


THE SUSTAINABLE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND



WHAT DO MARRIAGE
& FERTILITY HAVE TO
DO WITH THE

ECONOMY?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sustainable Demographic Dividend contends that the long-term fortunes of the modern economy rise and fall with the family. The report focuses on the key roles marriage and fertility play in sustaining long-term economic growth, the viability of the welfare state, the size and quality of the workforce, and the profitability of large sectors of the modern economy.

WHY DO MARRIAGE AND FERTILITY MATTER?

- 1 Children raised in intact, married families are more likely to acquire the human and social capital they need to become well-adjusted, productive workers.
- 2 Men who get and stay married work harder, work smarter, and earn more money than their unmarried peers.
- 3 Nations wishing to enjoy robust long-term economic growth and viable welfare states must maintain sustainable fertility rates of at least two children per woman.
- 4 Key sectors of the modern economy—from household products to insurance to groceries—are more likely to profit when men and women marry and have children.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

- 1 Companies should use their cultural influence to get behind positive, family-friendly advertisements and public education campaigns.
- 2 Countries should increase access to affordable health care and lifelong learning to strengthen the economic foundations of family life.
- 3 Public policy should support marriage and responsible parenthood by, for instance, extending generous tax credits to parents with children in the home.
- 4 Corporate and public policy should honor the work-family ideals of all women by giving families the flexibility to pursue their own preferences for juggling work and family.

The bottom-line message of *The Sustainable Demographic Dividend* is that business, government, civil society, and ordinary citizens would do well to strengthen the family—in part because the wealth of nations, and the performance of large sectors of the modern economy, is tied to the fortunes of the family.

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THE SUSTAINABLE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

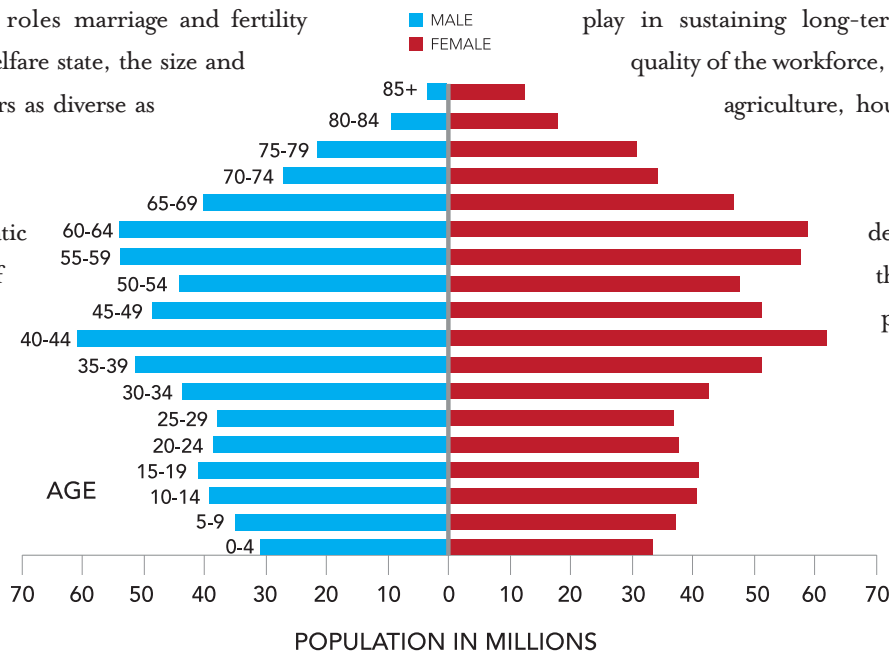
by W. Bradford Wilcox & Carlos Cavallé

The fiscal and economic crises enveloping many of the world's wealthiest nations—from Italy and Japan to the United Kingdom and the United States—have brought to light the economic challenges arising from tectonic shifts in demography in the developed world. Specifically, dependent elderly populations are surging even as productive working-age populations stagnate or shrink in much of the developed world. These demographic trends “portend ominous change in [their] economic prospects: major increases in public debt burdens, and slower economic growth,” according to political economists Nicholas Eberstadt and Hans Groth.

Also at work is another demographic trend: the declining percentage of children raised in intact, married families. This trend focuses on the key roles marriage and fertility play in sustaining long-term economic growth, quality of the workforce, and the profitability of agriculture, household products, and insurance.

