

World Map of Family Trends

Conceptual Framework

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Conceptual Framework

Background

Over the course of the last half century, family life in the West and throughout much of the developed world has been deeply shaped by what demographer Dirk van de Kaa has called the “second demographic transition.” Although this transition has not been manifested in every Western country to the same degree and in the same way, it is safe to say that almost every country in the West has witnessed rising ages at marriage, increases in cohabitation and nonmarital childbearing, higher rates of divorce, a trend towards fertility postponement, and higher rates of childlessness. These changes in family structure have been paralleled by equally dramatic changes in the family processes that take place within families. A large and growing body of research has documented the nature, causes, and consequences of this transition in the West.

Different demographic trends can be found in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Northern Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The essential structural features of demographic trends in these regions are well-known. But, trends in family structure worldwide have been documented only sporadically. A 1981 study indicated the prevalence of nuclear families in 45 percent of countries, and extended families in 55 percent, and a more recent decline in nuclear families is apparent.²⁹⁷ In addition, marriage rates are falling, age at marriage is rising, and consensual unions are becoming more prevalent in many regions.²⁹⁷ Less is known about the family processes and family culture in these regions and about the consequences of changes in family structure (especially related to marriage) in these regions for children.

The definition of family varies by country and region of the world, as well, and there have been various types of families throughout history. Nevertheless, this project will explore whether common measures of families are valid across countries so that they can be compared.

The *Family Map* project builds upon the considerable body of research on the nature, causes, and consequences of family trends in the West, but also extends that body of research to cover countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In so doing, the project seeks to identify “universal” family strengths and weaknesses—family features and processes that seem to universally deliver higher or lower levels of child well-being. But it also seeks to be attentive to the ways in which particular family structures and processes are helpful in some regions and not in others. Thus, the *Family Map* will contribute to our understanding of family features that contribute universally to human flourishing, as well as to features that only contribute to human flourishing in particular regions of the world.

The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 provides an organizational strategy which we will use to review research; it suggests a set of constructs from which indicators will be developed. The indicators for which there are data can then be compared across countries. Based on the conceptual framework, the constructs can be grouped into the following domains: family structure, family economics, family processes, and family culture.

This framework will be used to guide the selection of indicators within each domain, and that process will also include a review of available data sources for the indicators. The framework will begin with research that is most extensive and with which the team is most familiar, that which has focused on the United States and Canada. Then, important areas of divergence from U.S. and Canadian patterns will be discussed in other regions of the world.

The United States and Canada

The United States and Canada have experienced similar family structure changes in the last few decades such as delayed marriage and childbearing and smaller family size. The singulate mean age at marriage in the United States was about 26 years old for women and about 29 years old for men in 2002, while in Canada people tended to marry only slightly later than in the U.S., at about 27 years old for women and about 30 years old for men in 2000.²⁹² However, in Canada the total fertility rate is significantly lower (about 1.5) than the U.S. (about 2 births per woman). The Canadian fertility rate is more similar to those in Western Europe than the U.S.⁷⁸

Bélanger and Ouellet find that the difference in fertility rates can only be partially explained by the fact that the U.S. has a higher proportion of ethnic minorities, who tend to have higher fertility than whites.³¹ They find that earlier childbearing in the U.S., including the higher rate of births to teen mothers, also helps explain the gap.³¹ The U.S. Census Bureau International Database³⁰² estimates that in the United States in 2008 the rate is 43 births per 1,000 women age 15-19, while the rate is about one-third of that—14 per 1,000—among teens in Canada. The rate among women ages 20-24 is about twice as high in the U.S. (102) as in Canada (25), but narrows to 115 and 100, respectively, among women ages 25-29, while the United States falls slightly behind Canada among women ages 30-34 (rates are 96 and 100, respectively).³⁰²

Additionally, Bélanger and Ouellet find that greater provision of government services in Canada, particularly access to and education about effective contraception, makes Canada's fertility relatively lower.³¹ Cultural differences such as higher religiosity in the U.S. may help explain the difference as well.³¹ Marriage rates in 2003-2004 were higher in the U.S. than in any other OECD country.²³⁶ In 2007, annual marriage rates were estimated at over 7 per 1,000 people in the United States.²⁹⁰ In 2003, the latest year available from the Statistics Canada database, rates were significantly lower in Canada at below 5 per 1,000 people.²⁷⁸

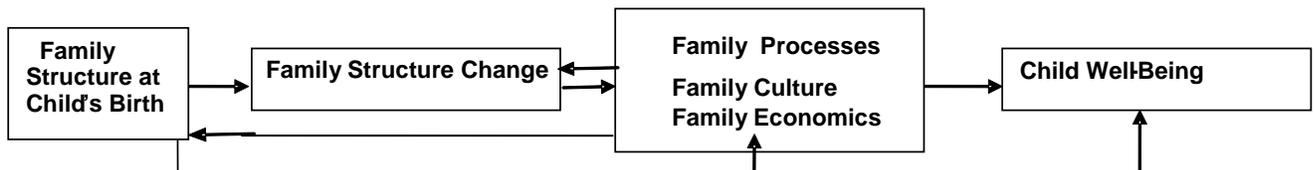
In both the United States and Canada, concern about the dramatic increase in non-marital childbearing during recent decades has been spurred by an extensive body of research

confirming that children do best when they grow up with two married or adoptive parents in a stable, low-conflict relationship.^{53,154,213} But, such living arrangements are less common for children today than in the past. In 1970, 11 percent of American children were born to unmarried couples.³⁰⁶ By 2006, almost two in five (39%) births in the United States occurred outside of marriage,¹³⁷ while this figure was about 28% in Canada in 2002.²³⁶ Cohabiting couples account for an increasing proportion of these non-marital births (29% of non-marital births in the U.S. in the early 1980s were to cohabitators versus 52% of non-marital births in 2001), but single parenthood has grown rapidly, as well.^{59,218} Furthermore, experiencing some change in family composition during childhood is now the norm for today's children and approximately 40% of all children in the U.S. are expected to spend some years in a cohabiting family by age 16.⁵⁹ Cohabitation rates are higher in Canada than the U.S. In Canada, 11% of children ages 0-17 lived with a cohabiting couple in 2000 compared to 5% in the U.S.¹⁷

These trends in U.S. and Canadian families have potentially negative implications for the development and well-being of children.^{11,205,213,269} For this reason, family status at birth is shown first in Figure 1. However, research to date presents an oversimplified picture about the effects of family structure, and we do not yet fully understand *why* being born to unmarried parents is detrimental for children. Therefore, it is important to examine mediators that we expect to explain the link between family structure and adverse child well-being. Key mediators include family structure change, family economics, family processes, and family culture.

As noted, Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships between family structure, family processes, family economics, and child well-being. This conceptual framework builds upon research that finds unmarried parents are more likely than married parents to experience relationship instability, weaker family processes (including poorer parenting and poorer marital relationship quality), and greater economic hardship,^{11,54,65,171,201,263,285} all of which are linked with poorer child well-being.^{51,141,142,161,214} Thus, these three factors represent potential important pathways bridging the gap between the demographic circumstances of a child's birth (represented by family structure at birth) and later child well-being across the life course. The diagram depicts an expected direct association between family structure at birth and child well-being. However, family economic hardship, family culture and family processes can also influence family structure and family structure change, since economic circumstances and attitudes, as well processes such as communication, are related to the likelihood of entering into and remaining in cohabiting relationships or marriage. The following literature review describes the research on each of these aspects of our conceptual framework.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Family structure at birth

A large body of research shows that being raised by married biological/adoptive parents is beneficial for children in both the short-term and long-term. Children who grow up living in any other family arrangements face a higher risk of socioemotional and behavioral problems, lower academic achievement, poorer health, and more unintentional injuries.^{5,16,77,90,92,112,117,129,204,225} The benefits of marriage for children are not simply a function of living with two parents, however, as evidenced by the fact that children living with cohabiting parents display more adverse outcomes than those living with married parents. Children of cohabiting parents are more likely than those of married parents to exhibit emotional and behavioral problems, to be poor, and to have lower academic achievement.^{1,68,90,101,170,199,237} Nevertheless, children of cohabiting parents often have advantages over children born to single, non-cohabiting mothers in that they have access to the presence of two romantically involved adults who ordinarily provide two incomes.¹

Relative to the abundant knowledge we have about how a child's *current* family structure is correlated with child outcomes, we know much less about the effects of the relationship statuses into which children are *born and raised*. Due to data limitations, only a relatively small collection of studies have examined the implication of relationship status at a child's birth for later child well-being. For example, young children born into single-parent and/or cohabiting parent families display more negative interactions with teachers and peers than children born into married parent families,⁶⁸ and show lower academic achievement in high school.⁶⁹ Also, only three studies that we know of have addressed the question of whether it matters for children if their cohabiting parents are both biological parents or if only one is a biological parent; all conclude that negative cohabitation effects are not dependent upon genetic relatedness of the parents to the child.^{22,53,200}

Family structure change

Divorce is fairly common in both the United States and Canada, although rates are higher in the United States. In 2007, there were about four divorces for every 1,000 people in the United States,²⁹⁰ while in Canada the rate was about half, at slightly more than two divorces for every 1,000 people in 2003.²⁹⁹ Parents who are unmarried at the birth of their child typically display greater relationship turbulence (i.e., more changes in family structure) than those who give birth within marital relationships. For example, approximately 50% of children born into non-marital cohabiting unions in the U.S. experience the end of their parents' union by age 5, compared with 15% of children born into marital unions.²⁰¹ More than two-thirds of children born into single-parent families in the U.S. experience a change in that parent's relationship status by the time they reach adolescence, compared with less than one-third of those born to married parents.⁶⁹ Evidence regarding relationship turbulence among different groups of unmarried women is not clear. Some research shows that children born into cohabiting families experience more family structure turbulence by first grade than children born into single-mother families,⁶⁸ whereas other work indicates children born to cohabiting mothers experience

less turbulence by age 3 than those born to single mothers.²³⁹ More longitudinal research is needed to understand the extent of relationship turbulence experienced by children born outside of marriage.

A life course perspective, which argues that life experiences influence an individual's contemporary well-being,¹⁰⁹ suggests that changes in relationship status in the parent generation (or parental family structure history) will exert influences on children and be associated with well-being in the child generation.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, social stress theory posits that experiencing changes in parental family structure during childhood precipitates stress for both children and parents, and that these stressors accumulate with each additional change in family composition and consequently harm child well-being.^{11,205,269} Past research supports this notion, showing that children who experience family structure turbulence are more prone to academic, emotional, behavioral, and health problems, and earlier initiation of sexual intercourse than are children whose parents maintain a stable relationship.^{57,68,69,147,204,228,239,316} Turbulence has a stronger negative effect on socioemotional and behavioral outcomes than cognitive ones.^{116,280} It is believed that the strains of family disruption and reorganizing into new families, which affect parenting and parent-child relationships, may be one reason for the differences in outcomes shown between children raised by stably married parents and those raised in families that have experienced changes in parents' relationship status.^{76,241}

The four dimensions of parental relationship histories most often identified in the literature as having implications for child outcomes include number, type, and timing of transitions, and the duration of time in various family statuses,^{19,205,313,317} yet there is no consensus about which aspect of change is most salient to children, or whether multifaceted measures are necessary.³¹³ Several studies of child outcomes emphasize the importance of stability, or number of transitions, over family structure type,^{140,313,317,318} though other scholars specify that not all types of transitions are detrimental.^{57,226} Further, there is little agreement about timing and the age at which transitions are most detrimental. Some researchers argue that change in early childhood is worse,⁷ whereas others cite middle childhood or adolescence as the most disruptive time for a change.¹¹⁷ Evidence on the importance of duration in various family types is also mixed, with some arguing that the amount of time spent living in a single-parent home has no influence on child outcomes,^{5,213} whereas others claim that the longer the time spent in a disrupted family, the more detrimental the outcomes for children.^{71,101,140}

With respect to mediating effects, family structure turbulence may be an important mechanism explaining the differential effects of being born into various types of parental relationships, although research finds mixed evidence. For example, some research suggests that the number and timing of family structure transitions teens experience partially account for the negative effects of living outside of a married, two biological parent family on educational attainment.¹⁴⁷ In contrast, however, other work reveals that the increased risk of turbulence experienced by children born to cohabitators versus married parents is not always responsible for observed differences in adolescent behavioral outcomes.²⁰⁰

Grandparents and other extended family members can provide critical support during times of family transitions or crises, such as marital disruption, parental unemployment, and imprisonment.^{75,153} Cross-cultural research suggests that the presence of kin living nearby can help share some of the childcare responsibilities that parents might otherwise bear by themselves.⁷² According to some studies, in families where no biological father is present, the presence of extended family members in the home tends to offset the absence of the father. These studies find that children from families with a grandmother, aunt, or other family member in the house tend to thrive as well as those from two-parent families.^{40,312} However, McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) find that grandparents do not help children being raised by single mothers in the U.S.²¹³

Family economics

Greater poverty and economic hardship have been associated with a host of negative outcomes for young children.⁵¹ Young children growing up in poor families are more likely to have problems with cognitive development and achievement in school^{89,136} and are more likely to demonstrate problem behaviors²³³ and poor emotional health.^{187,215} In addition, economically disadvantaged children are more likely to experience poor health, illness, and nutritional deficits during childhood and adolescence.^{177,277}

Single-parent and cohabiting families typically have fewer economic resources than married-parent families,²¹³ and divorce increases the likelihood of a family entering poverty.^{212,230} Economic hardship theory posits that the changes in family socioeconomic status that often accompany a change in family structure mediate, in part, the effect of parental relationship turbulence on child well-being.⁸ Some research suggests that income accounts for approximately 50% of the difference in outcomes between children in one-parent and two-parent families.²¹³ But, studies examining economic hardship as a mediator of family structure *change* have been hindered by data limitations.

