relationships are assumed to be based on altruism and solidarity, in the context of deep emotional attachment. While many unions may be underpinned by these sentiments and behavior, the overwhelming evidence also indicates that the distribution of power in a relationship matters not only for equality in the relationship but also for a broad range of factors related to individual and family well-being, from self-fulfillment, to freedom from violence, to child nutrition. Below we examine four dimensions of relations between partners: legal equality of partners, access to income and wealth, the gender division in paid and unpaid labor, and bodily integrity (reproductive choice and freedom from violence) and what the social sciences know of how they contribute to individual and family well-being.

Given that legalized same-sex unions are a very recent phenomenon, we focus here on heterosexual couples (whether married or in consensual unions), although much of the empirical evidence is likely relevant to same-sex couples as well except that dynamics around gender roles are less established.

### **2.1.1. The legal framework on gender equality**

The past century has witnessed a tremendous leap toward legal gender equality, albeit at different paces in different regions. A study of 100 countries using 17 indicators of potential gender inequality found that between 1960 and 2010, 28 countries removed all sources of gender inequality in family law, while an additional 29 reduced at least one constraint; 18 countries

stayed stagnant; hence, by 2010 53 of the 100 countries had achieved legal gender equality (Hallward-Driemeier, et al. 2013).<sup>14</sup>

OECD countries and those of Eastern Europe and Central Asia had few explicitly discriminatory laws by 1960 and those remaining had been eliminated by 2010.<sup>15</sup> In Latin America, a region with relatively few indicators of gender inequality in 1960, considerable progress was achieved in this fifty-year period. Countries of Sub-Saharan Africa had the greatest number of constraints in 1960; by 2010 the number of these had been halved, as in East Asia. There has been less progress and even some regression in the Middle East and North Africa as well as in South Asia. Many countries in these regions exempt religious and customary law from existing gender equality or anti-gender discrimination provisions in their constitutions (Hallward-Driemeier et al. 2013). Another study, focusing on the 1975-2005 period, found that countries with the lowest gender equality in family law all apply Islamic family law but that there is considerable variation among them.<sup>16</sup>

The greatest progress towards gender equality in the family has been made with respect to married women's legal capacity. In all but a few countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, married women can now sign contracts, initiate legal proceedings and open their own bank accounts. The most persistent constraints across world regions are those dealing with women's property rights and access to immovable assets: inequality in the inheritance rights of sons and daughters and in the property rights of surviving spouses. In addition, in some countries an adult married woman

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<sup>14</sup> The study investigated property rights, legal capacity and constitutional protection. The indicators do not include regulations regarding divorce.

<sup>15</sup> Until 1978 in Spain and 1984 in Switzerland, wives needed their husbands' permission to be employed; In France, until 1985 only the husband could administer the marital property (Hallward-Driemeier et al. 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Bangladesh and Pakistan have made more progress in attaining gender equality than Egypt, Jordan or Saudi Arabia. Also, not much progress has been attained in countries as diverse as India, Kenya and Nigeria. Iran and Indonesia back-tracked, scoring lower in 2005 than in earlier periods (Htun and Weldon 2011). Since 2005, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have taken measures related to women's capacity to pass citizenship on to their spouses and children.

cannot be designated a household head on the same terms as her husband or seek a job or engage in trade or a profession without her husband's permission (Hallward-Driemeier et al. 2013: Fig. 4).

Since 1981, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has played an important role in enshrining gender equality in the family globally since it went into effect in 1981.<sup>17</sup> As of 2017, CEDAW had been ratified by 189 countries, although many with reservations (UN Treaty Collection).<sup>18</sup> These reservations pertained mainly to Article 15, which stipulates that women's legal capacity should be "identical to that of men" and Article 16, which states that in marriage both spouses should have the same rights "in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property" (UN 1980, Part IV: 7-8).<sup>19</sup> The largest positive impact of CEDAW has been associated with the attainment of equal property rights between unmarried men and women, equal inheritance rights for daughters and widows, and several dimensions of legal capacity. This was felt most greatly in countries at lower levels of income and, in terms of inheritance rights, where the rule of law was weak. It should be stressed, however, that there is virtually always a gap between legal rights in principle and actual rights in practice, where the size of the gap is influenced by state capacity among other factors. Thus it is helpful to think of laws enshrining gender equality as a necessary first, but not only, step towards gender equality in practice.

Laws that regulate inheritance and property ownership in relation to marriage have a significant impact on how wealth is distributed between husbands and wives. Two broad marital

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<sup>17</sup> CEDAW was an outcome of global organizing efforts associated with second wave feminism. Its passage in 1979 built on momentum created by the first UN Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975.

<sup>18</sup> Among the countries that has not ratified CEDAW is the United States, although it signed the convention.

<sup>19</sup> Byrnes and Freeman (2011) attribute much of this progress to subsequent UN Conferences on Women and other human rights conferences, as well as periodic review processes to which signature countries are subject.

regimes have emerged across different cultures. In separation of property regimes (a shared legacy of British Common Law, classical Islamic law, and the customary law of many sub-Saharan and Asian societies) each spouse retains ownership of the property acquired both before and during marriage, as well as any inheritance. In community of property regimes (a legacy of Roman law), all property acquired during a marriage belongs jointly to husband and wife; if the marriage is dissolved this property is split equally between them. Importantly, this regime recognizes the non-monetary contribution of wives (domestic and care labor) to the marriage.<sup>20</sup> In some countries of the West, in the case of divorce, reforms to separation of property regimes have required sharing on an equal or equitable basis those assets accumulated during the marriage, and in at least one, the community property regime has been reformed to allow equitable rather than equal sharing, thus blurring the distinction between these two regimes.

Inheritance and the degree of gender bias differ cross-culturally. Countries with legal systems derived from British common law often enjoy greater testamentary freedom, whereas in the Roman legal tradition children become forced heirs to most of their parents' estate. A relatively unique feature of the latter tradition is that sons and daughters are entitled to equal shares. In contrast, daughters are entitled to only half the share of sons under some schools of Islamic law. Dominant patterns of wealth ownership reflect the influence of different marital and inheritance regimes as shown below.

Legal reform can have positive effects both on individual and family wellbeing. An analysis of the impact of inheritance reforms in two Indian states that equalized land rights of

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<sup>20</sup> In full community property regimes, the principle of shared ownership applies regardless of when the property is acquired. In partial community property regimes, such as in most of Latin America, individual inheritances and property acquired before marriage continue to be recognized as the individual's during marriage, although earnings resulting from such property are generally still pooled. See Deere and Doss (2006).

sons and daughters in the mid-1990s found that it increased the probability of women inheriting land, getting married later, and having more education (Deininger et al. 2013).

Laws that regulate the age of majority and the age of consent for marriage, and social norms that influence actual marital age, are also important for individual well-being and gender equality in partnerships. Early age at marriage can deter schooling completion for both men and women, with life-long implications for their earnings capacity, while early motherhood can have detrimental effects for the health and employability of women. Also, large age differences between husbands and wives can aggravate power imbalances within couples.

Since the 1970s the mean age at first marriage or union has been increasing for both men and women world-wide, and the gender age gap at marriage narrowing (UNDESA 2011). This trend is more marked in developed than in developing countries. In the US, for example, the mean age of legal marriage increased from 21 for women and 23 for men in 1970 to 27 and 29, respectively, by the late 1980s (Mintz 2015: 102). While the prevalence of adolescent marriage has fallen in developing countries, in a good number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, 30% or more of women are married by the age of 18 (UNDESA 2011:1). More years of schooling is associated with later age at marriage for women. This has led to a narrowing of the gender age gap and, potentially, greater female agency in marriage (Carmichael 2011).

Finally, how marital or common-law breakups are regulated has a significant impact on the wellbeing of the individuals involved. Divorce potentially gives unhappy partners an exit option from insufferable marriages, and in the context of extant gender inequalities, its regulation is especially consequential for the well-being of women and children. Its viability is conditioned by marital and inheritance regimes, access to income for the more vulnerable partner post-divorce, and social norms.

In the West, divorce based on mutual consent and/or unilateral, no fault divorce is now the norm. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century legal reforms in Muslim majority countries found various ways to constrain the husband's power of unilateral divorce (including awarding compensation payments to divorcées and expanding the divorcée's temporary rights to the marital home) and widened the grounds on which a woman could apply for divorce; but generally a structural imbalance remained. Since 1984 at least 10 Muslim countries have reformed their divorce regulations so that women as well as men can initiate a divorce or so that women can divorce their husband without his consent, parallel to the previous right of husbands (Hassani-Nezhad and Sjögren 2014: Table 1).<sup>21</sup>

How property is distributed upon a divorce imposes significant conditions on the ability of individuals to exit unhappy or abusive relationships. As noted above, community property marital regimes (where both partners are automatically entitled to half the community property), or where equal inheritance rights for sons and daughters prevail, make it easier for individuals to exit. In countries of the Common law tradition, such as the US and Canada, where separation of property regimes prevail, the trend over the past several decades has been towards the equal or equitable division of marital property upon divorce in recognition of wives' non-monetary contributions towards the marriage and child-rearing. This enables the more vulnerable member to exit with some level of financial security. It also has implications for offspring. A study of Brazil's extension of alimony rights to couples in consensual unions was found to be associated with an increase in women's leisure time and the school enrolment of the eldest girl among

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<sup>21</sup> A remaining source of gender inequality in family law concerns custody and guardianship over children. In the 10 Muslim majority countries that reformed their divorce legislation between 1984 and 2006, the mother always gets custody of young children, but in seven countries, mothers lose custody of sons at a younger age (most frequently age 10) than they do daughters. The only two countries to treat children equally irrespective of sex are Jordan (where they remain with the mother until puberty) and Morocco (where they do so until age 15) (Hassani-Nezhad and Sjörgen 2014: Table 1).

households in consensual unions compared to married couples (Rangel 2006); there was no significant effect on men's time allocation.

Ensuring viable exit options for unhappy partners can mean a difference between life and death. Honor killings, which are widely documented in the Middle East, parts of South Asia and North Africa, are sometimes against women who seek to initiate divorce or separation as well as reactions to female sexuality that transgress social mores (Kabeer 2014). One study in the United States found that by allowing for unilateral divorce which increased women's exit options from oppressive relationships, suicide rates for women fell dramatically while those for men did not change. This legal change was also associated with a decrease in intimate partner violence as well as femicide (Stevenson and Wolfers 2006). A study in Canada found that following a reform which improved women's financial position upon divorce, suicide rates among older married women were reduced while there was no change in the rate among men or younger unmarried women (Adam et al. 2011).

### **2.1.2. Access to income and wealth: continuing gender gaps**

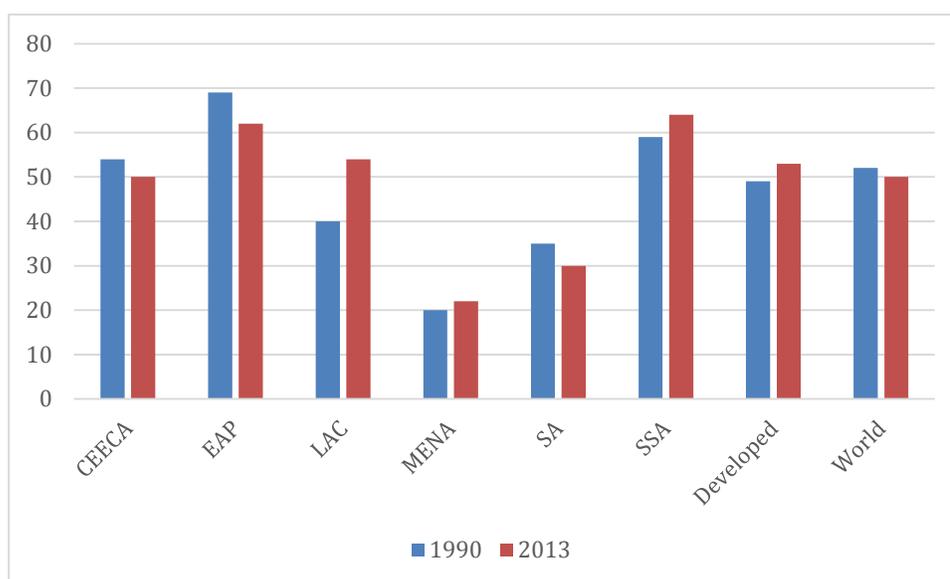
Over the past half century there has been a tremendous increase in women's labor force participation world-wide, with half of adult women in 2014 being economically active (ILO 2012).<sup>22</sup> The increase in the share of households with more than one income earner in concert with rapid urbanization, rising educational levels, declining fertility rates and transformations in family composition, have had profound implications for all facets of family life. Nonetheless, the increase in women's labor force participation has been uneven both across and within different regions. In addition, the conditions of women's employment continue to disadvantage them

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed analysis of the factors contributing to this increase and long-term trends see Goldin (2006) and Blau and Kahn (2016).

compared to men; for example, in 2014 the average global gender earnings gap remained at 24% (UN Women 2015). Moreover, while the increase in women’s labor force participation is often associated with gains in women’s access to and control over income and wealth, as well as more egalitarian relations among couples, this relationship is not linear or straightforward, although there is evidence of positive synergies in some dimensions. Figure 17.1 outlines female labor force participation rates by region between 1990 and 2013.