It is true that dramatic declines in fertility throughout much of the world—but especially in East Asia—have produced an initial demographic dividend.” Many falling fertility have devoted more human capital to the child rearing, high levels of economic growth. Economist David Bloom argues, for instance, that more than 25 percent of the per capita GDP growth associated with the East Asian “economic miracle” of the late twentieth century can be attributed to the fact that the total fertility rate in East Asia fell from about six children per woman in 1950 to less than two today.

CHINA 2030



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

But in large swaths of the world, this demographic dividend is now becoming a demographic liability. In more than 75 countries around the globe, fertility is well below the replacement level—2.1 children per woman—needed to sustain the workforce at its current levels. As Phillip Longman and his colleagues point out in *The Empty Cradle*, on current course, countries like China and Japan are poised to see their workforces shrink by more than 20 percent between now and 2050 because of persistently low fertility, even as their elderly populations surge. The economic stagnation Japan is now experiencing, rooted in part in below-replacement fertility that started in the 1970s, should be a warning sign to China, which saw its fertility fall below replacement in the 1990s. China’s sky-high growth rates are likely to come down to earth in the next few decades as its workforce shrinks (see above).

The lesson here is that nations wishing to enjoy robust economic growth and viable welfare states over the long-term must maintain fertility rates high enough to avoid shrinking workforces and rapidly aging populations. A recent Rand report noted, for instance,

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that “India will have more favorable demographics than China” in the long-term, insofar as its workforce is predicted to grow, not shrink, over the next few decades (see below).¹ Indeed, the report suggests that in this century, India may be able to turn this demographic advantage into higher economic growth rates than even China has enjoyed.

Yet it is not just the quantity of the workforce that is essential to economic growth but also its quality. Here, a different demographic challenge confronts many nations. As this report makes clear, marriage is in retreat throughout much of the globe—especially in Europe, the Americas, and Oceania. In these regions, increases in divorce, nonmarital childbearing, and delayed or foregone marriage mean that large numbers of children and adults will spend a major portion of their lives outside of an intact, married family. Indeed, in these regions, more than one in three children are born outside of marriage.

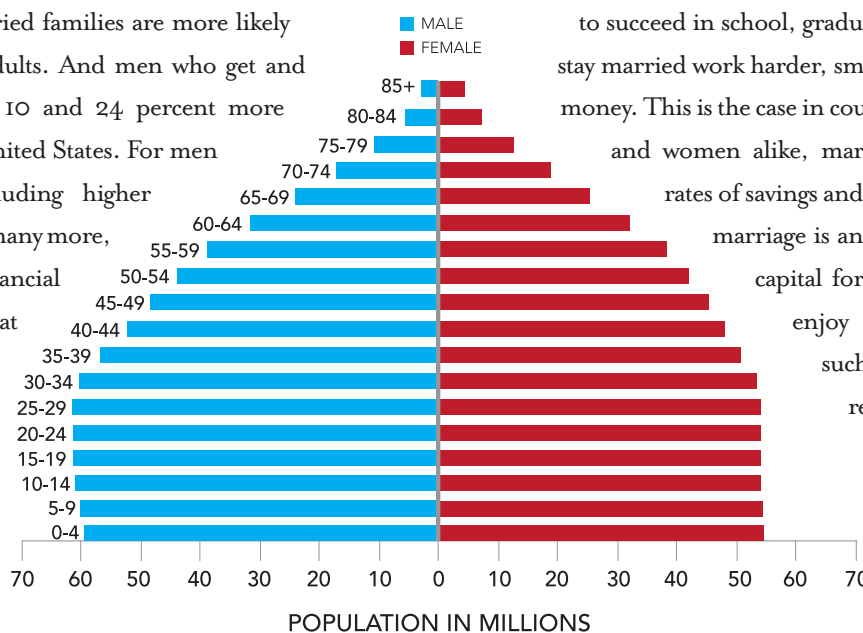
For children, marriage matters. Children reared likely to acquire the human and social capital they Those from intact, married families are more likely gainfully employed as adults. And men who get and and they earn between 10 and 24 percent more Italy, Mexico, and the United States. For men prudent behavior, including higher assets. In these ways and many more, social, human, and financial world, and countries that marriage culture—Malaysia—are likely to dividends.