Secure parental employment is critical for a family's economic stability. Not only does it provide a steady income, but a secure job is also more likely to offer health, retirement and other benefits for the employee and his or her family members. In addition, secure parental employment can contribute to healthy family functioning and psychological well-being, and protect against the stress associated with unemployment, underemployment, and poverty.^{206,273}

Parental employment status is related to the economic status of children in mother-headed single-parent families. The economic security of children can be affected by gaps in non-resident fathers' and custodial mothers' income and employment.³³ Furthermore, a high rate of joblessness among black males has been found to be related to their lower likelihood of being present or involved with their families.¹⁴⁹

The quality, not just the stability, of a parental job impacts family functioning. When working parents earn below minimum wage and have jobs without benefits, they are often not fully able to provide for the needs of their families, and are unable to lift their family above the poverty threshold. This is particularly problematic for single mothers

who enter low-complexity jobs, where there is evidence of a lower quality home environment as well.²¹⁷

While flexible work schedules can help parents meet the demands of work and families, shift work has been found to be related to marital instability among couples with children, particularly if the non-standard working hours occur during the week rather than the weekend.²⁴⁵ Factors that are related to marital instability include the type of schedule worked, the gender of the parent working nonstandard hours, and the duration of the marriage.

Family and medical leave as well as paid maternity/paternity leave are workplace policies that allow families to care for newborns and seriously ill family members while maintaining their jobs.¹⁶³ The degree to which parents feel overworked, or feel that the demands of their jobs are interfering with their family lives have been studied in the National Study of the Changing Workforce, the Iowa Youth and Families Project, and Roper polls. These studies have found that being overworked leads to more work-life conflict, less successful relationships with family members and friends, increased self-neglect, lost sleep, increased health problems, and higher levels of stress.¹²⁷

Access to good quality child care is a critical component of balancing work and family responsibilities. A few studies have found a negative relationship between extensive early maternal employment during a child's first year of life and children's cognitive outcomes.⁵² However, while over 80% of Canadian parents said they would prefer to stay home to care for their child rather than to have their child looked after by a competent caregiver,¹⁵⁷ a majority of Canadian parents (53%) used some form of child care for their children ages 6 months to 5 years in 2002.⁶³ Good quality child care can mediate negative effects of maternal employment, and substantial research links quality to child outcomes.^{2,327} Good quality child care can be particularly beneficial to children living in lower resourced environments of children in poverty.²³² For older children, the availability of before- and after-school programs is important to ensure a safe and constructive environment while parents work .

Family processes and connections

Parenting processes

Socialization theory emphasizes the importance of parental presence and positive parenting in promoting positive child well-being.²¹⁴ Parents who provide a strong literacy environment and cognitively stimulating materials and activities in their home contribute to higher levels of language and literacy development and better school readiness among their children.^{81,194,210} Parental warmth also promotes cognitive performance, school readiness, and academic achievement among young children.^{85,115,196} Supervision, monitoring and routines are associated with better child health and safety outcomes and fewer risk behaviors. Higher levels of parental monitoring and family interaction and communication help protect against risky adolescent behaviors, including drug and alcohol use and sexual risk-taking.^{37,133,193,305} Family routines and monitoring

are also associated with better overall health and nutrition for children.^{131,325} Parental warmth and child socio-emotional health are strongly related. For example, more parental support, involvement, and warmth promotes high self-esteem, reduced risk of depression, and fewer externalizing behaviors.^{69,134,326} Parental monitoring, routines, and cognitive stimulation are also important for promoting socio-emotional health and reduced problem behaviors.^{43,195,196}

Although the link between parenting and child well-being is strongly supported by research, studies provide mixed evidence about whether and which parenting processes mediate between family structure at birth and child well-being. Some research suggests that the amount of time children interact with either parent mediates some of the effect of living in a non-intact family on problem behaviors,¹⁵⁴ while lower levels of parental warmth, control, and school involvement all help explain lower cognitive outcomes and self-control and more problem behaviors for children in cohabiting families compared to those living in married families.^{99,285} It is important to note, however, that these studies did not control for family structure turbulence. In contrast, one study that did control for turbulence (the number and timing of family transitions) found no evidence that parenting measures mediate the negative effect of living in a single-parent or cohabiting family on child outcomes.¹⁰¹

The unstable environment precipitated by family structure changes is said to diminish a mother's ability to be a warm and supportive parent,³¹⁰ and research among teens shows that family turbulence is associated with weaker parent-teen relationships and less parental supervision.⁶⁹ Yet, relatively little research specifically examines how parenting might mediate between family structure turbulence and child outcomes, and existing studies provide mixed results. One exception is work by Osborne and McLanahan in which they found that poor quality mothering does mediate (reduce) the association between maternal relationship instability and aggressive behavior and anxiousness/depression among younger children.²³⁹

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles combine a number of parenting processes to describe patterns of parental practice and behavior. These have been characterized as permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, or uninvolved.²⁸ Permissive parents respond to their children's desires and behavior in an accepting, affirmative, and non-punitive manner.²⁸ In both the uninvolved and permissive parenting styles, parents exert little control toward their children.¹⁸⁵ However, uninvolved parents are disengaged from their children and their parenting responsibilities, whereas permissive parents are warm and responsive to their children, but allow their children to regulate themselves.⁸⁷ Authoritarian parents hold their children to an absolute standard of conduct, and use punitive and/or forceful measures to ensure children abide by the approved code of conduct. Authoritative parents are warm and value both the allowance of children's self-will and discipline. They encourage parent-child discussion, offer explanations for rules, seek children's opinions on policies they find unfair, and rely on reason and parental power to achieve desired child behavior.²⁸

The combinations of parental monitoring and support demonstrated by each parenting style have been found to be associated with children's well-being.²³¹ Studies show that limited parental monitoring, supervision, and control contribute to children's misbehavior.^{44,91,151,211} Studies also find that authoritarian parenting results in poorer psychological development and academic performance in children,²⁵² whereas authoritative parenting promotes child competence, adjustment, higher academic achievement, and improved psychological well-being.²⁵²

Family structure differences in parenting styles

There are differences in the levels of warmth and support across family structures. Within single parent families, custodial mothers or fathers are often trying to fulfill two parental roles instead of one, setting the stage for inconsistent parenting on the part of the single-parent due to an overload of responsibilities, tasks, and emotional stress;⁷⁴ lower parental involvement and conflictual parent-child relationships that compromise healthy development.²¹³ Children's attachment to nonresident parents is considerably weaker, further undermining the amount of support and closeness children experience in their parental relationships.⁵⁶ McLanahan and Booth²⁰⁸ report that single parents are more likely to use ineffective parenting practices, and provide less supervision, parental involvement, and control than married parents. The presence of a cohabiting partner may contribute to single parents' inability to parent effectively. Although cohabitation introduces a second adult to the household, unless the partner is also the biological parent of the child, it is unlikely that the partners' presence will raise custodial parents' levels of warmth and support.⁵⁶ Cohabiting partners may also undermine parents' effectiveness by competing with the child for their partner's attention and affection.²³ In addition, some qualitative research on single custodial fathers also suggests that divorced single custodial fathers are significantly less permissive and less likely to allow children to control them compared to divorced single custodial mothers.^{264,265}

Marital quality

Research indicates that it is also crucial to focus on marital relationship quality as a key dimension of family processes. Moore, et al,²²⁴ give ten characteristics of a healthy marriage:

- Commitment of the couple
- Satisfaction
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Lack of domestic violence
- Fidelity
- Interaction/Time together
- Intimacy/emotional support
- Commitment to the children
- Duration/legal marital status

Marital conflict is associated with less positive parent-child relationships, low parental warmth, less engagement with children, and less supportive parenting.^{42,58,176} Also, as we would expect, unmarried parents are more likely to dissolve their relationship following a birth, in part because their relationships tend to be of lower quality than married parents. Cohabiting couples typically have lower levels of relationship quality than married couples,^{54,65,171} but have higher levels of relationship quality than couples who are

romantically involved but not living together.²³⁸ Furthermore, for both cohabiting and married couples, relationship quality declines following a birth, but the decline in relationship quality is steeper for unmarried couples than for couples who were married at the birth.⁶⁵

Parental relationship conflict undermines children's emotional and behavioral well-being and increases parental stress, which leads to less effective parenting and a deterioration in parent-child relationships.^{8,152} More parental conflict in marriage is associated with child depression and anxiety in middle childhood,¹⁶¹ problem behaviors during adolescence,¹⁴¹ and depression or anxiety in late adolescence.¹⁷⁴ Conflict among parents in unmarried families also has harmful implications for children of various age groups, as it is related to a lower level of general child well-being, lower cognitive achievement, higher frequency of behavior problems, and reduced levels of sociability and initiative.^{139,142} Furthermore, better relationship quality among unmarried cohabiting or romantically involved parents is linked with a higher likelihood that the couple will eventually marry,⁵⁵ which may improve outcomes for children because they may spend more years of their life living with two married parents.²³⁸ Studies that explore the link between relationship conflict and health outcomes for children are lacking. Also, despite much attention to the quality of marital relationships, there is little research on how the relationship quality of cohabiting unions influences outcomes for children.

Furthermore, parental relationship conflict has been shown to be responsible for some of the difference in outcomes between children of intact and divorced families.²²⁹ Indeed, studies that measure both divorce and relationship quality find that children from high-conflict families are better off on several outcomes when their parents divorce rather than remain married.^{36,161} However, only about one-third of divorces involving children in the U.S. were linked to high-conflict relationship patterns for the parents in the late 1990s.¹²

The issue of family or domestic violence represents a more extreme topic but it is an important extension of the construct of the quality of family relationships and interactions. Research consistently finds an association between exposure to family violence and poorer developmental outcomes for children and adults, though the magnitude of the effect on children of observing violence is described as small.¹⁶⁵

Father Involvement

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2004, 58.3% of children aged 0-18 were living with two married biological parents.¹⁸¹ An additional 2.5% of children lived with two unmarried (cohabiting) biological parents. Almost 35% of all children resided in a single parent or stepfamily household. Only a small proportion (about 5%) of single parent and stepfamily homes consisted of a biological custodial father and a nonresident biological mother..

Fathers' involvement is different from that of mothers in terms of levels of involvement and the types of activities in which they engage with children.