Figure 17.1. Female labor force participation rates by region, 1990 and 2013



Notes: Regions are as follows: CEECA (Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia); EAP (East Asia and the Pacific); LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean); MENA (Middle East and North Africa); SA (South Asia); SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa); Developed (developed countries).

Source: Compiled from UN Women (2015: Figure 2.1), based on ILO data.

Figure 17.1 illustrates the heterogeneity in women’s labor force participation rates across world regions and how, globally, these have fallen slightly since 1990. This decline is driven by

trends in East and South Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. In India, for example, women's labor force participation fell from 33% in 1994 to 28% in 2012 (Neetha 2014). The largest gains have been in Latin America and the Caribbean where the rate is now comparable to developed economies. While there have been gains in the Middle East and North Africa over the 1990-2013 period, this region continues to show the lowest rates of female labor force participation. The highest rate is exhibited by Sub-Saharan Africa where agricultural employment still predominates.

Men's labor force participation rates also fell globally between 1990 and 2013, from 81% to 77%, decreasing in every world region (UN Women 2015: Fig. 2.1). The lowest male rates are currently found in developed economies (68%) and Central and Eastern Europe (69%). Overall, these trends mean that the gender gap among the economically active population has narrowed over this period, being smallest in developed countries and in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite increases in manufacturing and the service sectors, women's employment in developing economies remains largely concentrated in family-based agriculture or informal work (ILO 2012). A substantial share are unpaid family workers (or "contributing family members") and do not necessarily have access to their own income. Gender inequality is central to this phenomenon. For example, in India men on family farms are more likely to be landowners or leaseholders and considered the primary farmer (self-employed), with women as their helpers (Neetha 2014).

In Latin America, for example, women are overrepresented in the informal sector. Moreover, the quality of women's informal sector employment is generally more precarious than men's, with women concentrated in either domestic service or as unpaid family workers (Benería et al. 2016: Fig. 4.2).

Women's earnings are also limited by a persistent gender wage gap. In developed countries, this gap has shrunk over the past half-century, as women and men have developed similar levels of human capital, both in education and labor market experience. In the United States, by 2014, full-time female workers earned 79% of what men did annually from about 60% in the 1950s (Blau and Kahn 2016). The gender pay gap is even lower in Scandinavia and Southern Europe (Olivetti and Petrongolo 2016). The remaining gap is caused by discrimination, unequal bargaining conditions, different probabilities of career interruption (Goldin 2014) and occupational segregation, where women are often concentrated in occupations that suffer from what economists such as Nancy Folbre (2012) refer to as the "care penalty".

In developing countries, the gender wage gap has largely been maintained through the gendering of occupations and tasks. Female-dominated occupations generally have lower wages than those that are male-dominated, for example, in the context of the garment industry in India and Bangladesh (Custers 2012; Ghosh 2009) and is rooted in the devaluation of domestic labor and the status of women as secondary earners, limiting the positive impact that gains in education could have on gender wage gaps (Kabeer and Natali 2013). In export industries, highly informal sub-contracting arrangements employ women as part of a flexible workforce that hires and fires with fluctuations in export demand (Custers 2012). Women are sometimes home-based workers, where employers exploit systems of familial control, values, and cultural practices to create a docile, severely underpaid labor force (Cook and Dong 2011). In the service sector, increased female employment comes with a high degree of gender segmentation and wage gaps (Mazumdar 2006).

Overall, the increase in women's wage work and self-employment has brought income into the hands of women and improved the economic well-being of their families. In developed countries, families where both parents work are less likely to be in poverty (Esping-Andersen

2009). For developing countries, a range of studies indicate broad gender differences in the practice of pooling earned income, with men often retaining some discretionary income and women pooling most of theirs, particularly when there are children at home (Bruce and Dwyer 1988).

Whether earning income improves women's position in marriage, largely depends on whether women are able to control the income that they earn. A study found that in 13 of 44 developing countries surveyed, 10% or more of the women sampled reported that they were not involved in decisions regarding the use of the income that they themselves earned (World Bank 2012: Fig. 2.9).<sup>23</sup> Women in the poorest households are more likely to be uninvolved in such decisions compared to wealthier households. Malawi presents the most extreme case, with 45% of women in the lowest quintile not participating in this decision, compared to 13% in the top income quintile.

Gender differences in income earnings and assets, combined with inequality in marital property regimes and inheritance, result in husbands having more wealth than wives. The most rigorous study of the gender wealth gap in a developed country to date, based on 2002 data for Germany, found that the mean net wealth of women was 69% of that of men; this gender wealth gap was greater for married women, who on average owned 64% of the wealth of men (Sierminska et.al. 2010).

In developing countries, the first large-scale surveys of individual wealth ownership that measured the intra-household distribution of wealth found tremendous differences across world regions. Nationally representative surveys in Ecuador and Ghana in 2010 reveal that in the former, partnered women own 44% of the wealth of the couple, compared to only 19% in the

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<sup>23</sup> Based on the Demographic and Health Surveys sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development. Countries surveyed were in Sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to Bangladesh, Nepal and India.

latter. A similar survey in the state of Karnataka, India found that partnered women owned only 9% of couple wealth (Deere et al. 2012). This study argues that the governing marital and inheritance regimes largely explain these cross-country differences. In Ecuador, the default marital regime is partial community property, and inheritance laws treat children of both sexes equally. Assets such as land, housing and other real estate tend to be owned jointly by spouses. In Ghana and India, where separation of property is the default marital regime, these assets are predominantly owned by men. Moreover, in both countries, sons are privileged in inheritance, resulting in a much lower share of wealth owned by partnered women.<sup>24</sup>

In South Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, most land owners are male, and men own more land than women on average (Agarwal 1994; Deere and León 2001; Doss et al 2015). The primary means through which agricultural land is acquired is inheritance. Thus gender biases favoring men in inheritance – whether in law or cultural practices – end up reproducing gender inequality within households and families. In more urbanized developing countries, housing rather than land is the most important component of household wealth. Data for Latin America suggest that ownership of the main residence is more equitably distributed than the ownership of land; nonetheless, in most countries, a larger share of homeowners are still men (Deere et al. 2012).<sup>25</sup> All these factors reduce women’s wealth compared to that of men, with implications for gender equality in families.

Gender wealth inequalities among couples often originate in what each partner is able to bring to marriage. Through local surveys conducted in six developing countries, a study found

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<sup>24</sup> Historical data for the US suggest that women typically fared better in community property states than in common law states. A study of estate tax records in the 1950s found that women owned 49% of the reported wealth in community property states, but only 38% in common law states (Lapman 1962 in Deere and Doss 2006).

<sup>25</sup> Ranging from 73% in Guatemala to gender parity in Nicaragua and Panama.

that husbands considerably exceed wives in either the number or the value of assets that they bring to marriage (Hallman et al. 2005).

Globally, dowry systems differ on whether assets are transferred from the bride's family directly to the wife (giving her an endowment at the time of marriage), as in China and historically in Latin America, or to the husband and/or his family, as in India. The latter system can result in substantial wealth inequality between husband and wife at the time of marriage, although it also depends on the composition of the dowry. If part is paid as gold jewelry, this tends to be considered the wives' property (Srinivasan and Bedi 2007). Differences in initial spousal wealth are then reproduced during the marriage due to gender differences in labor market opportunities and/or inheritance practices.

Research has shown that more equal access to income and wealth among husband and wife has positive effects on shared decision-making, more equal work burdens and improved family wellbeing. A study of women in rural Bangladesh found that women who earned income had more say in purchasing decisions (Anderson and Eswaran 2009). Women's land ownership in Nepal was found to be associated with their having more autonomy not only in purchasing but also over their own healthcare and visits to family and friends, important for broader family wellbeing (Allendorf 2007). In the case of Ecuador, a study of how couples make decisions on whether or not to work and how to spend income found that women's share of couple wealth is a significant predictor of egalitarian decision-making (Deere and Twyman 2012).<sup>26</sup>

In countries where a woman's dowry is legally her property, its size has been found to be positively associated with the probability of husbands' doing domestic labor in Taiwan (Zhang and Chan 1999) and rural China (Brown 2009). This latter study also found that the size of a

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<sup>26</sup> Egalitarian decision-making was defined as where both men and women report making these decisions jointly, and agree that the other spouse does in fact participate in these decisions.

woman's dowry was positively related to the relative amount of time she dedicated to leisure activities, to household expenditures on "women's goods", and to her satisfaction with life. A small-scale study in Uganda focused on perceived differences in wealth and income among husbands and wives and found that husbands are more likely to participate in childcare when wealth was considered to be equally distributed or shared than when there were differences among the spouses (Nkwake 2015).

Studies have also focused on the relationship between women's income and assets and other indicators of women's wellbeing, such as health and the incidence of intimate partner violence (the latter discussed in Part 2.1.4.b). In Indonesia, women's share of assets is associated with their obtaining prenatal and delivery care (Beegle et al. 2001). A higher female share of owned assets and income in marriage is also associated with improved outcomes for children – whether health outcomes in South Africa (Duflo 2003), Ethiopia (Fafchamps et al. 2009), or Nepal (Allendorf 2007), schooling attainment in Africa (Kumar and Quisumbing 2012; Doss et al. 2014), or both in urban Brazil (Thomas 1990) and Vietnam (Menon et al. 2014).<sup>27</sup> Studies of household budget shares have shown that women's ownership or share of assets is related to greater expenditures on education in Bangladesh, India and South Africa (Quisumbing and Maluccio 2003) or in Ghana, on education and food (Doss 2006).

In sum, there is substantial evidence, although not always consistent, that women's access to income and wealth is positively associated with an increase in their bargaining position within the household, more egalitarian gender relations and enhanced family well-being, particularly of children.

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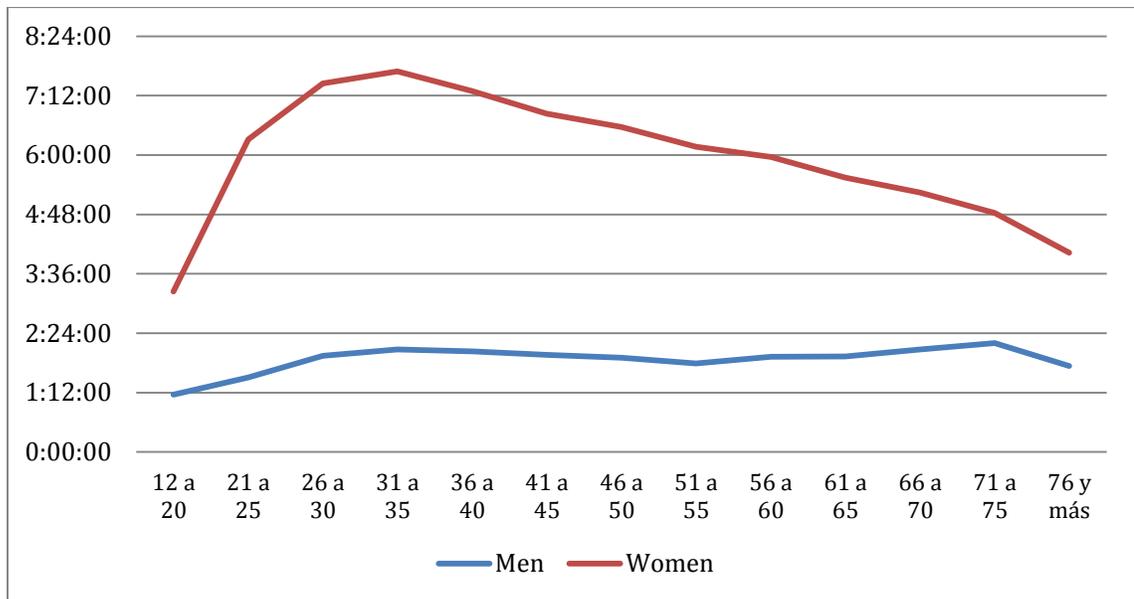
<sup>27</sup> See Doss (2013) for a summary of the intra-household bargaining literature and the methodological challenges involved, particularly the problem of endogeneity. The positive association between women's bargaining power and the various outcomes does seem to be sensitive to the choice of proxy and specific cultural contexts.

### **2.1.3. The gendered division of unpaid labor in the family**

One of the main factors limiting women's labor force participation as well as the returns to their labor is the gendered division of unpaid labor in the family. Across the world, women bear more responsibility for unpaid housework and care labor than men. As noted in the introduction, in industrialized Western societies, the gap in the distribution of non-paid labor and care work among men and women has decreased considerably, although significantly more so in some countries than others (O'Brien and Shemilt 2003; Gauthier and DeGusti 2012; Nordenmark 2016). In no country, though, has this gender gap been eliminated. In most of the developing world, care and domestic labor still remains heavily the responsibility of women, limiting their ability to enter the labor force or make full potential of their resources in the labor market. Overall, women's total labor time (paid and unpaid) tends to exceed men's, reducing their access to leisure and rest.

As Graph 17.2 shows, the gender gap in the time spent on unpaid labor in Latin America is large, particularly for women in their child-bearing years, being around 5 hours per day. Moreover, when analyzed by household income quintiles, the gender gap is largest among the poorest households, since it is particularly poor women who dedicate the most time to unpaid labor, with little difference in the time spent by men across quintiles (ECLAC 2009).