Finally, particular economy are especially strength of the family. for instance, consumers

spend money on child care, groceries, health care, home maintenance, household products, insurance, and juvenile products after they marry and have children, as Kathryn Sharpe and I find in *Marriage and the Baby Carriage*. Our research suggests that large sectors of the modern economy are more likely to flourish when men and women marry and have children. So companies in these sectors—from Bayer to Nestlé to Procter & Gamble to Wal-Mart—could and should do more to use their advertising and philanthropic dollars to strengthen families the world over and so—indirectly—their future bottom line.

But it is not just particular companies that are likely to see their fortunes rise and fall with the fortunes of the family. The core message of *The Sustainable Demographic Dividend* is that the wealth of nations depends in no small part on the health of the family. ■

INDIA 2030



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

outside of an intact family are significantly less need to become well-adjusted, productive workers. to succeed in school, graduate from college, and be stay married work harder, smarter, and longer hours, money. This is the case in countries as varied as Israel, and women alike, marriage fosters financially rates of savings and greater accumulation of marriage is an important generator of capital for economies around the enjoy a comparatively strong such as China, India, and reap long-term economic

sectors of the dependent on the In the United States, are much more likely to

W. Bradford Wilcox is director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia. Carlos Cavallé is dean emeritus of the IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain and president of the Social Trends Institute in New York and Barcelona, Spain.

¹ Julie Davanzo, Harun Dogo, and Clifford Grammich, “Demographic Trends, Policy Influences, and Economic Effects in China and India Through 2025,” *RAND Working Paper WR-849* (2011): 47.

THE EMPTY CRADLE

HOW CONTEMPORARY FAMILY TRENDS UNDERMINE THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

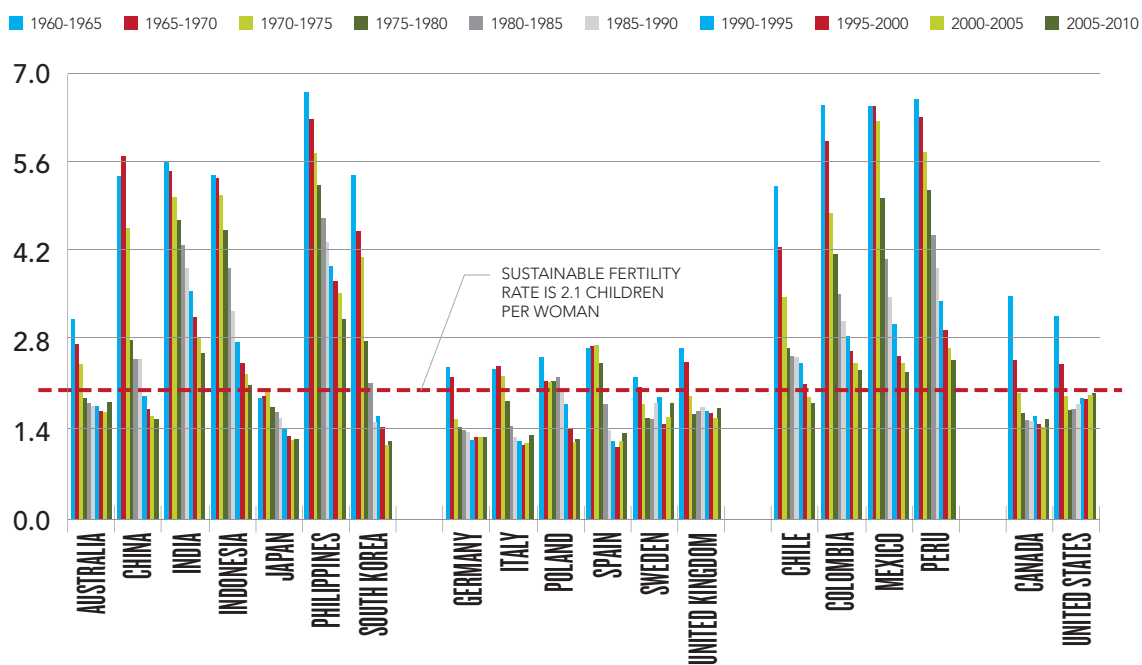


by **PHILLIP LONGMAN, PAUL CORCUERA, LAURIE DEROSE,
MARGA GONZALVO CIRAC, ANDRES SALAZAR,
CLAUDIA TARUD ARAVENA, AND ANTONIO TORRALBA**

A turning point has occurred in the life of the human race. The sustainability of humankind's oldest institution, the family—the fount of fertility, nurturance, and human capital—is now an open question. On current trends, we face a world of rapidly aging and declining populations, of few children—many of them without the benefit of siblings and a stable, two-parent home—of lonely seniors living on meager public support, of cultural and economic stagnation.