Research suggests that father involvement is different from that of mother involvement in terms of the levels of involvement and the types of activities in which fathers engage with children. Overall, fathers tend to be less involved than mothers. For example, Yeung et al.³²¹ found that fathers are 73% as engaged with children (in physical care, play, and teaching activities) as mothers and are 71% as accessible (available if needed) as mothers. Other studies^{34,328} confirm that fathers' relative engagement and accessibility are lower (as low as 33% of mothers' engagement and 65% of mothers' accessibility). Levels of father involvement vary by family type and by other characteristics, including whether the mother is employed,²⁴⁴ and the quality of the father-mother relationship.^{14,79,184}

The types of activities in which fathers engage with their children also vary by age and gender of the child. Compared to mothers, fathers of infants and pre-schoolers provide more physical and social stimulation, more spontaneous forms of play, and engage in more social and active games. Fathers of older children engage in activities that involve physical activity, teamwork, and games that involve more competition, independence and risk taking compared to mothers. In terms of differential involvement of fathers for sons versus daughters, fathers tend to have higher levels of companionship with sons, but show more physical affection to daughters. Research on fathers' *overall* levels of involvement with children has been mixed, with some research finding that fathers are more engaged with sons, and some research finding no differences (see²⁴⁴).

Importance of father-child relationship and father involvement for child development

Although fathers may be less involved than mothers, prior research suggests that father involvement is important for child well-being. The dimensions of father involvement that have been found to be the most beneficial for children include father-child relationship quality (e.g., closeness), positive interactions and quality time spent with children, role modeling, and a consistent relationships over-time, even after separation or divorce.

Research on the positive influence of father-child relationships and father involvement has focused on a diverse range of outcomes for children at all ages. The outcomes that appear to be the most susceptible to the benefits of father involvement include academic achievement and educational attainment,^{84,111,320} cognitive development,²⁶¹ sex role development,^{188,198} peer relationships,¹⁰⁰ of self and competency for relating to others,⁹⁷ reduced risky behaviors (drug use, alcohol consumption, crime, early childbearing) and fewer behavioral problems,^{13,49,64,143} psychological well-being (lower depression, higher self esteem),^{10,97,143} economic self-sufficiency in the young adult years,^{38,234} and more positive perceptions of the parenting role as young adults.^{39,73}

Differences in father involvement by father's marital and residential status

Research on the nature and influence of father involvement suggests that both marital status and resident status matter for the ways in which fathers are involved with their children, and the benefits of such involvement. In the context of non-marital

childbearing, fathers' interactions with their children, strategies of childrearing, and the extent to which they fulfill their parenting responsibilities will differ from those of married fathers.¹²⁴ Unmarried fathers' roles may be perceived as less formal²⁶⁸ or less clear²² and men may be less likely to positively engage with partners and children if their responsibilities with regard to their children are unclear.⁷⁹ Unmarried fathers also do not have the same legal rights as married fathers,¹⁵⁶ which may lessen their involvement with their partners and children and their perceived right to make decisions regarding the child's upbringing. Finally, some unmarried nonresident fathers may see the cost of co-parenting as too high and disengage from their children's lives, resulting in erratic and inconsistent parenting,¹⁵⁰ with negative consequences for children.

Additional research on nonresident fathers shows that the involvement and parenting behaviors of unmarried fathers differ for fathers who cohabit with their child's mother and fathers who are nonresidential. Unmarried fathers who lived with their children at some point are likely to be more involved with their children and are more likely to remain involved after forming a new relationship.⁶⁶ Previously-married fathers are more likely than never-married fathers to be ordered to pay child support and are more likely to actually pay child support.²⁶⁶ This suggests that fathers who were ever married to their child's mother may be more closely connected and attached to their children. In general, however, nonresident fathers (whether divorced from or never married to their child's mother) are not highly involved with children and become less so over time,²⁷⁰ although fathers' continued presence in the lives of their children after they leave the household and engagement in authoritative parenting can promote the psychological and social welfare of their children.⁹

Unmarried Father Involvement and Child Well-Being

In general, having unmarried parents is associated with poorer outcomes for children.^{9,47} However, for children who do not live with their fathers, men's economic contributions to the child's household (child support payments) are associated with better child well-being.^{9,123} High levels of nonresident father involvement and authoritative parenting are also associated with more positive child well-being for children,^{9,45,46,160,202} including fewer behavioral problems for young children and adolescents,^{146,160} better academic/cognitive performance in middle childhood and adolescence^{9,146} and later transition into and engagement in risky behaviors.^{45,50}

Family Culture and Connections

Social capital

Families have social capital, or access to resources and beneficial relationships through their personal or organizational networks.^{80,189,247} These networks prove critical for meeting a variety of individual's personal and social needs. Recent research examining the amount of social capital, interpersonal resources and connections present in American communities suggests that there have been significant declines over the past several

decades in the degree to which Americans socialize with their neighbors and trust other people, along with a loosening of bonds within the family.^{189,248}

The degree to which family members trust others in their neighborhoods, their sense of community, and their concern for their safety are important factors in community involvement. In addition, participating in formal and informal social networks in a neighborhood provide families with more social connections, which, in turn, can support good parenting.²⁶² Families can feel socially isolated in communities where such networks are nonexistent, which, in turn, can negatively affect parenting.^{125,189,243}

The interpersonal networks shared by family members, and the degree to which individuals are socially connected to the community can play a role in coping with hardships and in providing opportunities to succeed. For instance, neglectful parents tend to have fewer connections to others than their non-neglecting counterparts, and as such, fewer potential sources of support.⁸² Formal social service interventions can provide parents with support they may be missing from natural social networks,⁹⁴ so ensuring access to those services is essential.

Religiosity

Family engagement with religion can be conceptualized as a special case of connection to community, when characterized by family participation in religious services or membership in a religious organization. However, the observance of a religious or spiritual practice transcends any one community, and ties family members to a sense of higher purpose, meaning, and values. This sense of connection to something larger than oneself has been found to benefit individual identity formation, efficacy, and positive development among adults as well as youth.^{40,86,259} Numerous studies find that religious service attendance is related to positive family functioning, including higher levels of marital satisfaction, marital stability and lower levels of marital conflict and divorce^{61,164,189,191,286} and while Mahoney et al.¹⁹⁷ find mixed results in their meta-analysis of religious involvement and marital satisfaction, they find that personal religiosity and commitment were linked to marital satisfaction and commitment. Parental religiosity has also been linked with greater involvement, warmth and positive parent-child relationships, and with authoritative parenting.^{132,175,189,191} In addition, parental religiosity is related to positive outcomes among children, including cognitive and social competence, higher levels of adolescent social responsibility, and avoidance of early sexual activity, delinquency, and depression.^{32,189,191,223}

Attitudes

Culture influences decisions and behaviors related to family formation, economics, and process. Attitudes toward marriage, child-bearing, family size expectations, and the involvement of extended kin influence family structure. Attitudes towards mothers working and child care influence the economic decisions that families make, and attitudes towards parenting, sharing housework, spending time together, and the salience or priority of the family influence family processes. These attitudes will be addressed to the

extent possible in each regional section, but research tends to be thin in this area. At a later stage in this project, analyses of the World Values Survey will provide data on these attitudes for the target countries of the study.

Western, Northern, and Southern Europe

Family Structure

While European patterns of delayed family formation, reduction in marriage and increases in cohabitation are similar to those in the U.S, they appear to be more pronounced and more prevalent in Europe. In addition, the extremely low fertility in Europe diverges from that of the U.S. It has been cause for alarm, and was the focus of the recent European Population Conference in July. Fertility rates (TFRs or total fertility rates, which approximate the number of total births that a woman of child-bearing age will have) in Northern and Western Europe, which contains about one-quarter of Europe's population, stabilized at between 1.7 and 2 births per woman, which is a bit below replacement level.¹²² However, in Southern Europe and in German-speaking countries, which contain three-fourths of Europe's population, fertility levels have continued to decline, so that they are now between 1.3 and 1.6 births per woman of childbearing age.¹²²

Delays in family formation and child-bearing are suggested as important causes of lower fertility: data from 2006 shows that the mean age at first birth for women in many countries of Northern, Western and Southern Europe was about 28 years old, while in the 1970s the mean age was about 24-25.¹²⁰ Longer periods of time in education and training, economic stressors on establishing separate households, women's increased labor force participation, and expenses related to marriage and having children are all suggested as probable causes of this phenomenon (see^{121,122}).

Immigrant populations in Europe tend to have higher fertility than those born in Europe, especially immigrants who recently arrived. In most countries in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe, total fertility rates were three to seven percent higher due to immigrants than they would have been otherwise. However, the contribution of immigrants to the total fertility is too small to expect them to move the rate back to replacement level.¹²²

The relationship between marriage and fertility does not appear to be straightforward in Europe. In many counties where there has been a smaller decline in marriage rates, fertility rates are lower than in countries with steep declines in marriage.²⁷⁵

Although there are many different types of families and ranges in family size in European countries, Frejka et al. write that, "the two-child family clearly became the norm" in the late twentieth century. They explain that, "Between 40 and 55 percent of women in the cohorts born in the 1950s and 1960s had two children."¹²² However, one-child families are increasing relative to families with two or more children in many countries, especially

in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. Almost every European country has had an increase in childlessness, although in some countries the proportion of couples without children is much higher than in others.¹²²

Frejka and Sobotka point out that, “Unlike in the U.S., teenage childbearing has become marginal in many parts of Europe, especially in Western, Northern, and Southern Europe (with the notable exception of the United Kingdom, and, to a smaller extent, also Ireland and Portugal).”¹²⁰

Family economics

European researchers point to changes in the economy that impact family formation. An increase in the service economy and the need for higher skilled and technologically advanced workers has led to longer lengths of time in education and training for young adults. In addition, it has become increasingly difficult to find stable employment, and for young adults to establish separate households. Furthermore, there is increased consumerism, higher economic expectations, and conflicts between employment and childbearing aspirations.²⁷⁴

Family process

Even though women’s share in the labor force has increased greatly in the past decades and in many cases continues to grow, women still continue to be largely responsible for child rearing and household duties.¹²² In Scandinavia, fathers in cohabiting relationships have legal rights and obligations similar to those in marriages, including the requirement to pay child support if the union dissolves.²⁸⁹ A UNICEF poll conducted between 1999 and 2001 in nine Western European countries found that 14% of children between the ages of 9 and 18 report yelling and hitting in their home.²⁹⁶

Family culture

The second demographic transition is linked to changes in values, aspirations, and culture in Europe. Women’s control of their own fertility due to increased use of contraception, and higher educational and career aspirations have been major drivers of this transition.²⁷⁴ However, many Europeans, particularly Southern Europeans and those in lower income groups continue to profess traditional family values, but their behaviors do not match their attitudes, since they are also postponing marriage and childbearing for the same reasons as others.²⁷⁴ Increasing secularization in Europe among young adults¹⁹⁰ is also related to the decline in marriage rates in Europe.²⁷⁴

Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The countries in this region include (see²⁹⁴):

- Central Europe: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
- Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

- South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro
- Western Commonwealth of Independent States: Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine
- Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Family Structure

Families were heavily affected by the region's transition from the USSR to independence in the early 1990s. Since then, there has been an increase in the average age at marriage, a decrease in marriage rates and a concurrent increase in cohabitation, a dramatic decrease in fertility rates, and an increase in non-marital births. According to a United Nations report, these trends reflect the "second demographic transition" occurring in the region as well as young people's decreased inclination to make long-term commitments in the face of uncertainty and societal upheaval in the years of transition.²⁴²

Taking an average of all the countries except those in Central Asia, the mean age at first marriage increased from 22.6 years old in 1989 to 25.3 in 2006.²⁹⁵ The range in 2006 was greater, though, from a low of 23 in Moldova to a high of 27.3 in Hungary. In Central Asian countries, the increase was not as great: in 1989 mean ages ranged from 21.5-22.6, and in 2006 they ranged from 22.4 in Uzbekistan (virtually the same as in 1989) to about 24 in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.²⁹⁵

Marriage was nearly universal in many countries in 1989, but by 2006 the marriage rate for those ages 15-44 had fallen from 18.9 to 13.7 per thousand of the population across the entire region.²⁹⁵ Divorce rates do not show a discernable pattern for the region as a whole, increasing substantially in some countries between 1989-2006 (Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Albania, Moldova and Russia), while decreasing in others (Estonia, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and, notably, in all of the Central Asian countries), and staying virtually unchanged in the other countries in the region.²⁹⁵

More couples are cohabiting before or as an alternative to marriage, although consistent data on cohabitation are not available in every country. The Fertility and Family Surveys, conducted in seven countries in the region between 1991-1997, shows that in each country women aged 25-29 were much more likely to have cohabited by age 25 than women ages 30-34 and 35-39.^{300 as cited in 242} The range between countries was quite large, however. Poland stood out as having the lowest rate of women ages 25-29 having cohabited (4%), followed by Lithuania (15%), Hungary (18%), the Czech Republic (29%), Latvia (40%), Slovenia (43%), and Estonia (64%).^{300 as cited in 242} Culture and social norms play a large part in determining the cohabitation rate. For example, the prominence of the Catholic church in Poland helps explain low rates of cohabitation,²⁴² and while cohabitation rates were not found for Central Asia for this review, the emphasis on traditional marriage still prevalent in the region (see¹⁵⁵) would suggest very low levels of cohabitation.