Figure 17.2. Average time allocated to unpaid labor by sex and age, Latin America (daily hours)



Source: Compiled from ECLAC (2009: Fig IV.26); unweighted average for five countries, for time use surveys from mid-2000s.

Traditional gender roles tend to be reinforced when couples have children. Across cultures, being married and the presence of small children are found to lower the employment rates of women; the opposite is true for men (UN Women 2015; Esping-Andersen 2009). Indeed, men may typically receive what is referred to as a “fatherhood premium” (Budig and England 2001; Gangl and Ziefle 2009; Killewald and Gough 2013). Many mothers exit the labor force or reduce their work hours upon having children, especially if they have a stable partner who works (Baxter et.al. 2015; Evertsson 2012). In some cases, employers discriminate a priori on the basis of sex and gender role expectations and avoid hiring mothers of young children in both developed (Budig 2014; Correll and Benard 2007) and developing countries (Blofield and Madalozzo 2017; Heymann 2006).

Research shows that while some mothers prefer to stay at home with their children, especially in the first years, the availability and acceptability of alternative care arrangements increases mothers’ labor force participation rates. Thus, when given the option, many women

prefer to remain in the labor force after having children (Boeckmann, Misra and Budig 2014; De Laat and Sevilla-Sanz 2011). Many analyses have demonstrated that expanding access to paid leave, childcare, tax incentives for second earners, and flexible scheduling has increased women's labor force participation across OECD economies (Thévenon 2013). The literature on Latin America shows similar results; studies have found that access to affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) or full-day school has a positive effect on mothers' labor force participation rates (Contreras et al. 2010; Medrano 2009). Other studies show that access to formal ECEC enables mothers to go from part time to full time and/or to switch from informal to formal work (Hallman et al. 2005; Chioda 2011).

Without changes in gender norms, well-intentioned policies can backfire. Long paid leaves and abundant part-time options risk "mommy-tracking" career-oriented women into part-time or lower level positions (Blau and Kahn 2013). Thus, the challenge lies equally in fostering more paternal co-responsibility and changing the division of labor at home.

Studies show that when fathers participate more in care and housework, mothers are also more likely to work. So-called "father's quotas", which are individual non-transferable entitlements to paid parental leave, have been a way to provide strong incentives for men to become more involved at home (Moss 2015). The literature on developed countries shows that such policies enable fathers' increased participation in care, including after the leave is over (Arnalds et.al. 2013; Nepomnyaschy and Waldfogel 2007; Tanaka and Waldfogel 2007), with better health and life satisfaction for fathers and increased gender equality both at home and in the labor market (O'Brien 2009; Huerta, et al 2013; Moss 2015).

Even when the gender gap in employment is due to preferences – mothers genuinely prefer to stay home with the children, and fathers prefer to work outside the home – it can aggravate gender inequalities within the family due to the reduction in women's income vis-à-vis

men, with the effects outlined earlier. It can also endanger the material security of the family as a whole. These work interruptions reduce the wages and social protections of low-income households, increasing the financial hardship of these families. They also make old age poverty among women, specifically, more likely (ILO/UNDP 2009; Gerecke 2013). Overall, evidence from advanced industrialized countries and Latin America indicates that dual-income families are less likely to be in poverty (ECLAC 2009, 2012; Esping-Andersen 2009).<sup>28</sup> The differential impact of these gender roles on women and men can, to an extent, be “equalized” by outsourcing. Women can ameliorate the “second shift” at home often by using their earnings on market substitutes of domestic work (Hochschild and Machung 1989; Killewald 2011). In many developing countries, and increasingly in many developed countries, this substitution has involved the hiring of paid domestic workers, who, given high rates of poverty and inequality either domestically or globally, are relatively inexpensive for the well-to-do (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001; Palriwala and Neetha 2010; Parreñas 2015). States have historically ‘subsidized’ this form of labor by maintaining discriminatory labor laws toward paid domestic workers, mandating longer legal work hours and lower benefits and protections (Blofield 2012). In Latin America, the region with the highest economic inequalities in the world, paid domestic workers make up a sizeable 15 percent of the urban female labor force (ILO 2015).

This dynamic of paid domestic labor shows that inequalities between families affect and are affected by inequalities within families in two ways. First, highly educated professionals tend to increasingly marry each other, thus earning higher incomes (Mintz 2015). Second, unequal gender roles tend to be less entrenched among more educated couples. These couples are better

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<sup>28</sup> In low and middle-income developing countries both partners’ working may be insufficient to lift them above the poverty line, particularly if they are both employed in agriculture or in the urban informal sector.

able to outsource, and at the same time more likely to share in domestic tasks, thus reducing the double burden on the woman (Esping-Andersen 2009).

The double burden tends to be most deeply felt among lower income women, especially mothers, and especially in developing countries. Lower income women are less able to out-source a share of their domestic burden given their lower purchasing power; at the same time, they are less likely to have participatory partners at home. Partly due to these factors, mothers in lower income quintiles are less likely to be employed than mothers in higher income quintiles, across countries. The employment rates of women aged 25 to 34 in 2013 were 80% in the highest income quintile, compared to 39% in the lowest (Filgueira and Martínez Franzoni forthcoming). In Sub-Saharan Africa and other areas of the world where rural subsistence economies predominate, gaps are lower due to the fact that both men and women work in agriculture, though they do not always have equal access to the fruits of their production, as discussed earlier.

Lower-income women, when employed, are more likely to work in the informal sector (often as nannies or maids for the well-to-do). They are likely to experience higher levels of stress than fathers as they juggle the competing demands of work and family with few resources (Heymann 2006; Blofield and Madalozzo 2017). While the vast majority of mothers continue to reside with their families, an increasing number migrate domestically from rural to urban communities or internationally from poor (particularly Indonesia and the Philippines) to rich countries. The migration of women results in an international division of reproductive labor (Parreñas, 2000), or what Hochschild (2001) has referred to as a care chain. In it, women rely on migrant domestic workers, most often female, who in turn rely on other family members, virtually always female, to care for the family they have left behind in the process of migration.

#### **2.1.4 Bodily integrity**

### **2.1.4.a Reproductive autonomy**

Bodily integrity – in the form of sexual and reproductive autonomy, on the one hand, and freedom from violence on the other – are fundamental aspects of individual and family wellbeing. States provide the framework in which couples bear -or do not bear- children, and the conditions under which this occurs, including whether it takes place without undue physical, financial, or psychological hardship. The state also plays an important role in ensuring (or not) the bodily integrity of individuals in terms of both reproductive autonomy and freedom from violence, within –and beyond- families.

While male partners may be involved and affected, the consequences of the inability to avoid or terminate pregnancies, and to choose when to have children, weigh much more heavily on women and girls. Terminating a pregnancy in unsafe conditions can result in bodily harm and even death of the woman, while carrying a child to term also holds significant health risks, especially in less developed countries. Unwanted pregnancies affect the short, medium and long term schooling and careers of women to a much larger extent than men, reinforcing gender inequalities in relationships. Finally, in terms of the family as a whole, unintended or unwanted pregnancies are more likely to result in children living in poverty.

Control over reproduction and family planning has historically been in male hands, whether male heads of households, male religious authorities, or male state leaders. Individual autonomy in reproductive decisions has gradually become more broadly accepted as a dominant principle, although not without contestation. Concerns about public health, in particular, have driven practical concerns in the context of high rates of clandestine abortions and unwanted pregnancies, particularly among poor families. Progress has been slow and uneven. For example, in the United States, it was only in 1972 that the right of unmarried women to birth control was

affirmed in a Supreme Court decision, following a century of very restrictive regulation of family planning.

In developed economies, liberalized access to contraception and abortion has provided women with the freedom to plan reproduction around their education and career instead of being forced to prioritize their domestic obligations (Goldin and Katz 2002). Along with these changes, medical advances have given women and couples more control over reproduction, both in prevention, termination, and assisted reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization.

Advances in technology have also given rise to commodified exchanges in reproduction via surrogacy, which is today a billion-dollar business. Due to legal restrictions and economic dynamics, surrogacy is concentrated in certain countries including India, Thailand, the United States, Ukraine and more recently Mexico (Pande, 2014; Rudrappa, 2015). More broadly, while reproductive technology has helped the reproduction of the privileged, it has a history of being used against the less privileged, for example with the forced sterilization of certain minorities in the United States (Briggs, 2002; Gutierrez, 2008; Roberts, 1998).

In terms of actual behavior, there has been a dramatic decline in fertility rates across the world over the past half century; the global fertility rate has been halved from 5 children per woman in 1960 to 2.5 in 2012.<sup>29</sup> In 2014, all countries with fertility rates higher than 4.5 per woman, with the exception of Afghanistan and East Timor, were in sub-Saharan Africa, and all had low levels of development and low status of women.

Despite the decline in fertility, 40% of pregnancies worldwide are unintended. This is not simply a problem of developing countries; in the United States, half of pregnancies are unintended (Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI) 2014; Sedgh et al. 2016). While unintended

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<sup>29</sup> See the World Bank Data Blog at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/between960-and012-world-average-fertility-rate-halved5-births-woman>.

pregnancies are problematic across all age and income groups, they are particularly so with girls, with lasting socio-economic effects, including compromised educational and labor market opportunities (Micklewright and Stewart 2000; AGI 2015). Studies have repeatedly found that pregnancies among teenagers tend to be the result of lack of information about and access to contraception.

Closely linked to unintended pregnancies, an estimated 225 million women worldwide have an unmet need for modern contraceptives (Singh et.al. 2014). Globally, 25 percent of pregnancies end in induced abortion, mostly as a result of unintended pregnancies, with a higher rate among married women. The rate in developed countries for the overall number of abortions per 1,000 women of childbearing age (15–44 years old) is lower, at 27 per 1000, down from 46 in the early 1990s, while in developing countries it has remained roughly the same at 37 per 1000 women (Sedgh et.al. 2016).

When performed by trained professionals, induced abortion is very safe for the woman. Restrictive laws, on the other hand, are not only ineffective in reducing the incidence of abortion but also force the procedure underground. The abortion rate in countries where abortion is prohibited altogether, or permitted only to save the woman's life, is 37 per 1000 woman, while the abortion rate in countries that allow it on demand is 34 per 1000 women (AGI 2016a; Sedgh et al.). The main difference is that in countries that restrict access, almost seven million women are annually treated for post-abortion complications, and many who should be are not; it is estimated that 40% of those needing treatment do not receive it (AGI 2016a). Low-income women are most vulnerable to post-abortion complications (Blofield 2008).

The countries that best provide women and girls with the ability to exercise reproductive freedom are those with comprehensive family planning services, including sex education from an age when girls and boys begin sexual relations (rather than when authorities think they should

start), access to contraception through public or subsidized health services, and access to abortion services on demand. These include most Western European countries, aside from Ireland. In these nations, abortion is used as a relatively rare last resort, with virtually all abortions performed safely.

In heavily patriarchal countries, abortions may also be used to engage in sex-selection and female feticide, a widespread phenomenon in Asian countries, giving rise to an increasingly smaller share of girls born each year (Sen 2003).

States everywhere have grappled with the role and rights of the sexual partners of women, and the parents of girls, on issues of reproductive choice. The global trend has been to eliminate husbands' rights to veto wives' decisions in access to contraception and abortion. In the United States, where abortion regulations remain a highly controversial issue, 38 U.S. states require parental involvement in the case of abortion for minors (AGI 2016b) despite evidence that such restrictions have led to clandestine abortions and even deaths from complications.

The other side of reproductive autonomy is the ability to choose to *have* children regardless of material and family circumstances, and to bear and raise a child without undue physical, financial or social hardship. The most basic and brutal measure of the cost of bearing a child is maternal mortality. Efforts to reduce maternal mortality, bolstered by the Millennium Development Goals, have resulted in a 44% drop in rates between 1990 and 2015. Still, 830 women die from maternal mortality every day, and 99% of these women live in developing countries (WHO 2015). These deaths are largely preventable.

The financial and social aspects of this dimension—bearing and raising a child without hardship-- will be addressed in more detail below in the adult-child relationships section. Data from OECD countries suggests that the ideal family size of couples in the West tends to be around two children (Esping-Andersen 2009). Some countries face problems of 'fertility crises',

where fertility rates have dropped to way below replacement level. A very low fertility rate is problematic not only because it contradicts the expressed desires of couples, but also because it means that fewer future workers will bear the cost of supporting the elderly (Esping-Andersen 2009).

#### **2.1.4.b Intimate partner violence**

There is no manifestation of individual harm in a relationship more severe than intimate partner violence (IPV) – physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence suffered by a person, in the vast majority of cases, a woman, at the hands of a current or former partner.<sup>30,31</sup> A recent World Health Organization (WHO) report considers IPV prevalence to be at “epidemic” proportions; 30% of women world-wide who have been married or have been in a consensual union have experienced physical or sexual violence (WHO 2013).<sup>32</sup> IPV rates vary by region, with the highest incidences of lifetime violence being reported in South East Asia, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa, and the lowest in high income countries as well as East Asia.<sup>33</sup> The high IPV prevalence has tremendous economic, social and health consequences for women, their families, communities and societies.