In almost every developed country, including most in Europe and East Asia and many in the Americas—from Canada to Chile—birth rates have fallen below the levels needed to avoid rapid population aging and decline (see Figure 1). The average woman in a developed country now bears just 1.66 children over her lifetime, which is about 21 percent below the level needed to sustain the population over time (2.1 children per woman).¹ Accordingly, the number of children age 0–14 is 60.6 million less in the developed world today than it was in 1965.² Primarily because of their dearth of children, developed countries face shrinking workforces even as they must meet the challenge of supporting rapidly growing elderly populations.

FIGURE 1
TOTAL FERTILITY RATE (NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER WOMAN) FOR SELECT COUNTRIES, 1960-2010



Source: United Nations Population Division.

In recent years, the phenomenon of subreplacement fertility has spread to many less developed countries. In fact, the number of lifetime births per woman shrank in a single generation from six or more to less than two in places ranging from Iran, Lebanon, and Tunisia to Chile, Cuba, Trinidad, Thailand, China, Taiwan, and South Korea.³

World population is still growing, to be sure; the United Nations projects that our numbers could increase from 7 to 10 billion over the next 90 years.⁴ But this is a different kind of growth than we have

¹ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 2011): <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

ever seen before. Until quite recently, population growth came primarily from increases in the numbers of young people.

But over the next 40 years, according to the U.N.'s latest "medium variant" projections, 53 percent of world population growth will come from increases in the numbers of people over 60, while only 7 percent will come from people under 30. Indeed, the U.N. projects that by 2025, the population of children under 5, already in decline in most developed nations, will be falling globally as well (see Figure 2).⁵ This means that world population could well start falling by the turn of the century, especially if birth rates do not break their downward trend.

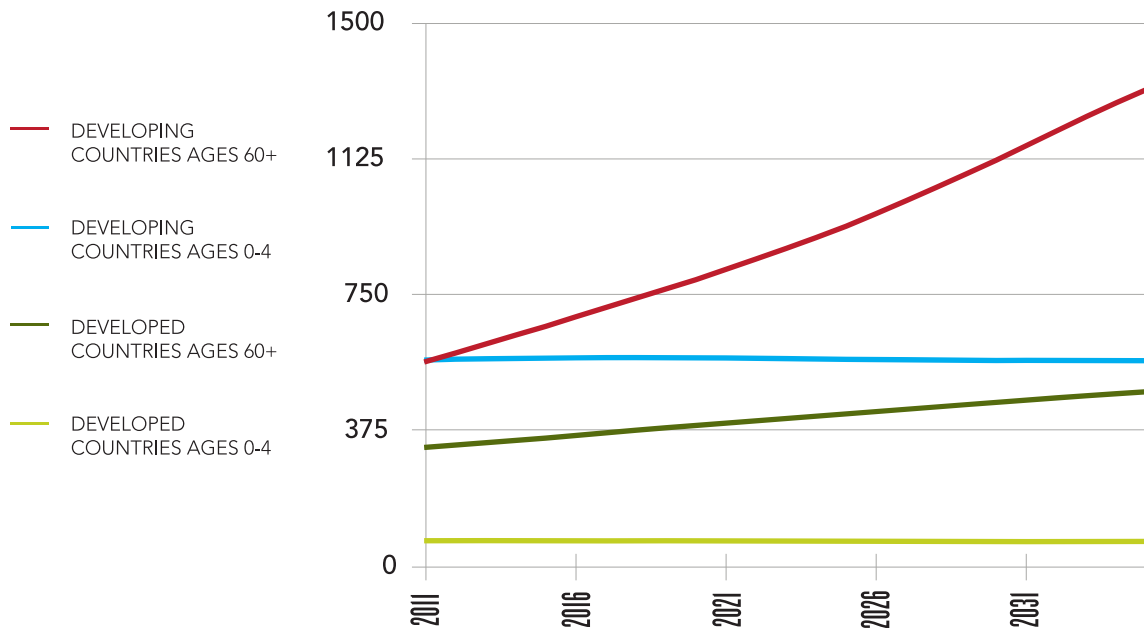


FIGURE 2
POPULATION AGES 0-4 AND 60+ (IN MILLIONS) IN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2011-2035

Source: United Nations Population Division, Medium Variant Projections, 2011.