Nuclear families continue to be the most common type of household in this region (see²⁴²), but other types are also important. Some countries have a greater proportion of

extended family households,²⁴² especially where it is traditional, like in Central Asian countries.¹⁵⁵ The proportion of single-person households rose between the 1960s and the late 1990s to reach about 20-25% in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia.^{300 as cited in 242} Single motherhood, traditionally uncommon,²⁴² was found to be a sizeable proportion of households in the 1990s in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (7-8%); Lithuania (11%); and Estonia and Latvia (18%).^{300 as cited in 242}

Total fertility rates in the region have fallen dramatically: from 2.09 in 1989 to 1.39 in 2006 on average for all countries except those in Central Asia.²⁹⁵ The rate is one of the lowest in the world.³⁰¹ In Central Asia, the average total fertility rate in 1989 was significantly higher at about 4, but fell to 2.7 in 2006.²⁹⁵ The decrease in fertility rates across the region may be due largely to temporary factors such as the “demographic shock” of the transition from Communism, or may reflect a more permanent shift toward Western European fertility patterns. In some cases, couples are deciding not to have children, in a break from the traditional universality of childbearing throughout the region.^{122,242} More often, couples are waiting longer for childbearing and then having fewer children. The mean age at first birth increased for the entire region from 23.1 in 1989 to 25 in 2006.²⁹⁵ Corresponding with higher rates of cohabitation, non-marital births increased over the time period from 10% in 1989 to 28% in 2006.²⁹⁵

Family Economics

After an initial increase following the break-up of the Soviet Union, poverty ratesⁱ decreased in most countries in the region in the early 2000s.³⁰¹ For example, rates fell in Moldova, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Bulgaria, but they rose slightly in Georgia.³⁰¹ Some countries that have persistently high rates of extreme poverty are Tajikistan (33% in 1999), Uzbekistan (26% in 2003), Moldova (33% in 2002), Armenia (24% in 2000) and Albania (25% in 2002).³⁰¹ Living in extended families, as is tradition in some of these countries, can help people to pool their resources and better survive on low incomes.²⁴²

Given the non-comparability of poverty rates, it is helpful to consider nutrition as another indicator of economic well-being. The Caucasus and Central Asia showed relatively high rates of malnutrition and underweight children in recent years, although rates are decreasing in most of these countries.³⁰¹ On the low end, 23% of the Armenian population ate less than the recommended dietary calories per day in 2004, while the highest percentage, 55%, was in Kyrgyzstan in 2003.³⁰¹ The percentage of underweight children (defined as those whose weights are two standard deviations below the median for that age internationally), is less than 2% in Serbia and Montenegro but runs the spectrum up to higher rates: 14.9% in Albania in 2000, 8% in Turkey in 1998, 12% in Turkmenistan in 2000, and 8% in Uzbekistan in 2002.³⁰¹

ⁱ Poverty is defined by each country, so data is not comparable across countries but is comparable within each country over time.

While it is common for women to seek employment (the female labor force participation rate in 2006 was 50%, compared to 70% among males),¹⁵⁸ women lag behind men in wages across the region. The gender pay gap as measured in 2002-2003 was the lowest in Southern and Eastern European countries, averaging in the high teens.³⁰¹ However, the gap was greater in Russia (36%) and the Caucasian countries of Georgia (47%) and Armenia (58%). Rates were similarly high in the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan (39%), Kyrgyzstan (35%), and Tajikistan (57% in 2000).³⁰¹

The United Nations cites the gender pay gap as one of the most significant causes of higher rates of poverty among women-headed households.³⁰¹ The same report points out that women also have greater demands on their time and finances due to the decrease in spending by the government on public services in most countries since the early 1990s and the increase in elderly dependents they are responsible for caring for in their households.³⁰¹ Similarly, Philipov points out that expenses for child care increased significantly after the transition.²⁴²

Although the region's average unemployment rate fell from 10% in 1996 to 9% in 2006, this was still much higher than the average rate of the world of 6% in 2006.¹⁵⁸ Despite nearly universal primary education and a large majority of young people enrolling in secondary school, young people suffer disproportionately from unemployment.^{294,301} A 2007 UNICEF report cites unemployment rates of 10-20% in most countries in the region among people aged 20-24, ranging as high as 33% in Poland.²⁹⁴ The only region in the world with a higher youth unemployment rate is the Middle East.³⁰¹

Family Process and Culture

Limited literature exists on family process and culture indicators in the region. The UNICEF Opinion Poll²⁹⁶ found that violent or aggressive domestic behavior affected more than 60% of the children ages 9-17 surveyed across each country in the region.ⁱⁱ Fifteen percent complained that their parents engaged in both hitting and shouting, while 45% cited just shouting, and 1% cited just hitting.

In the same poll, 75% of children in the region cited a "good" relationship with their father, compared to 92% with their mother.²⁹⁶ The difference can be partially explained by the fact that eight percent reported not having a father, while less than one percent said the same for their mother; those without a parent were not excluded from the question on the quality of their relationship. However, more children also reported an "average" relationship with their their fathers than mothers (10% compared to 6%) or no relationship (three percent versus less than one percent).²⁹⁶

Family norms and attitudes have changed greatly in Central and Eastern Europe, beginning with increased secularization and female autonomy under the communist regime.²⁴² However, adoption of these new values as well as greater tolerance of others'

ⁱⁱ Children were surveyed in all 27 countries that UNICEF includes in the Central and Eastern European and Central Asian region, listed at the beginning of this document.

opinions, qualities of the “second demographic transition,” accelerated in the years following independence.²⁴² Philipov argues that increased female autonomy contributed to the delay in marriage and family formation.²⁴² He also believes that a greater tolerance of other people’s preferences contributed to the acceptance of non-marital unions and non-marital births.²⁴² According to a recent article, the more disadvantaged sectors of the population were the first to adopt the characteristics of the transition, particularly non-marital childbearing. “This new behaviour has then gradually been adopted by other social groups, and has eventually led to wider attitudinal change.”¹²²

Even though women’s share in the labor force has increased greatly in the past decades and in many cases continues to grow, women still continue to be largely responsible for childrearing and household duties.^{122,155}

UNICEF reported in 2007 that in some parts of the region the end of communist rule has meant greater autonomy for women, but “in other parts of the region there has been a revival of more traditional attitudes, meaning less choices for women, and increased societal pressures for early marriage and childbearing.”²⁹⁴ However, in some countries, strong traditional attitudes may coexist with changes in family practices. A 2001 paper found that “with some exceptions, practices related to marriage demonstrated a trend toward modernity,” while “less change was evidenced for attitudes” than for practices in the capital cities of Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; Baku, Azerbaijan; and Ankara, Turkey.¹⁵⁵ For example, while the extended family (and in the case of Turkmenistan, the clanⁱⁱⁱ) still helped arrange a large proportion of marriages in the 1990s (25% in Ashgabat, 47% in Baku and 44% in Ankara), the practice was less prevalent than in the past. Also, while about half of the marriages that occurred before the 1970s were traditional and involved very little courtship, most of the marriages in Ashgabat, Baku and Ankara in the 1990s involved at least some courtship^{iv} (86%, 69%, and 76%, respectively).¹⁵⁵ Views about who should make the decision about a son or daughter’s marriage, appropriate age for marriage, and reasons for marriage^v were relatively stable over time.¹⁵⁵

Asia

Family Structure

With increasing economic opportunities in many Asian societies, there has been a move away from traditional extended, multi-generation households. A UN report found that in ten Asian countries (Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and China), adults in nuclear families are placing more

ⁱⁱⁱ The authors found that as of 2001 in Turkmenistan, “spousal similarity of clan membership [was] evidenced in 77% of the marriages.”¹⁵⁵

^{iv} However, the courtships often consisted of a limited number of meetings and usually occurred in groups.¹⁵⁵

^v Reasons could be traditional (ethnic, religious and family compatibility, wish for being married and parenthood, age for marriage); social and network pressure (social, network and circumstantial pressures, loneliness, necessity of marriage); or relational (spousal compatibility, love, physical, personality and educational characteristics of spouse).¹⁵⁵

emphasis on privacy, and have more options when it comes to locations of employment, so nuclear families are starting to set up households that are independent from their extended family.²⁴⁹ There has been a steady decline in the size of Asian households in those ten countries from 1980 to 2000.²⁴⁹ In China, Xu et al. report that “the idea of the three- or four-generation family household remains a stereotype”, and that nuclear families with 3 to 6 persons comprise the common family household.³¹⁹ In India, the percent of households with five or more members decreased slightly from 63% in the 1990s to 59% around the year 2000, and families that are large are still the norm in that area of South Asia (see⁸⁸, Table 8). De Silva also reports that about 10% of households in India were headed by females around the year 2000, and that there was also an increase in the numbers of Indian widows.⁸⁸

Along with a decrease in household size, young people in China, Korea, and Japan leaving their parental home are influencing changes in living arrangements. The age of leaving home is earliest in Japan, where 25% of males left their parental home by age 18 and latest in Korea where 25% of males had left their parental home by age 24.³²² For females, Japan again had the earliest age at leaving home (17 to 18 years), and China had the latest age at leaving home (24 years).³²² Even though the cultural values across China, Korea, and Japan are similar, the Chinese age at leaving home is later than the other two countries because 80% of Chinese newlyweds live in the parental home for at least a year after marriage.³²² For Japan, the authors infer that the early age of leaving home is due to high numbers of Japanese who go to college away from home.³²²

As in China, young adults commonly live with their parents after marriage in Bangladesh, South India, and Thailand. In Bangladesh, it is universally expected that all married couples start out living with the husband’s parents rather than starting their own household. New husbands become their own household heads when they start working full-time and have control over their earnings.¹⁵ In South India, there was a preference for stem families, where a married son and his family lives with his parents, and such stem families were easily formed because wives know their new in-laws due to a prevalence of marriage between cousins.⁶⁰ In Thailand, while newlyweds were culturally expected to live with family after marriage, it had been the mother’s family and not the father’s family that accepted the new couple into their homes.⁷⁰

The living arrangements of elderly Asians vary across the region(see¹⁷⁹). In the early 1970s, approximately 75% of the elderly in China, India, Singapore, Fiji, Korea, Malaysia, and the Philippines over the age of 60 lived with their children.²⁰³ However, this has been changing over the past 30 years. Between 1975 and 2001 in Japan, the number of elderly adults living alone increased from 611,000 to 3,179,000.²⁴⁹ Evidence of this change is supported by results from a 1984 WHO survey in Fiji, Korea, Malaysia, and the Philippines which found that older adults who own their own home, are self-supporting, and have a living spouse are less likely to live with their children.²⁰³ Xu et al.³¹⁹ report that research has found that older, more educated Chinese prefer to live in households separate from their children, although they still like to live nearby to at least one adult child. Similarly, a UN report finds that grandparents are more likely to live by themselves in highly economically developed Asian countries.²⁴⁹

Researchers are finding that there is a nearly universal increase in the age at first marriage for women in countries throughout Asia from generally about age 15 or 16 in the 1950s to age 23, 24, or even higher in some areas in the 1990s.^{15,60,70,102,249}