Almost half of the women who experience physical or sexual IPV report sustaining physical injuries requiring medical assistance. Compared to women who have not experienced IPV, these women are more than twice as likely to have experienced an unintended pregnancy that ended in induced abortion, almost twice as likely to experience depression, and more likely

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<sup>30</sup> Violence against women also includes violence carried out by those other than spouses or partners, as well as all forms of sexual violence, trafficking of women, female genital mutilation and honor killings (WHO 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Men are also the victims of IPV at the hands of women. In the United States the prevalence is much lower than female victimization and tends to have fewer severe physical or emotional consequences; also, it often takes place in the context of bi-directional violence (WHO 2010; Williams et al. 2008).

<sup>32</sup> The WHO study provides the most reliable regional and global estimates to date and is a mega review of current studies. It did not include emotional violence as this is measured less consistently across different studies. In most country-level surveys, the incidence of emotional abuse far exceeds physical or sexual IPV.

<sup>33</sup> There can be considerable variation for countries within a region, as well as between rural and urban areas in a given country. See Abramsky et al. (2011).

to have a premature or low-weight birth (WHO 2013: Table 6). The economic consequences are large, ranging from direct health costs to the indirect costs of lost work days, earnings and lower productivity.<sup>34</sup> The starkest example of the high cost of IPV is when it leads to femicide. WHO (2013) estimates that 38% of all female murders globally (compared to only 6% of male murders) are perpetrated by a current or former spouse or partner.<sup>35</sup>

Decades of research across disciplines in both developed and developing countries suggest a series of individual, relational, community and societal risk factors associated with *both* women becoming victims of IPV, and men becoming perpetrators (Morrison et al. 2007; WHO 2010; Abramsky et al. 2011). Individual risk factors include witnessing their mother being the victim of abuse, experiencing physical or sexual abuse themselves as a child, the harmful use of alcohol as a trigger factor, and the acceptance of violence as justifiable behavior. Protective individual factors for IPV include higher education, specifically women and/or men having completed secondary school. Relational risk factors include controlling behavior by the husband, marital discord, and large age and educational gaps between spouses. Community-level risk factors include high neighborhood unemployment, poverty and/or crime rates, a high proportion of illiteracy, and presence of individuals who justify wife beating.

Gender inequality is strongly associated with high rates of IPV. WHO studies emphasize that IPV is most prevalent where traditional gender norms based on male authority and control over women prevail:

“...gender inequality and male dominance reduces the opportunities for women to be involved in decision-making at every level; decreases the resources available to women;

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<sup>34</sup> See Kabeer (2014: Table 2) for a summary of the studies estimating the economic costs of IPV, for some countries reaching up to 2% of GDP.

<sup>35</sup> In South Asia, another form of violence against women resulting in death is linked to dowry-related violence or “bride burning”, when the bride’s family fails to meet the dowry demands of the husband and his family. Although dowry has been illegal in India since 1961, according to government data, the number of reported dowry deaths increased from 6,995 in 2000 to 8,391 in 2010 (reported in Kabeer 2014).

and increases acceptance of the use of violence against women. Furthermore, it contributes to gender-based inequalities in health and access to health care; in opportunities for employment and promotion; in levels of income; in political participation and representation; and in education. (WHO 2010: 26).

Considerable scholarly attention has been given to the relationship between a woman's status in family and society and the incidence of intimate partner violence (IPV). Most studies focus on whether women's education, employment and/or earnings act as deterrents to IPV. Systematic reviews of the evidence from developing countries find that the most consistent result is that women's education is associated with a lower risk of physical violence, particularly, their having completed secondary schooling (Vyas and Watts 2009; Abramsky et al 2011). Whether women are economically active is not associated with any consistent pattern in developing or developed countries for various reasons. While a number of studies have found a negative relation between women's employment and/or income and the odds of IPV, supporting the bargaining power hypothesis (Farmer and Tiefenthaler 1997), others have found no relation, or even a backlash effect.<sup>36</sup> One of the main empirical problems in analyzing the precise relation between women's employment and IPV is that both the likelihood of employment and a lower risk of violence may be due to the same factors, unmeasured characteristics of the woman (a problem known as endogeneity).<sup>37</sup> Studies that control for endogeneity, either econometrically or by using experimental methods, tend to find support for the bargaining power hypothesis, such as among poor women in the US (Gibson-Davis et al 2005), and in Mexico (Villareal 2007) and Uttar Pradesh in India (Bhattacharyya et al. 2011).

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<sup>36</sup> This might be expected given the different methodologies employed, including the reference period (lifetime or past year IPV), the group analyzed (current or ever partnered women) and how women's economic status is measured (absolutely or in terms of couple status differences).

<sup>37</sup> Both variables might be determined by the same factor, for example, by the controlling behavior of the husband (Kishor and Johnson 2004). See Moe and Bell (2004) for a study on how IPV in the US negatively affects women's employment and employability.

In the context of developing countries it has also been argued that women's access to employment or income might not strengthen women's fallback position in as powerful a way as might their ownership of assets (Panda and Agarwal 2005). Much depends on the type and quality of employment and whether women directly control the income they earn. Moreover, assets may provide more security than income since ownership of a dwelling or land may provide women with a concrete exit option, a place to move to. The potential protective role of homeownership when women themselves own a dwelling has been confirmed in recent studies in India (Ibid; Bhattacharyya et al 2011; ICRW 2006) as well as the United States (Resko 2010). Evidence of such a relationship in the case of land, however, is mixed, with some studies finding that it is associated with reduced risk of IPV (Panda and Agarwal 2005) and others finding no effect (ICRW 2006), and still others that women's land ownership increases the likelihood of lifetime physical violence, such as in Uganda, where women owning land goes strongly against traditional norms (Ezeh and Gage 2000). Another study, drawing on the extensive literature on the role of couple status differences, suggests that rather than examining the ownership of particular assets (whose importance may vary depending on the context), women's ownership of assets should be examined relative to their partners. In Ecuador women's share of couple wealth was found to be a protective factor against physical IPV, and in Ghana, against emotional abuse (Oduro, Deere and Catanzarite 2015).

The state plays a crucial role in ameliorating –or aggravating– gender inequalities. In the US, the expansion of legal assistance programs across the US after the Violence against Women Act of 1994 was passed has been associated with a dramatic decline in IPV, 21% between 1993 and 1998 (Farmer and Tienfenthaler 2003). Ease of access to protective orders and assistance

with custody issues and child support all strengthen women's fallback position by making exit from a relationship more feasible.<sup>38</sup>

Recognition in the global arena of the gravity of IPV for families and society and of women's right to live a life free of violence dates from the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which recognized violence against women as a violation of women's human rights. The 1995 Beijing Declaration of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women provided even stronger condemnation and an agenda for action, and the issue was subsequently incorporated into the CEDAW reporting process by states. Regional conventions, such as the 1994 Belém do Pará Inter-American Convention on Violence against Women and subsequent treaties and resolutions in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East have played important roles in galvanizing states to develop more comprehensive legislation against IPV, including its criminalization, and to begin to address the causes and consequences of violence against women.<sup>39</sup>

Most studies conclude that a comprehensive effort is required at all levels (individual, relational, community and societal) to reduce the prevalence of IPV and provide victims of abuse with access to justice and appropriate services (Morrison et al 2007; WHO 2010). There is consensus that much depends on changing social norms among both men and women, and that strong legislation sanctioning IPV and promoting gender equality is a critical first step. For the over-all well-being of current and former partners and their families, policies that give the more vulnerable member viable exit options without suffering devastating financial, physical or

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<sup>38</sup> This same analysis found that the increased provision of other services to victims at the county level, such as shelters and hotlines, did not impact the reporting of abuse. Other factors associated with the decline of IPV in the US include women's rising economic status and the aging of the population. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, IPV has continued to decline in the US, falling 64% between 1993 and 2010 (BJS 2012).

<sup>39</sup> As of 2015, 119 countries have some sort of legislation proscribing domestic violence and/or violence against women (UN Women 2015).

emotional consequences are crucial. Having such viable exit options also allows couples to foster meaningful, positive relations.

In addition, partner relations exist within a broader community. Aside from the state, factors outside of the household such as the extended family and the community also play an important role both directly and indirectly in providing the conditions for fulfilling, meaningful and egalitarian relationships. The extended family can enhance women's access to resources and ensure that they are able to exercise control over these resources. Their support may also reduce marital conflict, particularly, where sons and daughters both inherit land and post-marital residence may just as likely be uxorilocal (near the wife's family) as patrilocal, such as in portions of the Andes of South America (Deere and León 2001). Social norms are often most keenly felt at the community level, particularly sanctions in support of traditional gender roles and behavior. And social practices can also be difficult to change. A good example is the practice of dowry in India, which while illegal, continues and is associated with both IPV and other family violence against women, either because no dowry was paid to the husband's family or the amount was deemed insufficient, at the extreme, leading to "bride burning" with relative impunity.

But communities are also an important driver of progressive change, such as when women organize to form their own organizations. The literature on women's empowerment shows how women's organizations can enhance women's self-esteem and how organized women may influence social norms, leading to positive changes in intra-household relations and bargaining power (Rowlands 1997; Agarwal 1997; Pearse and Connell 2016).

In sum, there is good evidence that the overall tendency towards more gender equitable family law and greater gender equality in education, labor force participation, and asset ownership, is associated with increases in improvements in women's bodily integrity, and improvements in the wellbeing of the family as a whole. At the same time, these links are not

automatic, and require concerted efforts by the state to both provide and enforce a legal framework in support of gender equality.

## **2.2. Adults and children**

One of the most important functions that families perform is the rearing of children. This section considers how societies can support families in providing the caretaking and human development that children need to become flourishing adults, while at the same time ensuring children's individual dignity and protecting them from harm. To do so, we consider three key dimensions of children's wellbeing: ensuring material provision; supporting caregiving for emotional, social, and human development; and protecting them from abuse and neglect.<sup>40</sup>

### **2.1.1. Material Provision for Children**

Except in extraordinary circumstances, families are the unit in which children are raised into adults. They are also a key source of material provision for children. Children have little or no capacity to generate independent sources of labor income to meet their basic needs. They therefore need considerable material provision in their early years, and the only way these needs can be satisfied is through transfers –in the form of goods and services-- from those whose production exceeds their consumption (Mason and Lee 2011). When families are primarily responsible for the transfers, the quantity and quality of the goods and services each child receives has a ceiling: that of their families' resources. In these conditions, income inequalities between families translate into inequality of opportunity for children. When such inequalities

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<sup>40</sup> The fourth dimension of participation has been emphasized in the Convention of Children's Rights but as this has already been addressed in the section on family recognition we do not discuss it here.

leave a large share of families with children below basic levels of well-being, they tend to cause long-lasting harm in child development, as documented in a large-scale study of families across developing countries (Heymann 2006). Indeed, all evidence shows that children’s first years of life are critical in terms of further development and capacities.

State policies can ameliorate these inequalities. For example, taxes and spending can redistribute life chances and opportunities via public or subsidized education, health care, family allowances, in-kind transfers (food, clothes, transport) and other income transfers.

Table 17.1 shows the percentage of children and young people’s monetary consumption, and specifically health and education consumption, that is financed by their own families or by the state in a select group of countries. While this data does not take into account non-market production (specifically, women’s care labor in support of children), it demonstrates the stark differences across regions in state support for children.

Table 17.1. Monetary consumption by children (ages 0-24), selected countries ~2010\*

|                                     | <i>Consumption</i> |                     |                      | <i>Health and Education</i> |                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|                                     | <b>Total</b>       | <b>Public share</b> | <b>Private share</b> | <b>Total</b>                | <b>Public share</b> | <b>Private share</b> |
| <b>All Economies (23 countries)</b> | 12.7               | 33.9                | 66.1                 | 10.2                        | 19.3                | 8.5                  |
| <b>Africa (2)</b>                   | 9.1                | 18.4                | 81.6                 | 5.9                         | 7.6                 | 13.3                 |
| <b>E. Asia and China (3)</b>        | 14.9               | 18.4                | 81.6                 | 5.9                         | 7.6                 | 13.3                 |
| <b>S. and S. E. Asia</b>            | 13.2               | 22.9                | 77.1                 | 6.3                         | 10.2                | 6.5                  |

|                          |      |      |      |      |      |     |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|
| <b>(4)</b>               |      |      |      |      |      |     |
| <b>Latin America (5)</b> | 13.5 | 27.9 | 72.1 | 10.1 | 16.1 | 9.7 |
| <b>Europe and US (8)</b> | 12.6 | 46.9 | 53.1 | 13.5 | 30.5 | 3.9 |

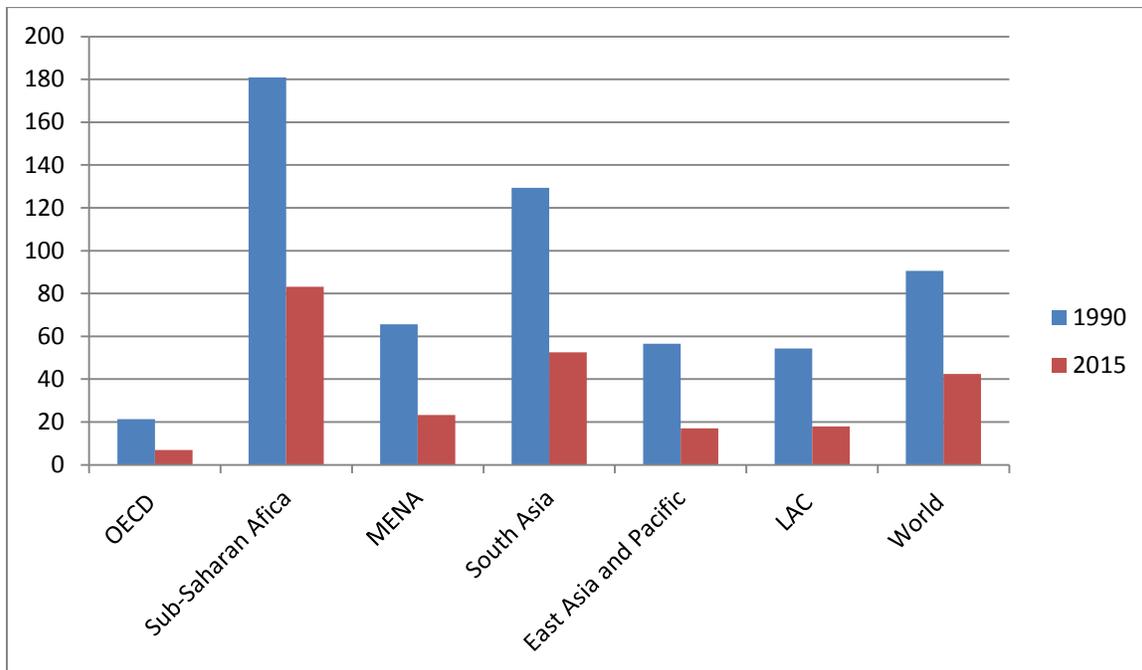
Note: \* Synthetic cohort values.