Accompanying the global megatrend of falling birth rates is a radical change in the circumstances in which many children are raised, as country after country has seen a surge of divorce and/or out-of-wedlock births and a sharp drop in the percentage of children living with both of their married parents. In much of Europe and the Americas, from the United Kingdom to the United States, from Mexico to Sweden, out-of-wedlock births are the "new normal," with 40 percent or more of all children born without married parents (see Figure 3). Though many of these births are to cohabiting couples, families headed by cohabiting couples are significantly less stable than those headed by married couples. This means that children born outside of marriage are markedly more likely to be exposed to a revolving cast of caretakers and to spells of single parenthood, compared to children born to married couples.

Take the United States. Fully 41 percent of U.S. children are now born outside of marriage. About half of these children are born to cohabiting couples, and about half of them are born to single mothers.⁶ Both of these groups are much more likely to be exposed to instability (when a parent leaves the household, or

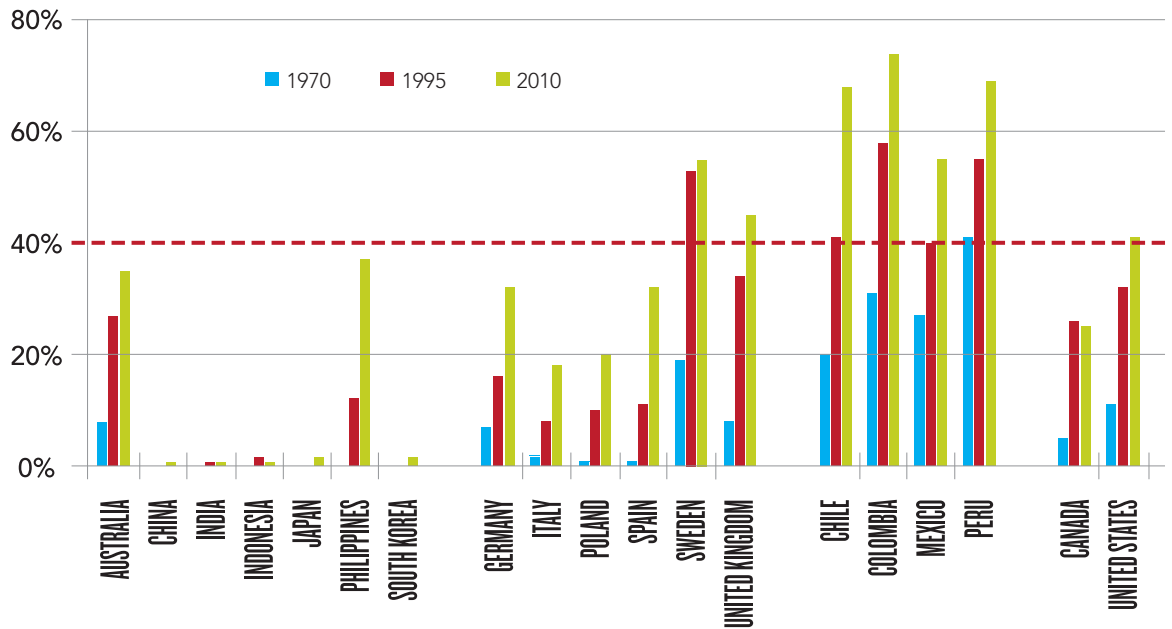
⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Sheila Kennedy and Larry Bumpass, "Cohabitation and Children's Living Arrangements: New Estimates from the United States," *Demographic Research* (March 19 (2008): 1663-1692.

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a new social parent arrives in the household—both of which are often stressful for children) and spells of single parenthood than are children born to married parents. One study of U.S. children found that 17 percent of those born to married couples, 57 percent born to single mothers, and 63 percent born to cohabiting parents experienced some type of instability in the first six years of their lives.⁷ Another study found that the percentage of children in single-parent families in the United States more than doubled from 12 percent in 1970 to 25 percent in 2009.⁸

FIGURE 3
PERCENT OF CHILDREN BORN TO AN UNMARRIED MOTHER FOR SELECT COUNTRIES, 1970-2010



Sources: www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources.

¹ Rates for Canada, Italy, India, and Indonesia are slightly older; see notes at www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources.