^{166,167,257,288} Some believe that this delay in getting married is due to women's increased participation in the workforce. In addition to delayed marriage, there is also evidence that rates of non-marriage are increasing.^{167,249} Jones reports that in 1990, approximately one in five to one in three women in six major Asian cities were still single in their early 30s.¹⁶⁷ And in Thailand, Bangkok, and Singapore, nearly 20% of women in their 40s with a postsecondary education are unmarried. Jones theorizes that the education of women is creating a gap between men and women and causing a shortage of available mates, where educated women do not want to "marry down" to a less-educated man, and less-educated men are less likely to marry women who have more education.¹⁶⁷

Young Asian couples are also more likely to have chosen each other than be matched through arranged marriages. In a study of couples in rural China between 1987 and 1996, nearly 57% of marriages occurred through self-selection and most of the couples were happy with their mate.³¹⁹ In Islamic Southeast Asia, women were starting to be allowed to select their own spouse, and by doing so, the divorce rate began to decrease in part due to couples with greater dedication to making their marriages work.¹⁶⁶ In a different report, Jones posits that the education of women has contributed to the breakdown of arranged marriages because parents feel that they cannot force their educated daughters into an arranged marriage, and also because educated daughters spend more time in the workforce than in places where they can meet potential mates.¹⁶⁷

Increasing age at marriage and increasing non-marriage rates indicate that Asian cultures are becoming more tolerant of behaviors that traditionally have been discouraged. The rising age at marriage may be influencing the numbers participating in premarital sexual intercourse. Multiple news sources report that a Beijing study conducted by Chinese sexologist Li Yinhe finds that the percentage of residents who have had premarital sex has increased to between 60 and 70 percent from a low of 16 percent in 1989.^{29,183,283} However, we have been unable to locate and verify this specific study. In addition to engaging in premarital sex, young Chinese are also losing their virginity at earlier ages. A survey of residents of seven major Chinese cities conducted in 2007 found that for those between the ages of 14 and 20, the age at sexual debut was 17.4, whereas the age at sexual debut for those between the ages of 31 and 40 was 24.1 years.²⁹ The traditional stigma of divorce may also be changing. In the Republic of Korea, divorce rates tripled from 1990 to 2003,¹⁸⁶ and in 2003 the divorce rate was one of the highest in the world at 47 percent.³⁰³ The same may be said about divorce. In China, while there is still a social stigma against divorce, more people are developing a tolerance towards divorce, especially among Chinese youths.³¹⁹ The divorce rate in China, while still small overall, has steadily been increasing since 1980, from about one-third of one percent to nearly 1.3% in 2004.³¹⁹ A UN report found that divorce rates are going up in Asia, and that economically prosperous countries such as Japan and Hong Kong are more likely than economically challenged countries such as Thailand and the Philippines to have a higher divorce rate among those aged 40 to 55.²⁴⁹ In Japan, one research study found that

people whose social networks included others with nontraditional family choices were more tolerant of those behaviors.²⁵⁷

Interestingly, though, while the divorce rate in Asia has been increasing, the rate in Islamic Southeast Asia has been decreasing. Prior to the 1950s, divorces in Asian Islamic countries was very high due to the ease of obtaining divorce, the prevalence of arranged marriage, and the young age of the women being married.¹⁶⁶ However, the divorce rate began to decline and by the 1970s had dropped below the divorce rates of the West. Jones reports that in Peninsular Malaysia, the divorce rate dropped by half in the 1950s, by nearly half again by 1973, and dropped by half again in 1985.¹⁶⁶ When this happened, women were starting to be allowed to select their own spouse, the age at first marriage began to rise, and the Islamic religion began to exert pressure on couples to remain married by making divorce more difficult to obtain. Jones suggests that self-selection of a spouse means that the couple has a greater commitment to one another and is more likely to want to work things out when problems arise rather than get divorced.¹⁶⁶

Fertility rates in Asian countries have been decreasing, and some are even below replacement levels.^{257,288} According to a UN report, over the last 20 years fertility rates in ten Asian countries have steadily dropped, especially in highly developed countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.²⁴⁹ These decreases can be seen as a problem by governments, because reduced population can impact the ability to maintain armed forces and maintain a supply of employees to employers, and can impact tax revenue.²⁴⁹ However, governments in the two most populous countries in the world have enacted policies to control fertility rates. In India, fertility rates have declined by 42% since the mid-1960s.⁴ Some authors argue that this decline is mainly due to India's Five Year Plan, a national family planning program established in 1952 designed to educate women about modern birth control methods.^{4,145} However, an unpublished report presented to the Population Association of America indicates that economic growth evidenced by increased female wages and increased agricultural productivity has greatly influenced the fertility rates in India.¹¹⁸ In China, the decline can be partially attributed to the Chinese government's "one child per family" population control policy. However, some young people in China's urban cities are choosing to not have children at all. Results from two small-scale surveys show that about 14% of young people from five urban cities would prefer to have a childfree marriage, and nearly 16% of college students report that they would not have children after they got married.³¹⁹

One potential cause of reduced fertility rates is the prevalence of delayed childbearing due to marriage postponement. When women postpone getting married, this then leads to a delay in the birth of a first child and can ultimately impact the number of children a woman is able to have.³¹⁹

Family Economics

The literature indicates that more and more Asian women are choosing to enter the workforce, and remain in it once they are married. A UN report states that the idea of a woman holding a job has become normalized in nearly all Asian countries.²⁴⁹ Xu et al.

report that the majority of Chinese women work outside of the home due to changing policies to encourage female participation in the labor force.³¹⁹ According to Tsuya et al., in 1994 nearly 60% of married women in Japan worked outside the home, and over half of them worked full-time.²⁸⁸

The effects of globalization in Asian countries have led to a decrease in the prevalence of child labor among children between the ages of 10 and 14. However, it is not universal and in countries that are still dealing with economic problems, some families may force children to drop out of school and go to work to help contribute to the household.²⁴⁹

Family Process

Across Asia, the social status of females seems to be increasing as countries become more developed and economically rich. Women are increasingly better educated, with 51% of women in Japan between the ages of 25 and 29 obtaining higher education.²⁵⁷ In Thailand, Bangkok, and Singapore, increases in women's education has also been found to influence to whether women get married or not.¹⁶⁷ The increase in education and participation in the workforce has led to some slight changes in traditional gender role expectations at home. In China, women are becoming more involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, including decisions about career choices, financial investments, housing purchases, and how much support is provided to their parents.³¹⁹ In China and Japan, male participation in housework-related tasks has increased slightly, but females still shoulder much of the burden, regardless of whether they work outside of the home.^{288,319} In 2000 in Japan, nearly 60% of wives spent at least 25 hours per week on housework related tasks, while 60% of husbands spent less than three hours per week on such tasks.²⁸⁸ While husbands spent just a few hours per week on household chores, that percentage represented an increase in the number of husbands doing any chores at all. Of the husbands who did any housework, younger husbands spent more time than did older husbands,²⁸⁸ which the authors believe may lead to more husbands willing to do housework in the future.

Xu et al. reported that a number of studies have found that married couples in China feel that their marriages are highly satisfying, and that they and their spouse love each other deeply.³¹⁹ Most couples have not considered divorce, and nearly three-quarters believed that their spouse would not leave them. Those who are satisfied in their marriage care about each other deeply, are compatible, can adapt to change, and knew each other well before marriage.

The UNICEF Opinion Poll²⁹⁶ found that hitting occurs between people in about 29% of Asian households. There was a large range, from Singapore (14%), China (17%), and Mongolia (19%) to Papua New Guinea (75%). Twenty-three percent of children in the region reported that their parents hit them, with the lowest rates in Mongolia (7%) and the highest rates in East Timor (53%), Cambodia (44%) and Myanmar (40%).²⁹⁶

Family Culture

The traditional gender roles for Asian women were that they would marry, have children, and be the sole caregivers for their children. Now, increasing numbers of women are in the workforce and continue to work after getting married and having children, thus changing those traditional expectations.²⁵⁷ In Japan, women want to be in the labor force even after marrying and having children, and those women need to find nontraditional child care arrangements. Japan has increased the number of pre-school slots available; however, though there is more availability, the demand exceeds it as there are even more children on waiting lists for pre-school spaces.²⁵⁷ Also, older family members living in the household and the father of the children are sharing in the household responsibilities, including children's socialization and their education.^{227,319}

The traditional Asian beliefs of respecting and taking care of their elders still generally holds true. A UN report shows that the old-age dependency ratio has been steadily increasing in 10 Asian countries over the past 50 years, most markedly in Japan and Hong Kong.²⁴⁹ Xu et al. reports that limited government social security and employer pensions in China lead senior citizens to rely on their adult children for support and care.³¹⁹ Yi et al. state that in East Asian societies, it is still considered a child's duty to contribute financially and take care of elderly parents.³²²

India has a distinct divide between its northern regions and southern regions when it comes to attitudes towards male and female children. Dyson and Moore¹⁰² found that in northern India, females generally marry young, fertility is high (about 6 to 7 live births per woman), the ratio of boys to girls is high, and infant mortality especially among females is high. An editorial in 2005 reported that in the ten years previous, the ratio of girls to boys below the age of 6 continues to decrease, from 94.5 girls to 92.7 girls per 100 boys.³⁰⁴ Researchers believe that these conditions confirm the traditional presence of son preference among Indian families. Pande and Astone report that 46% of women in rural India admit to having a son preference, with 75% wanting at least one more son than daughters.²⁴⁰ Son preference also can lead to discrimination against girls. In many families, especially those with older sons, girls are less likely to receive immunizations and be taken for medical care, and are more likely to be moderately or severely undernourished.^{20,102,219} Son preference is believed to be the main cause of excess female mortality under the age of 5. In 1992-93, the mortality rate for girls was 42 per 1,000 while it was 29 per 1,000 for boys.²⁰

Australia and New Zealand

(*New Zealand not yet included: in the next couple months their Census Bureau will come out with a comprehensive report on family wellbeing, which we will use to update this framework)

Family Structure

Australians are experiencing similar family formation trends as those in Europe and the U.S, including later partnering, delayed childbearing, and fewer births per woman. Young adults are living in their parents' home longer before establishing their own

households. Those who are partnering are less likely to marry than their predecessors were, and divorce rates among those who have married have risen.²³ The average age at marriage has increased for both men and women by about 2 years over the last decade, and, while the total fertility rate (births per woman) has been stable at just below replacement level, the percentage of births to unmarried women has increased from 28% to 33%.²⁴

Single parent families increased slightly to 22% of all families with children in 2007 from 20% in 1997.²⁴

Family Economics

The percentage of single parents who worked outside the home increased between 1997 and 2007, from 43% to 55%.²⁴ Among families with children, those headed by a couple with both parents working increased from 54% to 60%. Such families have increasingly turned to formal child care. The participation of children ages 3-4 in formal child care increased between 1999 and 2007, from 35 to 46 percent.²⁴

Australia is also experiencing the increased consumerism that was mentioned in Europe. These trends have created concern about the pace and pressure of life for families, with research and surveys showing that family time together and communication are being harmed by work pressures and increased consumerism and aspirations toward higher standards of living.¹¹³

Family Processes

The sharing of domestic chores, child care, and time use concerns that have accompanied the increase of women in the labor force are focal areas of Australian family policy discussions relevant to this project.¹¹³ Concern about child abuse rose to the national and international stage with the news of scandals among aboriginal peoples and with the government's recent apology for long term abuses by a system which removed aboriginal children from their homes and placed them in institutional or foster care. Australia has the second highest rate of reports of alleged child abuse in the world, with 52.4 notifications per 1,000 children per year²⁶⁷ and there has been a 50% increase in the case load in the last five years.²⁶ Reform of the child protection system is a current priority of the government and they are establishing a new National Child Protection Framework.²⁵

Family Culture

A survey conducted between 1996 and 2000 found that 90% of people noted changes in family life, with 66% noting breakdown of family values, family communication, increased isolation from kin and social networks, and increased consumerism.¹¹³ An Australian research institute published a call for improving national well-being by investing in early childhood and discouraging materialism.²⁸⁴

Africa

Family Structure

Living Arrangements:

Sub-Saharan African families have traditionally been studied as belonging to corporate kinship groups or extended patrilineal or matrilineal families. The corporate kinship group refers to the structural grouping of individuals within a society into units with similar or related *corporate functions or activities* such as economic, political, or religious functions or activities.³⁰ For example, members of a community who share rights to property on which the daily livelihood of its members belongs can be thought to comprise of an economic corporate unit.³⁰ There has been a gradual transformation of African marriage and family organizations away from corporate kinship and extended families toward nuclear families.³⁵ Bigombe and Khadiagala note that this process of social adaptation has resulted in an uneasy amalgam of traditional and modern values yet to emerge into a dominant pattern.³⁵

Polygyny has been a persistent family structure in Sub-Saharan Africa.³⁵ While polygyny rates have not declined as rapidly as hypothesized in the 1960s and 1970s, recent data indicate a trend towards widespread declines, especially in urban settings and among the most privileged and educated classes.²⁸¹ The prevalence of polygyny is variable between sub-regions of the continent, between countries in sub-regions, between ethnic groups, and within living environments in communities.²⁸¹ Polygyny has been and continues to be most widespread in West Africa and the Sahel with 30 -60 percent of women aged 35-44, in 1999, living in a polygynous marriage. An average of 39 percent of marriages in Central Africa, 23 percent in East Africa, and 14 percent in Southern Africa are polygynous. The sub-region variability is noteworthy, for example, the 17 countries in Eastern Africa range from 4 percent to 39 percent in their polygyny rates. The persistence of polygyny in rural areas is primarily driven by the sexual division of labor in agriculture - many wives and children are an essential source of labor in agriculture production. While polygyny is more prevalent in rural areas and among the less educated⁹⁸, in some communities this varies by gender. While educated women in some polygynous societies are increasingly shifting to monogamous relationships, well educated men and financially successful men may be expected and do take on additional wives.^{83,287}

Single-parenthood is another form of living arrangement taking hold across Africa. As increasing numbers of women have joined the labor force, single female-headed households have become more common.¹⁸ The driving forces for women's increased participation in the labor market have been twofold. First, increased desire to work and increase the family's well being, a motivation largely facilitated by increased female education. Second, and much more prevalent, has been the need for women to work for family subsistence- a need driven by poor returns of male employment. The increase in single-parent homes can also be partially explained by a trend by young African men and women postponing or delaying their first marriage while becoming sexually active

outside marriage, especially in urban areas and among educated youth.⁶² An emerging trend has been women's postponement of marriage in order to have greater control over reproduction. This trend is especially important in West Africa where the combination of separate spousal budgets and the practice of exchanging bridewealth give men control over women's reproduction.⁹⁶

Studies in most African cities find that single-parent female headed households are over-represented among the poor.^{35,168,246,308} Single-parent families, especially female-headed households, are especially high in South Africa as a legacy of the apartheid policy. Apartheid policies resulted in a high number of pregnancies outside marriage and divorce.³⁵ As part of the coping mechanism of single-parent households in Africa, poor single-parents have increasingly taken their children to live with their grandparents, a practice widely documented in South Africa.³⁵

Child fosterage, the assumption by someone other than the biological parents, of a child's rights and responsibilities associated with childbearing²⁰⁹, remains prominent in Africa.²⁰⁹ Isiugo-Abanihe¹⁵⁹ identifies three kinds of fosterage: crisis; alliance and apprentice fostering; and domestic fostering. Crisis fostering occurs when a child loses a parent or both parents to divorce, separation, or death and the child's custody is assumed by an agreed upon member of the surviving family. Alliance and apprentice fostering involves sending children to live with non-relatives such as friends as a sign of social, economic, and political alliance. As such, fostering serves to strengthen family bonds and as a means of increasing a child's opportunities in education and trade training.²⁰⁹ Wealthier urban families enabled upward mobility of children of their rural kin by "transferring" opportunities such as educational support.³⁵ Finally, domestic fostering involves the sending out of children to provide services and household tasks in certain homes. For example, girls could be sent to live with experienced women to learn domestic roles.

Southern Africa has the highest rates of fosterage with 14, 15, 25, and 30 percent of children in Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, and Namibia respectively in fosterage. Fosterage rates in Eastern and Western Africa ranged from 9-18 percent.²⁰⁹ The higher rates in Southern Africa are primarily driven by greater rates of male out-migration into the relatively highly industrialized South Africa and AIDS-related mortality. Generally, boys are less likely than girls to be involved in fosterage and the odds increase with the child's age. Despite fosterage's prominence, prolonged economic downturns across the continent have weakened fosterage networks.

Cohabitation is generally practiced in Sub-Saharan Africa, though there are clear regional differences. The following data draws from Demographic Health Survey (DHS) collected in 29 countries between 1994 and 2001. In understanding DHS data findings on cohabitation, it is important to note the limitation of having a common definition of cohabitation given the diversity in conceptualization and consummation of marriage across Sub-Saharan Africa. This diversity directly impacts responses to questions about living together, cohabiting, and the point at which marriage was consummated.^{149,216} Within some communities, the marriage process can involve one or all of; an exchange of

bridewealth, a religious ceremony or rite, and a civil ceremony. With these multiple processes, there are variations of when a husband and wife begin living together and having children, hence it is possible for a couple living together and having children after exchanging bridewealth to consider themselves not married until they have completed a civil ceremony.

The DHS data show cohabitation rates ranging from less than 1 percent to 80 percent of women aged 15-49 years in unions. The average cohabitation rate was 10 percent. Additionally, the proportion of cohabiting unions as a percentage of all women aged 15-49 are significantly greater than 10 percent in Southern Africa and parts of Central Africa. Eastern and West Africa have rates significantly lower than 10 percent.²²¹ Nevertheless, cohabitation is increasingly common in Africa, especially in urban areas among younger adults. In Southern Africa, this trend has been partially explained by increasing educational attainment among women. Migrant men often leave behind women who ultimately attain higher levels of education. In turn these educated women are less willing to get married to less educated, migrant men.^{35,220,221} Educated women are also less willing to accept the subordination of wives to husbands in traditional marriages.²¹⁶

The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic has and continues to play a significant role in shaping the African family. By the end of 2007, an estimated 22 million people were living with HIV/AIDS in Africa- 20 million being adults aged 15 or older.²⁹¹ Over 1.5 million adults and children died from AIDS in 2007. It is estimated that the average life expectancy in Sub-Saharan Africa would be 62 years old in the absence of HIV/AIDS instead of the present 47 years.¹⁰⁶ Sub-Saharan Africa is also the only region where more women are HIV-positive than men – in some countries, girls aged 15-19 are five to six times more likely to be infected than their male counterparts.³⁵

AIDS has orphaned over 11 million children as of 2007. Eke notes that high infection rates among the economically productive adult group has also resulted in a shifting in the traditional role of grandparents as they are increasingly looked upon to care for orphaned children. Additionally, these grandparents are increasingly denied their traditional right and expectation of care from their children as they age. It is also not uncommon for dying adults to be cared for by their children.³⁵ Despite high adult infection and mortality rates, the incidence of child-headed households is low. In a survey of 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of child-headed households is less than 1 percent.²⁹³ Even in a country like Zimbabwe, which has high HIV/AIDS prevalence and over one million orphans aged 0-17 years old, there are only 4 child-headed households per thousand.²⁹³

Marriage and Divorce:

DHS surveys conducted between 1994 and 2001 show that marriage remains the social norm in Africa.^{221,281} In 40 countries, the percentage of single men and women seldom exceed 4 percent and 2 percent respectively. However, Southern Africa has a proportion of never married women at age 45 of 14 percent.²⁸¹ Furthermore, there is a trend in

African capital cities towards extended single life which could ultimately lead to increases in never married rates.²⁸¹

In understanding the prevalence of marriage across the continent, it is important to note the role that divorce and remarriage play and the difficulties in measuring them. DHS surveys completed in the 1990s to the early 2000s do not measure marital history of both spouses comprehensively thus making it difficult to assess the frequency and timing of divorce or remarriage.²⁸¹ In the few studies where data are available, divorce tends to be followed quickly by marriage.¹⁷² In West Africa, these remarriage rates are highest at 45-53 percent of all dissolved unions, while they are 29-34 percent in East Africa.²⁸¹ Tabutin and Schoumaker (2004) suggest that surveys that report a snapshot of proportions of widowed or divorced people do not provide reliable indicators due to rapid remarriages. Studies have documented divorce rates of women's first marriage of 35, 38, and 29 percent, in Ghana, Togo, and Mauritania respectively among women who have been married 30 years or more.

The median age at first marriage for women is generally rising across the continent from 18-19 in the early 1970s to 19-20 in the 1990s. It is important to note that DHS data used to estimate the 1990s nuptiality trends were actually surveys conducted between 1994 and 2002, with most countries surveyed once in that period. Countries in Southern Africa have higher age at first marriage at an average of 28 years old. Among men, the age at first marriage has also risen, though less rapidly than women, to about 25-26 across the continent and 31 in Southern Africa.^{35,144,281}

Fertility:

Fertility rates in Africa's urban areas began to decline in the 1970s and in the 1980s for most of the rural areas.³⁵ These declines were also shown to be greatest in urban areas. Overall, total fertility rates from 1960-1964 ranged from 6-8 children per woman. Based on data collected from 2000-2004, births per woman have declined ranging from 2.6-8 children per woman among countries. While fertility rates have declined significantly across Southern and Eastern Africa, some countries in Central and Western Africa still have fertility rates of about 7 children per woman. Furthermore, fertility rates in the 2000s are generally higher in Central and Western Africa with no country recording rates lower than 4 children per woman whereas several countries in Eastern and Southern Africa have fertility rates lower than 4 children per woman.²⁸¹

While the impact of HIV/AIDS on mortality and morbidity are significant and well documented, the impacts of HIV/AIDS on fertility are inconclusive, partially due to a dearth of microdata on HIV/AIDS rates. Microdata enable the separation of physiological and behavioral responses to HIV/AIDS by distinguishing *own* HIV/AIDS infection and community prevalence rates.¹⁶⁹ The majority opinion is that fertility decline has been accelerated by HIV because seropositive women are less fecund and more likely to contracept, for example Terceira et al.'s findings,²⁸² but that is on the assumption that the epidemic has no effect on the fertility behavior of the uninfected. Using DHS microdata recently available in 2008, Juhn et al. find evidence that infected

women are approximately 20 percent less likely to give birth in the previous year compared to non-infected women. Contrary to earlier studies by Young^{323,324} and Juhn et al.¹⁶⁹ find that community-level infection rates have no significant impacts on fertility of non-infected women. However, when Juhn et al. look at the results country by country, they conclude that absent large behavioral responses from non-infected women, the effects of HIV on total fertility rates is very small.

In its revision of global population projections in 2000, the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat noted that despite increased negative impacts of HIV/AIDS on morbidity, mortality and population loss (UN population projections), the populations of the 9 most affected countries in Africa are expected to be larger by 2050 due to high fertility rates.