Source: Mason and Lee (2011: 16).

As Table 17.1 shows, in the African and East Asian countries (including China), less than 20% of a child's or young person's consumption is financed on average by the state, while in Europe and the United States, almost 50% is. In public health and education spending, the difference ranges from less than ten percent in the African and East Asian countries, again, and reaches just over 30% in Europe and the United States.

Of particular concern are the children whose family resources put them below basic levels of child physical wellbeing. Taking one proxy for this—the under-five child mortality rate—Figure 17.3 shows that considerable progress has been made over the past quarter century; the rate globally has been cut in half. Significant regional inequalities, nonetheless, remain. Seven out of 1000 children born in OECD countries will not survive to school age, while 83 out of 1000 children in Sub-Saharan Africa-- almost one in ten--will not.

Figure 17.3. Under-5 mortality (per 1000 live births) by world region



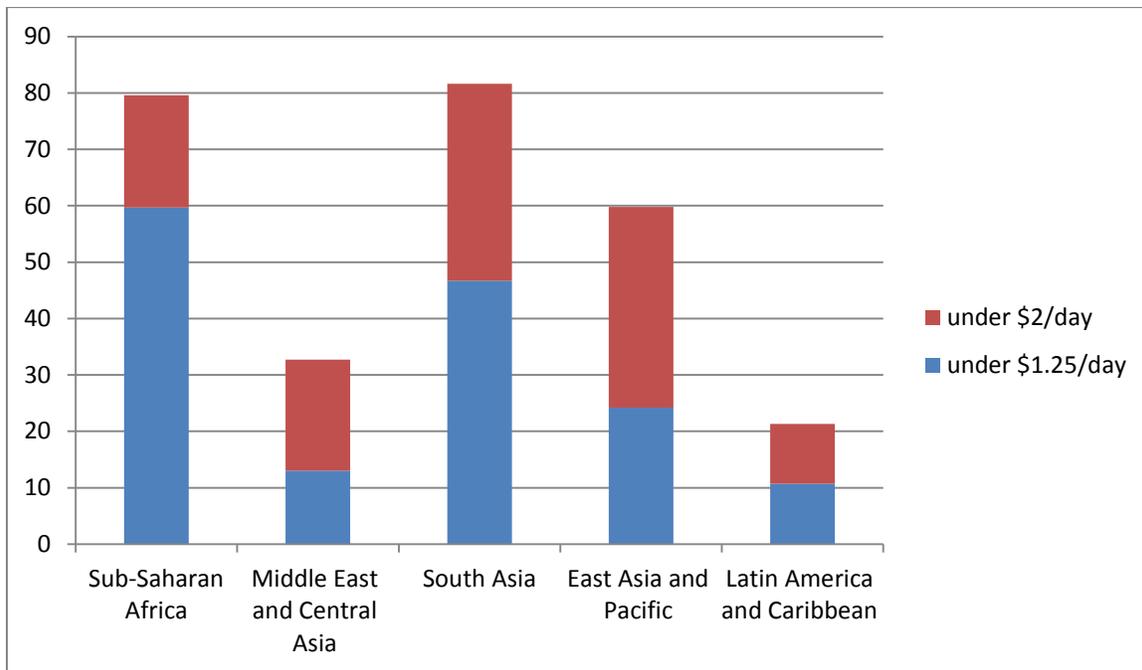
Note: See Figure 17.1 for acronyms.

Source: Compiled from World Bank (2016).

Figure 17.4 shows regional rates of child poverty, as measured by the World Bank thresholds of income poverty based on living on less than \$2/day (poverty) and less than 1.25 dollars a day (extreme poverty).<sup>41</sup> This measure gives us a glimpse of the extent of material deprivation among children around the world.

Figure 17.4. Percentage of children living in income poverty

<sup>41</sup> Material poverty is difficult to measure across countries and regions, due to a variety of challenges, including differences in the cost of living and access to non-monetary goods (e.g. subsistence agriculture). See [http://databank.worldbank.org/data/Views/Metadata/MetadataWidget.aspx?Name=Poverty%20headcount%20ratio%20at%20\\$1.90%20a%20day%20%282011%20PPP%29%20%28%20of%20population%29&Code=SI.POV.DDAY&Type=S&ReqType=Metadata&ddlSelectedValue=YR2011&ReportID=1769&ReportType=Chart](http://databank.worldbank.org/data/Views/Metadata/MetadataWidget.aspx?Name=Poverty%20headcount%20ratio%20at%20$1.90%20a%20day%20%282011%20PPP%29%20%28%20of%20population%29&Code=SI.POV.DDAY&Type=S&ReqType=Metadata&ddlSelectedValue=YR2011&ReportID=1769&ReportType=Chart)



Source: UNICEF (2014:7).

The unmet material needs of children vary by region: 80% of children in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia; 60% of children in East Asia and the Pacific; just over 30% of children in the Middle East and Central Asia; and 20% of children in Latin America and the Caribbean, live on less than two dollars a day. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of children live on less than 1.25 dollars a day. In all regions, rates of child poverty exceed poverty rates for the general population by three to seven percent (UNICEF 2014:7).

Material poverty is of course less extreme in developed countries, and the share of the population living in poverty according to the above measures in these countries is negligible. Yet the OECD measure of relative poverty --the proportion of children living in households with average incomes below 50% of the median income-- reveals a range of child poverty rates of just over 20% in the United States to less than 10% in the five Nordic countries, with Denmark and Finland at less than 3 percent (OECD 2017).

Certainly the causes of child poverty are varied. The role of the state, however, is central, as shown in Table 17.1. Countries that have relied more heavily on market provision generally have higher child poverty rates, the United States being a case in example. Despite its wealth, the United States has the highest child poverty rate of advanced industrialized countries. In the absence of a more assertive state role in providing material security and basic services, low-income families have not been able to ensure the material well-being of their children.

States address poverty and social risks through different sets of measures and levels of policy effort. Notwithstanding the wide variety of policies, the evidence indicates that the most efficient way to ensure a basic level of material well-being for families with children is to ensure them an income floor, whether it is through paid employment of adults accompanied by affordable care services, or through cash transfers. Most OECD countries (with the exception of the United States) and Eastern European and Central Asian countries, as well as China, already provide some kind of guaranteed minimum income scheme (Lindert 2013: 8), and cash transfers to impoverished families have become a widespread policy tool in developing countries in the past two decades. With the latter, it has become common to target mothers, given the evidence (as discussed earlier) that mothers more reliably spend the transfers on children and family wellbeing. Such transfers are most likely to reduce poverty when they are substantial in size, and provided on the basis of need, with non-restrictive criteria. Often they are conditional on ensuring school attendance and health checkups of children, as in most of Latin America, where by 2012 such programs reached 25% of the population (Stampini and Tornarolli 2012). By 2010, such conditional cash transfer programs had been adopted by 40 countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America (Lindert 2013: 13).

Policies that ensure a financial floor for children seek to counter some of the policy legacies that heavily focus transfers on the elderly, a much more politically organized

constituency across countries. A study on Spain and Italy in the 1990s found that the percentage of children in poverty increased after government taxes and transfers (Bradshaw 1999:402), and a study on Brazil in 2008 found that children were twenty times more likely to live in extreme poverty than the elderly (IPEA 2008).

Cash transfer policies are especially crucial for the increasing number of female-headed households around the world, which are often (but not always) more likely to be low-income and poor. A significant proportion of fathers who do not live with their offspring do not financially support them, and even fewer contribute to their caretaking, leaving mothers, and sometimes extended families, on their own with the burden of providing both sustenance and care (Bartfield and Meyer 2003; Smyth et al. 2014). Indeed, the social conditions of lone mother families have been identified as a litmus test of social citizenship in the literature on advanced industrialized countries (see Lewis 1997; Orloff 1993). In the United States, where support for single mothers is meager, half of single mother families live in poverty (Legal Momentum 2011). In many developing countries, single mothers struggle with both higher material scarcity and lower state capacity to enforce policies such as child support. One study of 400 low-income families in São Paulo found that half of non-resident fathers never contributed any child support, and less than five percent cared for their child once a week or more (Blofield and Madalozzo 2017). Such struggles are even more prevalent in countries such as South Africa where 65% of families have only one parent present. The higher concentration of female-headed households among the lower-income quintiles also aggravates inequalities between families.

### **2.2.2. Caring for children**

In addition to material provision, children need significant caretaking during their early years to become flourishing adults. They also need stable attachments to at least a few adults. An

increase in women's employment, more distance from extended family, and higher conjugal instability, have transformed caring for children. Each of these challenges will be discussed in this section.

### **2.2.2.a. Policies that reconcile work and family**

With the massive increase of women into the labor force, states have grappled with updating the maternalist assumptions that have implicitly or explicitly guided public policies, namely, that mothers will privately accomplish optimal levels of childcare with some help from female relatives and fathers. States have two direct ways of helping parents reconcile paid and unpaid work responsibilities. The first, employment-based leaves, allow mothers and increasingly fathers to take breaks from employment to care for children at home. The second way is to support the defamilialization of care by providing public or subsidized early education and care services that promote both children's development and enable parents to remain in paid employment.

### **2.2.2.b. Parental Leaves and work-life balance**

Market forces put considerable pressure on the time that parents have available for caregiving. Employment-based paid leaves that allow workers time off to care for dependents play an important part both in ensuring the financial security of families and needs of young children for parental care. The overwhelmingly positive effects of paid maternity leave have been extensively documented, for the health of newborns (and thus an investment in child wellbeing and human capital down the road), for the health of the mother (recovery from childbirth, initiation of breastfeeding), for the ability of especially the mother to remain in the labor force,

and for the income security of the family at a particularly vulnerable time (Gauthier, 1996; Berger et.al. 2005; Aitken et al. 2015), as well as in the future, since mothers' employment is linked with child wellbeing (Esping-Andersen 2009). Thus, paid maternity leave has become globally accepted as almost a universal right in principle, with the exception of the United States, Papua New Guinea and Suriname. Increasingly, such leaves have been extended to fathers, although significant parental leaves, and especially paternity leaves beyond a few days, have mainly been restricted to advanced industrialized countries. Parental leaves have also been extended to adoptive couples in many countries (Moss 2015).

How paid leaves are financed, and the levels at which wages are replaced, dramatically affect access to leave for families at different income levels (Gornick & Meyers 2003; Ray, Gornick and Smith 2009). Paid leaves are generally provided through social insurance schemes funded by some combination of employee and employer contributions or through tax revenues (Moss, 2015). Socializing the costs also helps reduce employer discrimination against those who are eligible for such leaves, mostly mothers but sometimes fathers (Gornick & Myers, 2003).

Given that more than half of the world's population works informally, many of them self-employed, laws on the books may mean little in practice. While the cash transfer schemes mentioned earlier have reached some of these families, they tend to be meager and in any case do not reach all informally working parents. Equally important are policies that encourage the extension of social security systems and the strengthening of state capacity more broadly, so that laws can benefit -and obligate- all citizens. For example, increases in formalization in Brazil led to maternity leave coverage going from 26 to 41 percent between 2000 and 2011 (Blofield and Martínez Franzoni 2015).

Beyond legislated leaves, encouraging reasonable, flexible work hours for both employees and the self-employed enables parents to spend time with their children in meaningful ways on a

daily basis. Of course, providing more opportunities to spend time together does not guarantee families will do so, nor does it guarantee family well-being, but it makes both more likely. For example, sitting down together for a family meal is often seen as meaningful time together. One study found that eating meals together as a family was the most important predictor of adolescent flourishing, controlling for background characteristics (Zarrett and Lerner 2008, cited in Global Family Map 2015: 39).