Or take Sweden, where 55 percent of children are born outside of marriage. The vast majority of these children are born to cohabiting couples. But even in Sweden, where cohabitation enjoys widespread acceptance and legal support, cohabiting families are less stable than married families. One recent study found that children born to cohabiting couples were 75 percent more likely than children born to married couples to see their parents break up by age 15.⁹ And the percentage of single-parent households with children in Sweden has almost doubled in the last twenty-five years, from 11 percent in 1985 to 19 percent in 2008.¹⁰

An abundant social-science literature, as well as common sense, supports the claim that children are more likely to flourish, and to become productive adults, when they are raised in stable, married-couple households. We know, for example, that children in the United States who are raised outside of an intact, married home are two to three times more likely to suffer from social and psychological problems,

⁷ Shannon E. Cavanaugh and Aletha C. Huston, "Family Instability and Children's Early Problem Behavior," *Social Forces* 85 (2006): 551-581.

⁸ W. Bradford Wilcox, *When Marriage Disappears: The New Middle America* (Charlottesville, VA: The National Marriage Project, Institute for American Values, 2010).

⁹ Sheela Kennedy and Elizabeth Thomson, "Children's Experiences of Family Disruption in Sweden: Differentials by Parent Education Over Three Decades," *Demographic Research* 23 (2010): 479-508.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011* (Washington: U.S. Census), 840.

¹¹ Paul R. Amato, "The Impact of Family Formation Change on the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Well-being of the Next Generation," *Future of Children* 15 (2005): 75-96; Camille Charles, Vincent Roscigno, and Kimberly Torres, "Racial Inequality and College Attendance: The Mediating Role of Parental Investments," *Social Science Research* 36 (2007): 329-352; Elizabeth Marquardt, "Gift or Commodity: How Ought We to Think About Children?" (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, "Whither the Child?" Barcelona, Spain, March 2010); W. Bradford Wilcox et al., *Why Marriage Matters* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2011).

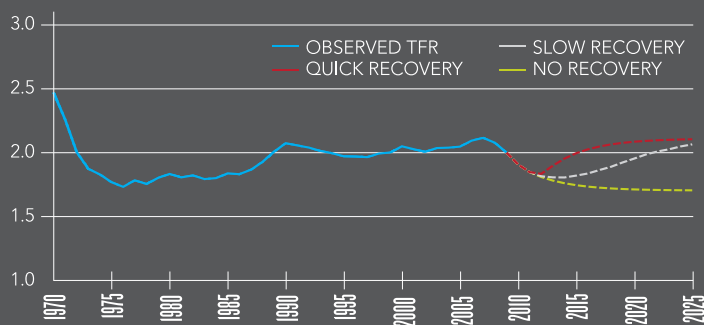
THE FUTURE OF U.S. FERTILITY

by Samuel Sturgeon

Although fertility in most developed countries has fallen well below the replacement level Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.1 children per woman, the United States is clearly an outlier. For most of the last forty years, the total fertility rate in the United States has hovered slightly below the replacement level TFR. During this time, about 25 percent of the change in the TFR from one year to the next can be attributed to changes in the economy. Because of the Great Recession's ongoing fallout, the TFR in the U.S. is expected to remain below 2.0 for the next few years. Looking forward fifteen years, **Figure A1** projects what the TFR in the United States might look like under three separate economic scenarios:¹ a quick economic recovery, a slow economic recovery, and no economic recovery.

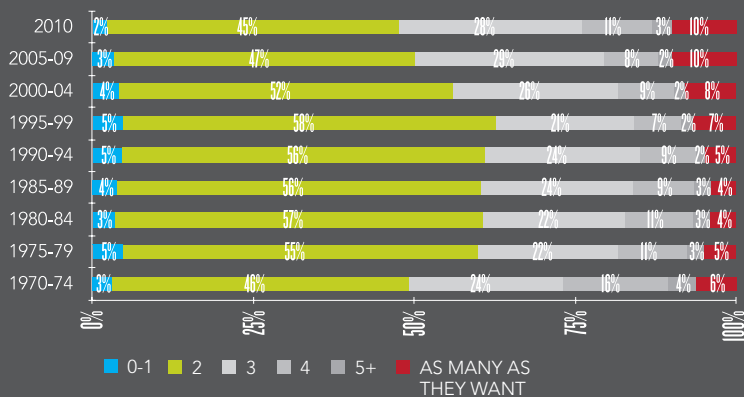
One reason that U.S. fertility has remained and is likely to remain comparatively high is that Americans continue to value relatively large families, at least by the standards of the developed world. Specifically, over the last forty years there has been very little change in what most Americans of childbearing age (18–46) consider to be the ideal family size.² Around three quarters of American adults this age believe that two or three children is the ideal. The average reported ideal family size over the last forty years has remained fairly constant, hovering around 2.5 children with a high of 2.73 in 1970–74 and a low of 2.39 in 1995–99 (see **Figure A2**). In 2010, the ideal family size was 2.66 for American adults age 18–46. These cultural trends suggest that U.S. fertility will return to replacement levels when the economy recovers and Americans feel freer to afford their fertility ideals.