The median age at first birth in Sub-Saharan Africa is, based on DHS surveys conducted between 1994 and 2001, is 19.7 years old. This median age at first birth ranges from 18.9 in Central Africa to 20.9 in Southern Africa. The proportion of girls aged 15-19 who have either had a child or are pregnant is 25 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁸¹ Data also show age at first births have been rising modestly across Africa along with the rise in age at first marriage.^{35,144}

Fertility levels are associated with rural/urban living. Overall, families in urban areas have an average of 3-4 children while those in rural areas have 5-6 children. This difference is partially driven by the higher education levels of women in urban areas.²⁸¹

Non-marital childbearing is primarily discussed in the literature as a consequence of migration. Migration primarily involves young men migrating to urban areas in search of employment, though migration of females to urban areas is increasing.^{3,130} Africa's population is increasingly becoming urbanized with an average of 34 percent living in urban areas in 2000 and a projected 54 percent by 2030.²⁸¹ This migration tends to encourage males having wives in rural areas and additional wives or sexual partners in urban areas. It is especially prevalent in South Africa due to its history of apartheid and the resultant high rates of migration. Furthermore, the contexts in which multiple partner fertilities are discussed are in the contexts of polygyny or fathers having multiple non-marital births due to their migratory patterns between rural and urban areas.³⁵

Family Economics

In conceptualizing poverty, household assets or resources have been deemed highly appropriate in assessing a family's long-run command of economic resources, consumption, and overall economic well-being.^{119,207,256} Indices of household assets acknowledge the difficulty in collecting data on household income in a developing world context as well as avoiding the seasonality of income in most African households. Sources of income can change from year to year and season to season.²⁰⁷ Among the assets/ lack of assets commonly assessed in estimating poverty rates are the physical quality of the house (building materials, source of light, nature of sanitation,), reports of

ownership of transportation (car, motorcycle, bike, animal), and household durables.
114,222

Female headed households face challenges in access to assets, partially due to inheritance and or marriage customs.^{173,207,311} However there is great regional variation in female access to assets. In Western Africa, where polygyny and matrilineal family structure is more prevalent, women are more likely to own/take charge of assets like land.¹⁷²

While assessing the impacts of poverty on families, it is also important to make a distinction between rural and urban living.²⁰⁷ Rural areas are likely to experience higher poverty rates due to uneven access to amenities, low education, and fewer economic opportunities.¹¹⁹ Rural economies are still largely agricultural.¹³⁰ Indeed as societies have shifted from traditional subsistence into wage-earning economies, there has been an increase in migration from rural areas to urban areas.^{3,130} Furthermore, urbanization has led to a shift in traditional gender roles as households have become two-income wage earning households.¹¹⁰

Other indicators used by institutions such as the World Bank to assess poverty include deprivation of shelter, food, and water.¹⁷³ A Child Well Being Index has also been constructed comprising of under-5 mortality, gross primary and secondary enrollment, and per capita GDP. The World Bank also measures poverty/household income by counting those percentages of those living on a \$1 or less.

In trying to understand how poverty affects families, it is important to consider factors that affect child nutritional status Africa. Malnutrition is the leading cause of child mortality in Africa.¹¹⁹ Another trend to consider though difficult to measure is the rate of child homelessness. While homelessness is an issue on the continent, specifically in urban areas, most of the research focuses on homeless children, “street kids”.¹⁷³ Some studies have concluded that children’s homelessness is on the rise but child-headed households have not increased as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Others have concluded that children’s homelessness is aggravated by increased stress on fosterage networks and at issue is whether these networks can continue to absorb orphans. Even then, these studies are highly localized due to complexities associated with assessing homelessness.

Parental education in Africa is generally low with data banks reflecting high adult illiteracy rates of 40 percent of the adult population.²⁸¹ The highest adult literacy rates are found in Southern Africa (81 percent), followed by Eastern and Central Africa (64-68 percent), and West Africa (45 percent).²⁸¹ Women’s education levels have been associated with higher child labor rates, lower age at first birth and lower age at first marriage.^{144,173,180,309}

Traditionally, in some societies, especially those in which polygyny is found, women have been in charge of production. As economies and households have gradually shifted to two-income wage earning households coupled with increasing urbanization, men’s roles as family breadwinners have also shifted. Women have increasingly participated in

the labor force or engaged in economic activities geared towards supplementing the household's well being.^{35,110} Among the major increases in female labor participation in Ghana between 1988 and 1998 were concentrated in home-based work and other work compatible with child care.⁹⁵

Family Process

There is limited literature for family process indicators. An area gaining increased exposure and study is the role of fathers in their children's lives. Fathering has been traditionally a social activity undertaken by the community where responsibility for raising children was shared between male adults in the extended family and community.²⁵³ Changing family structure and migration leading to a shift from extended families to nuclear families may be playing a role in the increase in interest on fatherhood.²⁵⁶ However, extended families still plays a critical role.

Marital quality is not regularly assessed across Africa though domestic violence has often been identified as an issue to be addressed in households.²⁷⁹ Domestic violence may be more prevalent in South Africa where it has been studied extensively, though it could be just better documented there.

Some researchers in South Africa have studied leisure and family routines by observing household and family activities. They have found leisure to be an activity primarily inside the household.²⁵⁶

Family Culture

The ability to bear children continues to be an important social marker of the value of women in most communities.⁶² Inability to bear children presents a challenge to women seeking marriage and is also a cause for divorce.²⁸¹ The overwhelming importance of children in adult life in turn affects the contexts in which children are being raised. For instance, willingness to bear children serves as a marker of relationship quality and impedes protective behavior against HIV/AIDS even for the unmarried.²⁷²

Middle East

In this section on the Middle East, three regions are included. First is the Persian Gulf, composed of Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.¹⁰⁷ The second region, which is distinguished from the Gulf Countries, is made up of other mostly Arab Middle East countries: Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.²⁷ We include a third region, North Africa, with the Middle East, because of its cultural similarity. This region includes Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.²³⁵

Family Structure

The traditional patriarchal and hierarchical model still heavily influences the structure of most Middle Eastern families.^{27,107,235} However, there is a growing trend toward more nuclear family households as opposed to the traditional extended family model. The trend is stronger in urban households than in rural ones,²⁷ although El-Haddad notes that in the Gulf, the practice of living in extended families remained relatively high (for example, 31% of households in Riyadh in the mid-1990s) in the face of rapid urbanization.¹⁰⁷ In North Africa, 20% of households were extended families in 1995.²³⁵

Across the Middle East, even when nuclear families live in a separate household, they still tend to be heavily influenced by their kinship ties. This is true of union formation, as well. Most marriages are still seen as the union of two families rather than two individuals, underpinning the continuing prevalence of marriages arranged by the family and/or tribe.^{107,235}

Marriage rates are very high in the Middle East, especially since many Muslims believe it is their duty to marry according to the Qur'an.²³⁵ In some countries such as Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, less than five percent of women 35-39 years old had never been married when surveyed in the mid- to late-'90s (or 2003 in the case of Egypt).²⁵¹ Many other countries had rates of around ten percent during that time, with a few substantially higher, most notably Lebanon at 21 percent.²⁵¹

The average age at marriage has increased across the board: from 18-21 for women in most countries in the late 1970s to 22-25 in the mid-1990s.²⁶⁰ There has also been a decline in the age difference between spouses.²³⁵ Later marriages coincide with the recent emergence of households in which single young men and women live alone.²³⁵

The trend of later marriages is due to greater average years of schooling,^{235,251} but it is also due to the expectation that a man be able to bear the costs of a wedding and support a family (now with less help from his extended family) before marrying.^{27,107}

The vast majority of marriages involve only one husband and wife. Polygyny is prohibited in Tunisia, and in other North African countries two to five percent of marriages may be polygynous.²³⁵ Polygyny was not mentioned in El-Haddad's¹⁰⁷ report on families in the Gulf countries nor in Badran's²⁷ report on Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria.

Divorce is still extremely rare in most Middle Eastern countries. One reason is that while divorces are relatively easy for men to obtain, women face financial, legal, and social obstacles to obtaining a divorce against the will of their husbands.^{27,107,235}

When women divorce or become widows, it is much more commonplace for them to remain unmarried and head their own households than in the past, although not as common as in most other parts of the world. Female-headed households as a percentage of all households ranged between 5% in Kuwait to 17% in Morocco in 1999.³¹⁴ These households are more common in urban areas^{27,235} and among women older than 50.²³⁵ They tend to have lower income and assets than households headed by men,²⁷ and on

average only 36% of the income for their households come from the woman's earnings, the rest usually coming from relatives.³¹⁴

Fertility has declined across the Middle East, although there is a wide variation in fertility rates between countries. While in 1960 the rate for the entire region was about seven children, by 2006 it had fallen to about three.²⁶⁰ Still, fertility rates are greater than five in some countries such as Oman, Saudi Arabia,¹⁰⁷ Lebanon,²⁷ and Sudan.²³⁵

More years of schooling among women is the main reason for the decline in fertility.^{27,235,260} More educated women have fewer children because they tend to marry later, have better access to contraceptives, have lower child mortality, and have better employment opportunities, thus making them rely less on their children to support them financially in their old age.²⁷ Cultural factors also play a part, however; Nosseir points out that rates are lower in North African countries closer to the Mediterranean, where they may be influenced by Europe through travel and migrant work, than those farther away.²³⁵ Rates are also lower in urban settings and the middle and upper-income groups.

Family Economics

Poverty afflicts many Middle Eastern families. The average poverty rate^{vi} among most of the Arab population was virtually unchanged between 1990 and 2000, at about 16-17%, although poverty rates in some countries were much higher.²⁹⁸ Rates of food deprivation were similarly stagnant at about 10% in both 1990-1992 and 2000-2002. According to a United Nations report, the region is unlikely to meet its Millennium Development Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.²⁹⁸ Many poor families send their children to work to bring in more income: for example, an estimated two million children ages 5-14 were working in Egypt in 2003.²⁷ Prevalent child labor may be partially responsible for keeping 20% of eligible children from attending primary school.²⁹⁸

Unemployment is a serious hindrance to economic development in the region. According to the United Nations report, "At 21 per cent, the unemployment rate among Arab youth in 2004 was more than double that of adults. Those levels have remained high throughout the Arab region since 1991."²⁹⁸

While still below the rates in other regions of the world,³¹⁴ women's employment is on the rise, buoyed by lower fertility rates and increased access to education.^{27,107,235,314} Between 1970 and 2000, the female economic activity rate (including full-time and part-time jobs) rose 5 percent on average among the countries of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria; and among women of childbearing age the increase was greater, from 19 percent to 28 percent.²⁷ Women in the 25-44 year-old age group in the Gulf had a much higher participation rate of 46% in 2000.¹⁰⁷ Rates were substantially lower in certain countries in the latter two regions as well as in many of the North African

^{vi} Countries set their own benchmarks for poverty, the United Nations considers these measures more accurate than international poverty measures. For more information, see MDG country reports, available at: www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports.html

countries.²³⁵ Across the region, unemployment is about 20 percent higher for women than men.³¹⁴

Conferences in the 1990s that focused on the well-being of Middle Eastern populations called for better family support systems and policies, especially to accommodate working women. These included flexible working hours, subsidized child care, and parental leave.²⁷ In many countries, employers have policies of paying maternity benefits and child care benefits for their female employees, but in practice these employers may be more reluctant to hire women they deem likely to take advantage of these benefits and may encourage women to quit upon marriage.³¹⁴ Private child care companies are rare—extended family members still provide child care support for many working women.³¹⁴

Family Process and Culture

There is limited literature on family process and culture in the Middle East, but authors do write about some general characteristics. Nuclear families have a strong tradition of the father as the provider and the mother as caretaker of the children and house.²³⁵ These roles have changed somewhat due to greater female education and employment and concurrent changes in attitudes toward family roles. Increasingly, men seek out working women to marry²³⁵ and profess a desire for their wives to work.^{107,235} Women who work receive more help from their husbands around the house²³⁵ and share more in decision making.^{107,235} It is also more common for men to migrate for work, thus leaving their wife responsible for household decisions in their absence.²³⁵

These factors, as well as the decline in age difference between spouses,²³⁵ have led to more equal partnerships. Urban families “are increasingly moving towards egalitarian relations among members,” although this is less true in rural areas.²³⁵ Overall, women are still inferior in status, but researchers disagree to what extent.²³⁵ El-Haddad cautions that in the Gulf, “although education gives women the chance to leave the house and work, it does not give them the right of self-determination.”¹⁰⁷ Some parents still give women’s education low priority, requiring their daughters to drop out of school to care for younger siblings.²³⁵ However, overall primary and secondary participation rates among boys and girls in the Middle East are nearing parity.³¹⁴

There is a special trend particular to the Gulf in which domestic servants and babysitters take over the functions in many families that used to be the domain of the parents. El-Haddad argues that parents in these families may not be spending sufficient time and may not be giving the proper care to raising their children.¹⁰⁷

Domestic violence is still prevalent in the Middle East. Country-level data are not widely available, but one survey found that one-third of Egyptian women who had ever been married had been beaten by their husbands.^{108 as cited in 135} The same survey found that most women who had ever been married agreed that “husbands are justified in beating their wives at least sometimes.” Lower, but still large majorities of the most educated women (65%) and employed women (69%) agreed.^{108 as cited in 135} Employment, but not education, was found to make it more likely that a woman would file a claim with the

police after a domestic assault in a study in Tunisia, indicating that perhaps the woman's financial independence was the determinant in that study.^{182 as cited in 135}

Latin America

The region of Latin America has many distinguishing trends, although it is important to note both intra- and inter-country variation for many indicators. Latin America has experienced what researchers call the “first demographic transition,” characterized by higher life expectancy and lower fertility rates. Also, the proportion of women who work outside the home has increased considerably in recent years.