### **2.2.2.c. Institutionalized Early Childhood Education and Care**

Children's access to caretaking outside the home, especially after their first year, is also important for their development. The beneficial educational effects of good quality early childhood care, both in terms of promoting equal opportunity and human capital overall, have been extensively documented (OECD 2012). Indeed, children's equal access to early childhood education and care services is crucial for child wellbeing, equal opportunities and human capital later in life, since children who have been to ECEC do better in elementary and high school, and even much later in life, compared to other children (Heckmann 2012; Esping-Andersen 2009; Nielsen and Cristoffersen, 2009). Studies have also shown the cost effectiveness of early education; in Canada, Akbari and McCuaig (2014) showed that for every dollar invested \$1.75 was recouped, through taxes paid by parents and the reduced spending on social programs.

Early education and care services have been shown most effective in supporting family well-being when they focus not just on children's educational and social needs, but also on ensuring that both parents can work (Orloff 2009). Most European countries have developed publicly supported day care institutions for children, and coverage has increased. Denmark had the highest share of children aged 0-2 years in daycare at 68% in 2013, closely followed by many

others. The participation rates for children aged between 3 and 5 have also been increasing and are now over 80% in the majority of OECD countries (OECD, n.d.). By contrast, in Asia and Latin America, governments are slowly investing more in ECEC, but are still not keeping up with demand (Blofield and Martinez Franzoni 2015; Peng 2016).

Other countries, notably the United States, have invested far less in ensuring that children have access to high-quality ECEC (Gornick and Meyers, 2003; Child Care Aware of America, 2013). The United States does not provide public day care or early education for young children, nor does it generally subsidize private day care for children, even for families who could not otherwise afford it. In addition, the United States has no compulsory federal standards for safety, staffing, or teaching curricula for early childhood care or education. The result is that most day care in the United States has been judged by experts to be poor to mediocre (Child Care Aware of America, 2013). Moreover, these day cares are generally far more expensive than middle- and low-income parents can afford. In 2011, the average annual cost of center-based infant care was more than the annual in-state tuition at public four-year colleges in 35 states; for a 4-year-old, average costs exceeded tuition in 19 states (Child Care Aware of America, 2012). As a result, only 28% of children aged 0-2 in the U.S. were enrolled in formal child-care in 2010, and only 66,5% of children aged 3-5 years.

#### **2.2.2.d. Paternal care, custody arrangements, role of grandparents and extended family**

In an era in which conjugal relationships dissolve frequently, special attention must be paid to ensuring children's continued ties to both parents. Considerable research establishes that children who maintain significant relationships with both parents do considerably better than those who simply maintain ties to one parent, provided that the relationship between the parents

is relatively low conflict (Verschuere and Marcoen 1999; Sarkadi et.al. 2008). Children's relationships with nonresident parents can play an important role in supporting child development, promoting academic success, and increasing self-esteem in children (Amato 2005; Gilbreth and Amato 1999). Studies also demonstrate a correlation between negative outcomes for children and absent fathers -- including early sexual activity, risky behavior, and delinquency (Ellis et al. 2003; McLanahan, et.al. 2013). Given this, all countries in the European Union, for example, recognize that children have the right to a personal relationship with both parents.

Shared physical custody is one means to support children's relationship with both parents. Shared parenting (in other words, frequent, continuing and meaningful contact with both parents) is today permitted and often encouraged in most developed countries, although the specifics of the arrangements can differ markedly. Social science research strongly supports shared parenting as contributing to children's wellbeing when conflict is low and both parents agree to it (Buchanan et.al. 1996; McIntosh and Chisholm, 2008; Smyth et. al. 2014). The empirical evidence is far less certain about the positive effects of shared parenting in circumstances beyond that in which both parents agree (Smyth et al. 2016; Pruett and DiFonzo 2014). Given that high-conflict custody arrangements can undermine the child's wellbeing, and especially when the threat of domestic violence is present (Smyth 2014; Pruett and DiFonzo 2014), imposing such arrangements in the absence of the consent of both parents is considerably more controversial.

Child support payments from the non-custodial parent are a critical source of income maintenance for children, particularly for lone parents in countries that do not have robust welfare states, which is most of the world. Although this means that single parents in countries that rely more on market provision, such as the UK, the US and Canada, are especially dependent on child support, a much smaller percentage of such parents actually receive support than in countries with stronger welfare states. For example, in 2004, for those non-widowed lone parents in the U.S.

who received child support, this support made up 96% of the families' total social income transfers, compared to 24% in Sweden. Yet only 30% of non-widowed lone parents in the U.S. received child support compared to 100% in Sweden, where the state guarantees the transfers (Hakovirta 2011: 254). We know less about developing countries, but research on Colombia suggests that, for custodial mothers in these countries, child support is less common, but when received, has an even greater impact on reducing poverty and extreme poverty for children than in developed countries (Cuesta and Meyer 2014: 70).

In the Nordic countries and Germany, the government directly provides child support whether or not the non-custodial parent pays it, ensuring that income to children (Hakovirta 2011; Skinner and Davidson 2009). In other countries, onerous child support awards can also have negative effects on the relationship between the non-resident parent, most often the father, and these children. Recent research in the United States suggests that in some circumstances children's relationships with the noncustodial parent can be thwarted by unrealistic child support requirements. The result is that these parents engage with their children less, hindering the potentially valuable contribution they could make to their children's lives (Edin and Nelson 2013; Harris 2011). In some countries, including Brazil, non-payment of formal child support obligations can land the father in prison, which will certainly guarantee non-payment for the duration of the sentence, as well as make parent-child contact more difficult. All this suggests an important intervening role by the state in providing support to children and collecting the financing from non-custodial parents.

Grandparents often play important roles in the lives of their grandchildren (Hagestad 2007; Silverstein & Giarrusso 2010). Increased life expectancy has reinforced this: Uhlenberg (1996) notes that a U.S. child born in 2000 will be more likely to have a grandmother alive at the time he or she is 20 years old (91% chance) than a child born in 1900 would have been to have a

mother still living at the same age (83%). As mothers have increasingly moved into the workplace, grandparents – usually grandmothers – have stepped in to fill gaps in care. The amount and regularity of this intergenerational caretaking varies considerably among countries based on a number of factors, including whether intergenerational coresidence is common, geographic proximity, cultural norms, work demands on the mother or grandparents, and the availability of public support for caretaking (Guzman 2004; Hank and Buber 2009; Chen et al. 2011). As an example, in China, because intergenerational coresidence is common, 45 percent of children 6 and under have a grandparent living with them (Chen 2011: 579). In developed countries, caretaking by grandparents is less likely to be as extensive, but still important (Hank and Buber 2009). In transnational families, grandmothers, more so than fathers, often care for the children of migrant mothers (Dreby, 2010; Parreñas, 2005).

Grandparents in skipped-generation households are particularly crucial (Chen et al. 2011:582). In China, for example, 10% of children live in skipped-generation households (Chen et al. 2011:583), often because the parent has migrated for employment reasons. In Russia, 20% of children live in a household headed by their grandparents; in South Africa, 36% do, exacerbated by the AIDS crisis, which has left many children orphans across sub-Saharan Africa (World Family Map 2015: 32). In the United States, circumstances including parental drug abuse, child abuse, teenage pregnancy, and incarceration result in grandparents assuming the custodial role (Fuller-Thomson and Minkler 2001).

### **2.2.3. Protection from abuse**

The last century has been referred to as the “age of the child” because of the increased emphasis on protections for children. All Western countries, and many non-Western ones, now

have laws providing for child protection and child welfare. These laws authorize intervention by the state into the family in the case of child abuse. Internationally the construction of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), shows the global attention to protection of children. The CRC was adopted by the UN general assembly in 1989 and in 2015 all countries except South Sudan and the US had ratified it, making the CRC the most widely ratified human rights treaty (UN, n.d.). According to Unicef the CRC has “changed the way children are viewed and treated –i.e. as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity” (Unicef, n.d.).

Physical and psychological violence in families has been demonstrated to pose great threats to the well-being and welfare of children, not only when the child is a victim but also when the child witnesses abuse (Hester et al. 2006). The CRC states that children should be protected against all forms of physical and psychological violence, and physical and sexual abuse while remaining in the care of their parents. Indeed, in much of the world, substantial measures have been taken to prevent such violence, including extensive policies, laws, campaigns and other public measures. Yet these efforts have been spotty geographically: in some countries family violence is not addressed as a serious problem (see the section on Intimate Partner Violence). Even in countries that have made significant efforts to prevent domestic abuse, the phenomena may be so deeply rooted that it takes generations to eliminate. For example, as Björnberg and Ottosen (2014) point out, despite the Nordic countries’ thoroughgoing efforts against domestic violence, significant numbers of women and children still fall prey to violence in their homes (Berglund 2010). In addition to physical violence, sexual abuse within families poses a great threat to children’s wellbeing worldwide (UNICEF, n.d.,a).

The use of violence to discipline children is a particular problem. Research demonstrates corporal punishment’s ineffectiveness, its causal link to the development of violent behavior, and

its association with other problems in childhood and later life (Strauss and Paschall 2009; Lansford et.al. 2012; Gershoff 2013). Despite this, according to the World Health Organization corporal punishment kills thousands of children each year, as well as injures and handicaps many more (UN Tribune, n.d.).

Some countries have unequivocally prohibited such corporal punishment, for example, Norway and Sweden in the 1970s (Eydal and Satka, 2005). Slowly other countries have followed in their footsteps. By 2014, 42 countries had enacted such laws (UN Tribune, n.d.). Yet other countries, including many states in the United States, continue to treat such violence as a prerogative of parenting.

Mental illness and drug abuse has repeatedly been demonstrated to be an important causal factor in child maltreatment (Department of Health and Human Services 2014; Park et.al 2006). Therefore, policies that ensure parents' access to mental health services and drug treatment programs are critical to children's wellbeing (Haskins et al., 2015). In the United States, for example, under-resourced child welfare systems often lack resources to pay for parents' mental health treatment and are forced to apply available resources on the most serious cases, hence the children that are removed from their families have in many cases already been harmed (Eichner 2010).

Poverty can also increase conditions associated with neglect and abuse (Paxson & Waldfogel, 1999). In the United States, several studies show that a substantial percentage of children taken into foster care – in some studies as high as 30 percent – could remain safely in their own homes if their parents had access to decent housing (Harburger and White 2004; Lewin 1995). Ensuring material well-being to families is tightly linked to also providing a setting for higher psychological wellbeing and protection from abuse and neglect.

In sum, state efforts to improve children's welfare are most successful when they routinely support families in ways that forestall abuse and neglect rather than when they coercively remove children from their homes after child maltreatment occurs. Certainly there will still be situations in which the state will have to intervene coercively to protect a child from maltreatment, but many of these situations can be avoided by states' efforts to remedy the conditions that give rise to abuse. It is in their homes, given the right support to the family, rather than removed from the families, that children have the best chance of growing into flourishing adults (Björnberg and Ottosen, 2013; Eichner 2010; Doyle 2007, 2013).

This section and the one below both deal with relations of actual and potential dependent and caregiving. For a breadth of reasons, a group of individuals need temporary or permanent care beyond their early years. The World Health Organization estimates that over one billion people around the world live with disabilities, of whom between 110 and 190 million have significant difficulties in functioning (WHO 2011). With the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, global attention to the health, social, and infrastructural needs of the disabled has been increasing. Despite this, the majority of individuals with disabilities in developing countries do not have their needs met, and even in high-income countries, it is estimated that between 20% and 40% of people with disabilities generally do not have their needs met for "assistance with everyday activities" (WHO 2011: 9-10). As we discuss in the next section, population aging is contributing to higher prevalence of individuals with disabilities.

### **2.3. Aging family members**

Life expectancy has increased at an impressive rate both in the developed and developing world. This is due both to a drastic decrease in infant mortality rates and an increase in longevity. This section outlines the role of families in providing care for older people around the world, and considers how public care-protection, markets, and communities interact to confront the challenge of ageing societies and longevity.

Globally, the proportion of the world's population aged 60 years or over is expected to double from about 11% to 22% between 2000 and 2050. By 2050, about 34% of Europe will be aged 60 years or over, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia will have about 25%, while Africa with the youngest population structure is expected to see an increase from 5 to 10 % in the population 60+ (WHO 2016; UN 2002). In terms of sheer numbers, the worldwide population aged 60 years or over is projected to increase from 900 million in 2015 to 1400 million by 2030 and 2100 million by 2050 (WHO, 2016). In mainland China alone, the number of 60+ Chinese will increase from the present 192 million to 450 million by 2050, or from 14% to 33% of the population (UN 2013a).

As societies age, two challenges relating to families must be confronted. First, many aging adults require caregiving, including long-term care for routine activities; and second, financial support once they leave the labor market.

### **2.3.1 Caregiving for aging adults**

As people age, many require care, much of which is currently provided “informally,” meaning by non-professionals. For example, in 2006, around 20% of those 65 and older in the European Union received informal care, rising to between 30-60% for those 75 or older, depending on how informal care is defined (Eurostat, 2006). One study estimated that 19 million

persons provided a minimum of 20 hours a week of care to elders in 11 countries alone of the European Union (Grammenos, 2005). Of these informal caregivers, about half provided more than 35 hours a week.

Care for the elderly across the world has most often been organized within the family and familial networks (Glendinning et al. 2009). Some countries, for example Cambodia and Vietnam, assign this responsibility to family members by law. Regardless of law, cultural norms have traditionally assigned this responsibility to family members. Some cultures specify a hierarchy of caretaking, for example assigning the oldest daughter or son as the preferred caretaker.

Partners and adult children (and their spouses) are the most frequent caregivers for family members, followed by broader family (Arber and Gilbert 1989; Chapel 1985). The increase in male life expectancy in particular has increased the availability of spouses as caregivers. It is women, however, often adult daughters or daughters-in-law, who disproportionately provide caregiving for family (Armstrong and Kits 2004; Glendinning et al. 2009; Parreñas 2001). This is the case regardless of differences in state policies, female labor market participation and cultural values across countries.

Even when parents and adult children do not reside in the same household, they generally stay emotionally connected, with a strong sense of obligation, especially in conditions of crisis and need (Attias et al. 2005; Hank 2007). In the United States, for example, at least 80% of parents speak to an adult child once a week; 69% of adults speak to their mother at least once a week; and 40% of adult children see a parent at least once per week (Lye et al. 1995; Swartz 194). These ties are sufficiently meaningful to individuals that the presence of family members is an important factor when individuals decide to stay or move (Michielin et al. 2008; Mulder and Malmberg 2014).

Urbanization, the increase in female employment, and changing family structures are transforming the available provision of informal care for the elderly (Heymann 2006). For example, more than 100 million rural Chinese are estimated to have moved to cities in search of work; combined with extremely low fertility (due in large part to the one-child rule) this reduces the availability of children to care for aging parents (Xiong 2009). Intergenerational living remains common in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, where at least 40% of children live in households that include adults besides their parents, in many cases grandparents (World Family Map 2015: 11). That said, the majority of families in most countries today live in a nuclear-family structure, apart from aging parents (World Family Map 2015). Further, an increasing number of older people live alone, sometimes as a result of divorce. Such family cleavages can weaken relationships between parents and children, and alter the extent to which adult children take on caregiving (Börsch-Supan et al. 1996; Engers and Stern 2002).

Norms of filial obligation are also changing rapidly in many places. In South Korea, for example, the percentage of people who thought the family should be responsible for the support and care of their elderly parents declined dramatically from 90% in 1998 to 33 % in 2012 (Peng 2013: 10). At the same time, the proportion of older people nominating their spouse as the preferred caregiver has increased (Knodel 2012). Of course, caring is an individual decision made in the context of a specific relationship, and as such, unpredictable.

Against this backdrop, most developed states in recent years have established or expanded government policies aimed at ensuring adequate caregiving for aging adults. Several European countries, plus Japan and South Korea, have established universal long-term care (Leon et al. 2014). Still, most advanced industrialized countries continue to limit publicly-funded long-term care only to the poorest elderly (Scheil-Adlung 2015).

Many countries with the most universal and generous long-term care systems have moved in the last 15 years towards care in the home rather than in institutions. This policy of “ageing in place” is aimed at meeting with dignity the general desire among older people to remain in their own homes, but has also been a means to lower public expenditures for care provision (Timonen and Rostgaard, forthcoming). In China, the long-term care model is now seen to be family care as the main part, supported by community-based services and complemented by institutional care (Shang & Wu 2011). While such de-institutionalization can be both preferable to users as well as cost effective, it may also transfer the burden of care to individuals and families who may not be able to ensure their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of care recipients (Rostgaard et al. 2012).

Most developing countries are from formulating adequate long-term care systems. As the World Health Organization concluded, long-term care (LTC) needs “are increasing in the developing world at a rate that far exceeds that experienced by industrialized countries...[and] at levels of income that are far lower than those which existed in the industrialized world when these needs emerged. Therefore, the search for effective LTC policies is one of the most pressing challenges facing modern society” (WHO 2002, iii). In some countries, no formal programs exist to support long-term care. In others, at least some training of volunteers, and some forms of community care are beginning to emerge. Integrating emerging long-term care programs into the health system, rather than fragmenting health care and social services programs, is one way to reduce costs and increase coordination of care (Ibid. 2002).

### **2.3.1 Financial support for ageing adults**

Traditionally, aging adults co-resided with children who supported them financially. This still occurs, of course, as discussed earlier. In India, for example, more than three-quarters of seniors live in three-generation households (Desai et al., 2010). Yet this is less and less common,

while life expectancy has increased. Relying solely on the adult's savings, or on the financial resources of their families, results in harsh stratification, as well as undignified circumstances for a large swathe of these seniors.

Because of this, most countries (by one count, 177 of them) have mandated pension systems (He et.al. 2016). These systems generally have two purposes: to help equalize seniors' incomes over the course of their life, rather than have this stream drop dramatically following retirement; and to reduce the incidence of poverty (MacKellar 2009). Most such public systems rely on pooled payroll taxes from current workers and employers; a few, including those of Bangladesh, Georgia, Botswana, and South Africa, are funded through the government's general funds. A minority of countries have systems requiring contributions to personal retirement accounts rather than to pooled pension funds.

Public pension systems have dramatically reduced poverty in many countries. Such schemes generally have high coverage rates for populations in high-income countries. For example, 90 percent of the labor force is covered in Japan, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, and Italy. In contrast, public pensions cover only one out of three people in China, and one out of ten in India. This difference is linked to the proportion who work outside the formal labor-market sector and thus remain uncovered (MacKellar 2009). In India, for example, the main pension scheme excludes the self-employed, agricultural workers, and members of cooperatives with fewer than 50 workers (Social Security Administration, 2013b). To address this, India introduced an alternative defined contribution pension scheme in 2015.

Also, pension schemes tied to employment disadvantage the many women who have reduced paid work to assume unpaid caretaking, and thus have a shorter work history and lower earnings. To deal with this, some states have added supplements to women's pensions for such

activities (Tinios et.al. 2015). Other states, for example Bolivia and Brazil, have established non-contributory pensions for low-income seniors.

Some states have moved away from public pension systems toward private individual retirement accounts. However, coverage in these countries remains limited, payouts often insufficient to support citizens, and pension fund management companies have been criticized for high fees and weak competition. Further, these systems appear to work far better for higher- and middle-income workers, and less so for those below the median (James et. al. 2010). Because of such issues, two countries – Argentina (2009) and Hungary (2011) – have closed their individual accounts systems and moved back to pooled pension funds for all workers. Chile, in 2008, reformed its pension system to add basic pensions for those not adequately supported by the individual account system (He et. al. 2015).

## **2.4. Other adult relationships**

Families include more than partners and direct descendants. Households may include extended kin, grandparents, siblings, uncles and aunts, cousins, and so on. Furthermore, whether extended family members live within the same household, or in different households, they provide important emotional support, economic contribution, caretaking, and sometimes patriarchal control.

### **2.4.1 Extended families**

Norms and practices of extended family solidarity continue to play an important role in individuals' and families' lives (Uhlenberg 2009; Yi and Farrell 2006). They increasingly serve the purpose of supporting family members through the periods of marital and economic

instability that often accompany contemporary life, as well as help to buffer families' caretaking and human development activities from labor market pressures (Parrenas 2005; Swartz 2009).

While the nuclear family now dominates residential patterns in most developed countries, in many regions of the world, intergenerational living continues to be widespread. Extended families are most widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia and Latin America. As also mentioned earlier, in almost all of the countries for which data is available in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, at least 40% of children live in households that include adults besides their parents, in many cases extended family members. In India alone, this figure is 50%; in Turkey, 58%. In Colombia and Nicaragua, the figure is 55%, in Mexico, 45%, and in Romania, 43 percent. The highest share is 70%, in South Africa (World Family Map 2015).

Relatedly, while in Asia and the Middle East, the vast majority of children live in two-parent families, in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, a significant share of children live with only one or no parents. The latter types of households are more likely to include extended family members, who "may compensate for the absence of one or both parents" (WFM 2015: 3). In developed countries, the figures of extended family coresidence are lower but not insignificant, ranging from 15% in Canada to 29% in the United States and 34% in Spain (for the countries reported in the Global Family Map). Living with adults other than parents can generate benefits for children, as the Global Family Map (2015: 11) stresses, but, "depending on the circumstances, it can also produce difficulties such as overcrowding, violence, and abuse". In cases where poverty, orphanhood, or parental incarceration drive these arrangements, children may be in especially fragile situations. Another group of vulnerable children are those left behind by migrant parents in the country of origin (Parreñas, 2005). Across the globe, migrant workers are

denied the right to family reunification. This is particularly the case for low-wage migrant workers including domestic workers.

Even where families live as nuclear families, extended family members still generally have a strong sense of attachment and obligation for one another, as discussed in the section on aging. Once this “latent kin network of support” has been activated (Riley & Riley 1993), family members often provide both material support (financial and other resources), practical support (child care, household help, transportation, caregiving, or other services), and other types of aid (Eggebeen & Hogan 1990; Bengtson & Oyama 2007). Because this support is intermittent, it risks being a hidden means through which privilege is transferred between generations. These ties are sufficiently strong that even those who have strained relationships with aging parents still increase their support as parents grew older (Silverstein et al. 2002). Further, while Americans live further from extended family than many other countries, both there and in other countries, family geography often allows informal care to supplement institutional care (Swartz 2009).

#### **2.4.2 Kinship networks**

Kinship networks that include grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, and adult brothers and sisters still have considerable power in individuals’ lives in many developing and developed countries (Joseph 2000; Luke and Munshi 2006). In a cross-national study of 27 countries, Murphy (2008) concluded that there was “a steady gradation” among countries with respect to kinship contacts. At the high end of the scale are the Mediterranean countries (including Cyprus and Israel), and those with an Iberian colonial heritage, such as Brazil and, to a lesser extent, Chile. At the other end of the scale, low-contact countries include the Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries. One factor associated with strong kinship networks is weak state governance, given that strong family ties may both be a response to government corruption and may also promote it.

In countries with strong kinship systems, the kinship matrix may lie at the “the core of social identity, economic stability, political security, and religious affiliation” (Joseph 2000:171). They provide some stability in cultures in which conjugal relationships are relatively weak, and help shore up the vulnerable position in which wives are placed by Muslim marriage law. Particularly in the absence of strong welfare supports, these networks serve a variety of functions. As Singerman describes in lower-income communities in Cairo for example:

families are intimately and extensively involved in almost all realms of social, political, moral, and economic life, such as educating children, childrearing, securing employment, negotiating the bureaucracy and the political elite, establishing and maintaining businesses, saving money, promoting morality and status, distributing resources and information, securing credit, organizing migration, policing sexuality, etc. (Singerman 2006: 2).

Strong kinship systems provide caretaking for aging adults, particularly where the aging adult has no children (Schroder- Buterfill 2005). They also serve to buffer the harsher effects of market forces, particularly in the absence of robust state action. For example, in Russia, kinship networks that used to be central to “getting by” under the Soviet shortage economy have now become an important resource in coping with the widespread social and economic dislocations brought by the transition to capitalism (Walker 2010). Further, in some countries, such networks are a major factor in securing workers job mobility (Blan and Ang 1997; Luke and Munshi 2006).

While kinship networks help provide members with stability and support, as Joseph (1994; 2000; 2005) notes, some cultures fuse these goods with submission to patriarchal control. In Lebanon, for example, junior family members and women defer to family elders and to male kin generally with the expectation that they will in turn attend to their needs, security, and well-being, as well as safeguard family honor. Sibling relationships frequently become the focus of these

networks, and both brothers and sisters defer to the oldest brother in their natal family even after marriage (Meeker 1976, Joseph 2000). These relationships therefore become vehicles for maintaining culturally appropriate gender roles that reproduce patriarchy (Joseph 1994).

Kinship ties take on a special role when relatives migrate either nationally or transnationally. Relatives often help one another in creating migratory routes, safe housing, transitional financial support, networking for jobs and creating relationships in new cities or countries (Bashi 2007; Menjivar 1997). Gender informs patterns and practices of assistance. For example, Mexican migrant women created female centered networks to counter their exclusion from those of their male counterparts (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). In the case of transnational families, migrant mothers likewise rely on the creation of a network of women for assistance with child care. When a mother migrates, care for children left behind is largely left to extended kin, primarily women, particularly grandmothers (both paternal and maternal), aunts, and older daughters (Silverstein et al. 2006; Parrenas 2005). In contrast, the transnational families of migrant men rarely rely on other relatives for the care of their children but instead almost always solely depend on the care work of the left-behind wife (Parrenas 2005). This suggests a different structural formation for the transnational families of migrant men and women as the households of migrant men are more likely to mirror traditional nuclear households with a breadwinner father and stay-at-home mother while those of migrant women reflecting female-centered extended households. These diverging household configurations challenge the assumption that women's migration results in increasing the care work carried out by other men.

### **3. Conclusion and policy recommendations**

The vast majority of the world's population live most of their lives within family units, of all shapes and sizes. Regardless of their tremendous diversity, all families have certain commonalities. They all must confront the need to balance production and reproduction, or, in other words, ensure both income and care. Most families, at some point, raise children, and we all age if we are lucky enough not to die young. At best, families also provide us with a sense of meaning and belonging. At worst, families may grapple with severe material deprivation or be settings for neglect, abuse and inequality in power relations, stunting the ability of their members to flourish as human beings. Here, we return to our key question: How can societies support conditions that allow families to flourish and at the same time promote individual dignity, equality and choice? Below, we summarize our empirical evidence and provide policy recommendations based on the evidence.