These changes are occurring in the context of some persistent traditions. Most significant among these traditions are strong ties with extended family, high rates of union formation, and prevalent consensual unions in lieu of marriage, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean.

Family Structure

Fertility rates have declined dramatically in Latin America. While most Latin American countries had fertility rates over six in the early 1950s,^{104 as cited in 126} by the early 1980s the regional rate was 3.94, and in 2005-2007 it was estimated at 2.43.¹⁰⁵ Between the early 1980s and the 2005-2007 period, infant mortality fell from 57.5 to 24.2 per 1,000 births.¹⁰⁵ Higher education rates among women are partially responsible for these lower fertility rates, both because these women tend to choose to have fewer children and because they tend to marry later.^{148,162,276}

“Marriage among women in Latin America occurs early in life and is nearly universal,” write Fussell and Palloni.¹²⁶ They cite the US Census Bureau's International Database showing that in 19 Latin American countries in 2000, most women married at age 20-24, and only 5% to 15% of women ages 45-49 were single. Many of the partnerships are not marriages, though—in five countries in Central America and the Caribbean, consensual unions are more prevalent than official marriages, while such unions are much less common in the Southern Cone of South America.^{93,254,302 as cited in 67} In the mid-1990s, the highest proportion of consensual marriages occurred in the Dominican Republic, where they made up 62% of all partnerships, versus the low end in Chile of 12 per cent.^{93,254,302 as cited in 67}

Castro Martín finds that countries with a high prevalence of informal unions tend to have relatively early union formation, low economic development and a large proportion of citizens of indigenous or African descent, while cautioning that causation has not been established and that several countries are outliers.⁶⁷ Many authors note that historical and cultural factors can help explain why consensual unions are particularly common in Central America and the Caribbean.^{21,67,126,128,276} In the Caribbean, visiting unions in which the man usually comes on a regular basis to the woman's home for purposes of

sexual intercourse, childrearing and arranging for economic support or companionship are also common, although mostly among the low-income populations.⁴¹

Garcia and Rojas write that within countries consensual unions are more common among the “more disadvantaged social sectors” in which subordination of women is more prevalent, levels of schooling are lower, and people tend to live in rural or “marginalized urban settings.” Traditionally, cohabitation among members of the middle and upper classes has been looked down upon in Latin America, and they report that “in only a few Latin American countries, the most developed, is cohabitation among all social classes becoming commonplace and acceptable,” as it is in most of North America and Europe.¹²⁸

Consensual unions as opposed to marriages in Latin America are associated with negative child outcomes such as higher infant and child mortality rates and poorer child nutrition. They may also be associated with lower investment in children, limited kinship networks, and limited property and inheritance for children than formal marriages (see⁶⁷).

Those wishing to understand the full picture of Latin American households must look beyond the simple model of a biological nuclear family. Complex units, containing extended kin or unrelated adults, constituted 20 to 34% of households in the 1990s.¹²⁸ Also, women-headed households increased greatly in recent years to their current share of about one-quarter to one-third of all Latin American households,²¹ due in part to increases in divorce, father absenteeism¹⁷⁸, and increases in single-person households,²¹ including elderly women who are living longer. Several researchers argue that reconstituted families are more common than in the past, although census data does not usually distinguish between original and reconstituted families. Thus, it can be difficult to determine rates of multiple partner fertility.

The Caribbean deserves special mention because of the much greater degree of complexity among Caribbean families. In both Trinidad and Jamaica, for example, the smallest proportion of children live in single-parent households, and the highest proportion belong to extended family households.⁴⁸ Caribbean family structures are fluid and open, without much distinction along the lines of the nuclear household. The “open” structure of the Caribbean family system results in children living in a variety of families—with one parent, in cohabiting unions, in extended families, with non-biological siblings, with or without biological siblings and with non-related caregivers.^{138,258} Changes in household composition may take place for a week, month, year or longer. Children may even be fostered out for reasons such as a lack of resources in the family of origin, to ensure educational attainment and schooling or to strengthen family ties among family members.²⁵⁸ Often the child’s birth mother provides financially and carries on a strong relationship with the child, but in some cases the child may actually be completely cared for within the household of his foster parents.^{41,258}

Family Economics

Many differences among family indicators and child outcomes in Latin America are due in large part to prevalent economic inequality and persistent poverty. The United Nation's Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) estimates that, as of 2006, 37% of Latin Americans were living in poverty, and 13% were living in extreme poverty.¹⁰³ ECLAC defines extreme poverty as an income level too low to purchase sufficient food for members of the household, while poverty is a multiple of the extreme poverty line that takes into account the cost of basic goods.

Parental education is one of the most important socio-economic status indicators, so much so that Aldaz-Caroll and Moran define a poor family as one in which the parents did not finish primary school. In a quantitative analysis, they find that children from poor Latin American families tend to have lower educational achievement, and that being poor is associated with a number of other factors that also lead to lower educational achievement. These factors include: less educated parents, a crowded home (especially more than three siblings), family not headed by two parents, single mother, domestic violence, mother is an adolescent, family migrates often, parents are less dedicated to their children's studies, parents are less supportive of their children, and parents bring a low level of cultural capital.⁶

Parental education also directly influences family structure. Heaton, Forste, and Ottostrom find that "Latin American women with secondary levels of schooling are significantly less likely to experience early marriage or parenthood relative to those with no schooling."¹⁴⁸ St. Bernard notes that women with higher educational achievement have lower fertility rates.²⁷⁶

The other main socio-economic indicator is parental employment, and the most noticeable trend in Latin America has been growing maternal employment among all income levels. Female labor force participation rates rose from 46% in 1996 to 52% in 2006, according to the International Labor Organization.¹⁵⁸ In fact, the biggest increase in entrants occurred among women of prime childbearing age.²¹ Fussell and Palloni write that "[Women's work is] key, as has been illustrated by the growth of literature on household survival strategies during the 1980s and 1990s, when the region experienced widespread economic crisis and restructuring."¹²⁶

The increase in women's employment has not been matched by an increase in formal child care or government family support. Rather, child care is frequently provided by extended kin.¹²⁸ Extended kin may also help with household chores or contribute to housing costs among the poor.^{128,162} However, sometimes extended kin can be more of a burden than a help: "At present, one in every four Latin American households contains at least one older adult (ECLAC 2000); the increase in the number of older adults implies additional care-giving, performed by women in their homes."²¹ In the Caribbean, Lloyd and Desai find that the role of the extended family in child support is not as extensive as in other regions, and in some countries in that region, children in extended family households fare less well.¹⁹² The consequences of weaker conjugal bonds in extended family households for children's welfare are therefore more apparent in this region.⁴⁸

Family Culture and Family Process

There is not an extensive literature on family process and culture in Latin America, although at the end of the section we include information from studies in the Caribbean, and across the region there has been relatively more focus on gender roles. Arriagada writes that, “Participation in public life [labor, social and political participation] is giving rise to new perceptions of women's roles and affords them greater autonomy with respect to their families.” However, “A large proportion of women still have to obtain permission to undertake paid work, join associations or visit friends and family, and there are still areas of exclusive male decision-making, such as goods purchase and where to live.”²¹

Preliminary analysis of statistics from the World Values Survey point to the same tensions as women enter the workforce: a large majority of respondents from eleven Latin American countries^{vii} agreed that “a husband and wife should both contribute to income.”³¹⁵ However, more than half also concurred that “if a woman earns more than her husband, it is almost certain to cause problems.” Over half agreed that “a woman needs children to be fulfilled,” although with much variation between countries.³¹⁵ About two-thirds of respondents in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico agreed that “A job is alright, but what most women want is a home and children.”³¹⁵ While more than three-quarters of respondents from those four countries responded that sharing household chores was “very” or “rather” important for a successful marriage³¹⁵, Arriagada finds that women are still responsible for the majority of household chores.²¹

Women and children also continue to suffer from high rates of domestic violence.²¹ The UNICEF Opinion Poll found that 26% of children surveyed in Latin America complained of high levels of aggressive behavior at home, including shouting or beatings.²⁹⁶ However, 74% reported having a “good or excellent” relationship with their father (38% excellent and 36% good), although that figure was 91% for mothers (51% excellent and 40% good).²⁹⁶ Only 2% reported having a “bad” relationship with their fathers, but many more reported not having a father (15%) than not having a mother (2%).²⁹⁶

In the Caribbean, authoritarian parenting is the most dominant parenting style.²⁷¹ In some contexts such as Jamaica, for example, cultural beliefs have given rise to a parenting style that has been shown to negatively affect children’s psychosocial outcomes, leading to serious concerns about the psychological adjustment of Jamaican children and adolescents.²⁷¹ Corporal punishment and other violent disciplinary measures are pervasive. Caribbean parents, and Jamaican parents in particular, as a rule do not engage in positive verbal interaction with children, neither do they offer warm and gentle guidance and direction. Heritage, history, tradition, and socialization are often cited as explanations for harsh disciplinary parenting practices in the Caribbean.²⁷¹

^{vii} The eleven countries in Latin America included in the World Values Survey and the years surveyed are Argentina (1984, 1991, 1995, 1999), Brazil (1991, 1997), Chile (1990, 1996), Colombia (1996, 1997), The Dominican Republic (1996), El Salvador (1999), Mexico (1990, 1996, 2000), Peru (1996, 2001), Puerto Rico (1995, 2001), Uruguay (1996), Venezuela (1996, 2000).

Parents in the Caribbean frequently have weak ties and commitment to their male children.²⁵⁵ Male marginality and its correlates, poverty and substance abuse, may affect the extent to which parents influence boys' lives. Parents who can do little to ensure their sons' cultural success may bias their attention and resources toward daughters. Reciprocity between mothers and daughters often forms the core of stable family relations, another cause of different treatment of sons versus daughters. Caribbean mothers appear stricter and more demanding with daughters than sons, which may indicate indifference rather than indulgence toward sons.²⁵⁰

Conclusion

Across the world, families are undergoing major changes. This report has summarized some of the most salient changes for each region. While there are unique trends in each region, there are commonalities across research on all regions in the constructs that are monitored and discussed.

The family structure constructs that are most salient in the research include measures of the number of parents that children live with, and whether they are cohabiting parents or married parents. The rise in single parent families is occurring worldwide, albeit in varying degrees and for different reasons in each region. The relationship of single-parenthood to child well-being outcomes is essential to investigate worldwide. In many regions of the world, extended families must be included in any valid effort to monitor family trends, and while this is rarely available in data sources, it may be possible to identify mother-child dyads and accompanying adults in the household. Fertility declines have also been documented in most regions of the world, as well as the increase in non-marital births with declines in marriage. Research in the U.S. has linked single-parenthood and nonmarital births, as well as cohabitation among parents as leading to less positive outcomes for children and thus it is important to investigate whether these patterns hold universally by including measures of these constructs in our investigation.

Economic constructs that we have found to be critical for families include poverty and material hardship, parental employment and education, child care, and transfers from extended family and government. Detail on part-time and full-time employment, as well as informal and formal child care is desirable as well. In some societies, children are producers, not just consumers, and an indicator of the number and age of family members who are working appears to be important for those societies.

While family processes have been found in U.S. research to be key inputs to healthy child development, the international research on this is sparse, and tends to focus more on domestic violence and sharing of household chores. There is little research on differences in parenting styles, closeness and communication, important as those appear to be to child outcomes, based on U.S. research. While interaction with extended kin and community are cited as important, research was not found universally that would suggest measures that could be monitored for this project.

Family culture was the least researched area in our review. Some research mentioned attitudes on the importance of childbearing, family size expectations, sharing household chores, attitudes towards women working and child care, and towards involvement of fathers and extended kin in raising children, family time together, and family religiosity. However, there was not a universal consensus on the important aspects of culture to monitor. We recommend choosing attitudinal questions from the World Values Survey in order to have a consistent set of issues to address, with comparable data.

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