The empirical evidence shows a broad trend toward legal acceptance of consensual adult partnerships, although with regional variation. On partner relations within families, the evidence shows that there is an overall tendency towards more gender equitable family law and greater gender equality in education, labor force participation, and asset ownership, and that these are associated with improvements in women's bodily integrity and more shared decision making, as well as enhanced wellbeing of the family as a whole. At the same time, these links are not automatic, and require concerted efforts by the state to both provide and enforce a legal framework in support of gender equality. On adult-child relations, the evidence shows that a state role in ensuring income floors to families with children is essential for children's physical and material wellbeing. Beyond this, ensuring a healthy balance of family (including paternal) care, and good quality institutional care allows children and their families to flourish. Finally, state efforts to protect children are most successful when they routinely support families in preventive ways. Overall, care for older people around the world remains centered in the family as well. The

looming challenge for aging societies is to ensure access to care services to relieve the burden on families, especially already overburdened women, and to ensure the dignity of older people.

We offer a set of policy recommendations based on the empirical findings. Three broad criteria guide our list of recommendations: 1) legal and cultural patterns should embrace the plurality of family types rather than punish them; that said, 2) embracing plurality should not foster family forms that are inegalitarian or authoritarian (for example, defending polygamy, the rights of parents to use physical punishment to discipline their children, or child wives); on the contrary, states should actively promote more egalitarian relations and limit or outlaw harmful practices that are still present in many family arrangements; and 3) the burden that families carry regarding care, material support and nurturing should not be constrained by private capacities but should become the target of collective, public support. First, we discuss legal rights and regulations; second, state policy more broadly, including transfers and services; and third, how to finance such policies.

### **3.1. Legal rights and regulations**

#### **3.1.1. Legal recognition of families**

The goal of state policy should be to support the broader range of relationships in which people are organizing their family lives, consistent with promoting human dignity and fairness within and outside of these relationships. The following principles would further these goals:

- Same-sex couples should be treated the same as opposite-sex couples
- States may want to make available other formal partnership statuses besides marriage to support long-term caregiving that does not fit the traditional conjugal model and to ensure fairness for the partners if the relationship ends. Such formal statuses increase the

likelihood that people will stay together to provide one another the care that each needs, and establish a stable relationship in the event of children.

- Even those couples who do not formalize their relationships should be accorded some rights and responsibilities when a relationship is long-term, especially when children are involved.
- We support the African Protocol of Women’s Rights, which endorses monogamy but in the case of polygamy, calls for measures that support the property rights of all wives, as well as their consent to future marriages of the husband.
- When determining which adults have parental rights and responsibilities, both biological and social factors should be given weight, and established relationships should trump biology alone. However, biological parenthood is a sufficient basis upon which to impose child support obligations.
- Children born to unmarried parents should receive the same rights and protections as children born within wedlock. By the same token, unmarried parents should have the same legal rights to parentage as married parents.
- Parents who live outside the child’s household should be expected to pay a fair share of the child’s support.
- Transnational families – a common form of household maintenance for migrant workers across the globe – forces the geographic separation of family members at the expense of their intimate ties. National laws and international conventions should support the right to family reunification.

### **3.1.2. Regulating within families**

We recommend, broadly, laws that foster equality and dignity between partners and other adults, and respect and protection for children. More specifically, women and girls, married and single, must be considered equal to men and boys in every aspect of the law. For example, women should be able to sign contracts, initiate legal proceedings, open their own bank accounts and businesses, and have full property rights equal to men's, including full inheritance rights. Women and men must also have equal labor rights and full civic rights – such as passing citizenship on to their spouses and children, voting rights, rights to run for and hold public office and the like – and women must have full reproductive autonomy. Further, women and men, girls and boys, should all have the right to live a life free from violence. In particular, we strongly support efforts to strengthen laws sanctioning intimate partner violence.

Research shows that more equal access to income and wealth among husband and wife has positive effects on shared decision-making, more equal work burdens and improved family wellbeing. Egalitarian relationships within the family are not only preferable in and of themselves for reasons of self-fulfillment, dignity, and equity, but also for family wellbeing – especially for the children. Thus, laws that provide for more equitable relations between family members, based on respect, dignity and protection (for children specifically), should be encouraged.

One issue that calls for particular attention involves constructing policies that encourage men to assume their share of domestic responsibilities. While women now work long hours in the workplace, men have been slower to adapt in the domestic realm. We recommend public policies that will encourage men to adapt, including public education campaigns and making use-it-or-lose-it paid paternity leave, sometimes known as “father’s quotas,” available. Promoting more involvement of men in care is not only beneficial to women in reducing their “double burden”, and to children as care recipients, but to men themselves; indeed, a study in Sweden showed a reduced suicide rate among men who took more paternity leave.

In adult-child relations, we recommend a recognition of the best interests of the child in legal arrangements for parental care, and custody. This includes legal rights for same-sex couples; for cohabiting couples; for single parents; for parents not living with their children; and allowing for the legal recognition of the rights of grandparents to access to their grandchildren. We recommend building mechanisms into child support systems that ensure that the obligor parent has the capacity to pay support and flexible adjustments as needed (also addressed below).

### **3.2 State transfers and services**

Beyond legal rights and regulations, we recommend a set of state policies in the form of transfers and services. Given the massive transformations that families have undergone over the past half century, we recommend a strong, two-fold role by the state to ensure flourishing families, well-equipped to deal with 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges:

- 1) Transfers that guarantee a minimum income floor for all families with dependents (children, disabled, elderly) as well as for ageing adults;
- 2) Publicly funded health, education and care services with universal principles to allow families to maintain a healthy balance between the twin responsibilities of production and reproduction.

We address both in turn.

#### **3.2.1 Transfers**

First, as discussed, states that provide income transfers to families on a broad basis are best able to ensure low levels of material deprivation among families. With children, such transfers have important long-term effects in allowing nourished, educated children to become

healthy adults. Thus, they are not only an investment in the present material wellbeing of families, but also an investment in future human capital. With older people and the disabled, transfers provide the ability to live in dignity, regardless of socio-economic status and/or family support. With dependent partners fleeing abuse, they provide the ability to support themselves. Such transfers should of course take into account local standards of living, but over-all should guarantee the ability of a family to live in basic dignity. To the extent that pensions for seniors vary based on prior work history, they should be adjusted to take into account unpaid caregiving.

Beyond such guaranteed floors, we recommend an active state role in ensuring the payment of legal obligations between family members. This includes child support for children, spousal support between partners, and any legal support for ageing parents owed by adult children. In all these cases we recommend the state guarantee such transfers to the recipients while taking on the responsibility of collecting the revenue from the obligor. In this way, the recipient's material wellbeing is guaranteed, stresses associated with payment are less likely to be communicated to children, and the state has an incentive to ensure enforcement. That said, we recommend constructive rather than punitive ways to collect on financial obligations, taking into account the financial ability of the obligor (as mentioned above).

Policies to guarantee income floors to families also contribute to family wellbeing and children's welfare since they ameliorate the conditions that foster abuse or neglect. It is far more conducive to children's welfare -and cost-effective in the long term- to ensure decent housing with their own parent(s) than to remove them on child maltreatment grounds to live with a stranger.

We also recommend a strong state role in regulating and ensuring income support for employment-based leaves for care responsibilities and allowing for a reasonable balance between work and family responsibilities. Beyond maternity leaves, which allow women to physically

recover from childbirth, bond with and begin breastfeeding the newborn, such leaves should also encourage paternal co-responsibility regarding children, and male engagement with other dependents. They should be available for same-sex and opposite sex couples, for cohabiting partners, adoptive parents, and for other arrangements in which adults are called upon to care for children, older people, or the disabled and other dependents. Such leaves should be funded either through social security or government tax revenue, to avoid labor market discrimination against potential recipients. Given that most people around the world work informally, efforts should focus as much on broadening coverage as on the legal reforms themselves. Without coverage extensions, reforms risk aggravating socio-economic inequalities between those who have formal jobs and those who do not.

### **3.2.2. Publicly funded health, education and care services**

We call for publicly-funded services to be broadly available in order to allow families to maintain a healthy balance between the twin responsibilities of production and reproduction. It is critical to provide such services to the poor. Yet providing them to individuals on a broader, even universal basis not only ensures access for everyone, but also fosters a political commitment to these services among the middle and upper classes. This is particularly important for services involving children, such as early education and care services, public education, public health facilities, and public spaces for leisure and sports. Ensuring that children from all socio-economic backgrounds access these services not only helps equalize opportunity in the short term, but also helps safeguard equal opportunities moving forward, through limiting exit options for those better off, whose parents will then use their political clout to ensure quality services.

The extension of publicly-funded care services yields a multitude of other benefits. These services have the potential to improve the lives of family caregivers, the recipients of care, and care workers themselves. Given how feminized care remains, care services that “defamiliarize” part of family care, including early education and care services for children, and care services for the disabled and older people, can reduce the “double burden” especially on women. Such services – so long as they correspond to typical workdays – free women up, when they so choose, to participate in the labor market and earn an income and thus materially support their families. This can at the same time enhance their bargaining power, providing for more egalitarian relationships. Overall, such services help families balance the twin roles of production and reproduction.

These services are also important for the well-being of the recipients. Research has overwhelmingly established that high-quality early childhood education and care has positive effects on children’s wellbeing, equal opportunities, and human capital. High-quality care services for older people and the disabled are also vital in ensuring them dignity and autonomy, especially in societies with small or weak family units that are not able to care for their elderly and/or disabled family members. While informal family care-giving may work in specific areas, families need the relief provided by publicly-funded services as well. If the services are outsourced to private, for-profit companies, they need systematic government regulation and monitoring to ensure quality.

Policies to promote publicly funded care services also provide governments with an excellent opportunity to extend decent jobs with a living wage and benefit protections to care workers. These workers are overwhelmingly women who, because of the “care penalty” discussed earlier, tend to be paid less, to receive fewer protections, and often work in highly

exploitative conditions. We recommend strong public regulation and guarantees of equal labor rights for all care occupations, both inside and outside households.

More specifically, we strongly recommend governments use the opportunity when investing in care services to create jobs in the formal sector with living wages and social security protections. This is not only a challenge for developing countries. A 2016 study found that 46% of childcare workers in the United States had to meet their basic needs through at least one public safety net program such as food stamps, contributing to high stress and high turnover among workers (Whitebook et.al. 2016). This has negative effects on the workers as well as the children they care for. Decent jobs in the formal sector not only promote the wellbeing of these women and their families, as well as the children for whom they care, but can also foster the reduction of socio-economic inequalities between families.

We also recommend universal access to health care services. Universal coverage is important, of course, for recipients and thus for individual and family wellbeing, but it is also important for family caregivers. A recent study in *The Lancet* found that women provided billions of dollars' worth of unpaid work around the world caring for family members in the face of deficits in access to affordable health services (Langer et al. 2015).

While all aspects of health care coverage are important for individuals and their families, we would like to highlight two. First, coverage should include mental health. Ensuring parents' access to mental health care services reduces the potential for abuse and violence visited upon children, and helps keep families together. Second, of particular weight from the perspective of our normative goal are services that ensure individual agency and dignity regardless of family circumstances. Here, services that enable women and girls to have full control over their own reproduction have been shown to have the best results for individual and family wellbeing. The empirical data is unequivocal when it comes to abortion policies; restricting access to legal

abortion does nothing to bring abortion rates down, but simply pushes the procedure underground with very negative health effects. At the same time, while the evidence clearly demonstrates that legal and accessible abortion is a necessary element of ensuring women's and girls' health and wellbeing, the best way to promote a society with low abortion rates -something that many on both the reformist and conservative sides of the issue can agree is a desirable goal- is to ensure comprehensive access to sexual education and contraceptive services, including long-term reversible contraception. We therefore call for a broad investment in the prevention of unintended and unwanted pregnancies, and in enabling wanted pregnancies, including ensuring access to pre and post-natal care.

### **3.2.3. How to pay for state support for flourishing families?**

State expenditures for all the above policies require state revenues, of course. While income-transfer policies require money and a way to deliver it, care services require more complex investments. Start-up costs for extending care services are likely to be especially high, as they require infrastructural investments. However, the investments we advocate will pay for themselves over the medium to long term in three ways. First, early childhood education and care services, as mentioned earlier, more than pay for themselves because every dollar invested produces more returns in the form of enhanced human capital and more stable, productive human beings later in life. Second, providing care services enables parents, especially women, to participate in paid work. In countries that make such services broadly available, taxes on mothers' increased earnings have been shown to pay for these services (Esping-Andersen 2009). Third, and finally, the newly-formalized employees of care services also pay taxes on their income.

This said, we also make a strong call for tax reform. Many countries still have ample space to increase progressive taxation aimed at personal income and capital gains. Globally, taxes on capital mobility can contribute to finance global initiatives regarding the aforementioned policies. Also, we believe it is worth revisiting and recreating a strong inheritance and estate tax system. Inheritance laws that allow wealthy families to pass on substantial parts of their wealth inter- generationally cement inequalities between families, and worsen inequalities of opportunity for children. Without increasing inheritance taxes, global inequalities -between countries and within countries- will grow much worse. National or even a global tax on inherited wealth, or an internationally agreed upon national tax on wealth, might go a long way in turning structural trends towards increasing inequality into trends towards equality. The revenue from such a tax could also be used to make the investments for which we call.

To conclude, families based on egalitarian principles, with supportive state policies that allow families to flourish, provide the most conducive setting to do what families can do at their best: provide a space where persons are loved and nurtured, love and nurture back, and are able to flourish to their fullest potential.

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