FIGURE A1. TOTAL FERTILITY RATE IN THE UNITED STATES, 1970-2025



Source: National Vital Statistics Reports. Estimates by Demographic Intelligence.

FIGURE A2. IDEAL FAMILY SIZE IN AMERICA, 1970-2010



Source: General Social Survey, 1972–2010. Men and Women Ages 18–46.

¹ The three projections are based on models using the following hypothetical economic patterns: Quick recovery: The unemployment rate falls to 5.0 by 2012 and remains there through 2015. Consumer Sentiment Index rises above 100 by 2012 and remains above 100 through the end of 2025. Slow recovery: The unemployment rate decreases by .5 of a percentage point per year until 2019 when it reaches 5.0 and remains at 5.0 through 2025. Consumer Sentiment Index experiences a similar slow rise before reaching 100 in 2019. No recovery: The unemployment rate remains at 9.0 through 2025 and Consumer Sentiment Index remains in the low 70s.

² See H. B. Duvall and S. Philip Morgan, "Intended and Ideal Family Size in the United States, 1970–2002," *Population and Development Review* 31 (2005): 507–527.

such as delinquency, depression, and dropping out of high school. They are also markedly less likely to attend college and be stably employed as young adults.¹¹ Sociologist Paul Amato estimates that if the United States enjoyed the same level of family stability today as it did in 1960, the nation would have 750,000 fewer children repeating grades, 1.2 million fewer school suspensions, approximately 500,000 fewer acts of teenage delinquency, about 600,000 fewer kids receiving therapy, and approximately 70,000 fewer suicide attempts every year.¹² In Sweden, even after adjusting for confounding factors, children living in single-parent families are at least 50 percent more likely to suffer from psychological problems, to be addicted to drugs or alcohol, to attempt suicide, or to commit suicide than are children in two-parent families.¹³

And so it is not just the quantity of children that is in decline in more and more regions of the world but also the quality of their family lives, calling into question the sustainability of the human family. Sustainable families don't just reproduce themselves; they also raise the next generation with the requisite virtues and human capital to flourish as adult citizens, employees, and consumers. And families headed by intact, married couples are the ones most likely to succeed in raising the next generation.

What are the causes and consequences, especially economic, of these recent declines in fertility and marriage? What is the appropriate response of policy makers, business leaders, civil society, and individuals? These questions were addressed

¹¹ Amato, "Impact of Family Formation Change."

¹² Gunilla Ringback Weitoft, Anders Hjern, Bengt Haglund, and Mans Rosen, "Mortality, Severe Morbidity, and Injury in Children Living with Single Parents in Sweden: A Population-based Study," *Lancet* 361 (2003): 289–295.

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at the “Whither the Child?” academic conference sponsored by the Social Trends Institute in Barcelona, Spain, in 2010.

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www.socialtrendsinstitute.org/Activities/Family/Whither-the-Child.axd

This report surveys the evidence from that conference, and other relevant scholarship, in an attempt to understand the rapid demographic evolution of modern societies and to suggest options for ensuring their sustainability.

CAUSES OF FALLING FERTILITY AND MARRIAGE RATES

Urbanization is a key driver in the transformation of global demographics. Today, more than half the world population lives in urban areas, up from 29 percent in 1950.¹⁴

This trend impacts human reproductive behavior. For city dwellers, whether rich or poor, the economics of childbearing are challenging. In the not-so-distant past, when the majority of the world’s population were still small-scale farmers, most children could still play economically useful roles. They could tend to fields and farm animals, deliver messages between fields and home, and perform tasks in the home that have now been largely supplanted by the widespread consumption of store-bought food and clothing and the introduction of modern appliances. In an urban environment, however, children are no longer an economic asset to the parents but an expensive (and easily avoidable or deferrable) economic liability.¹⁵

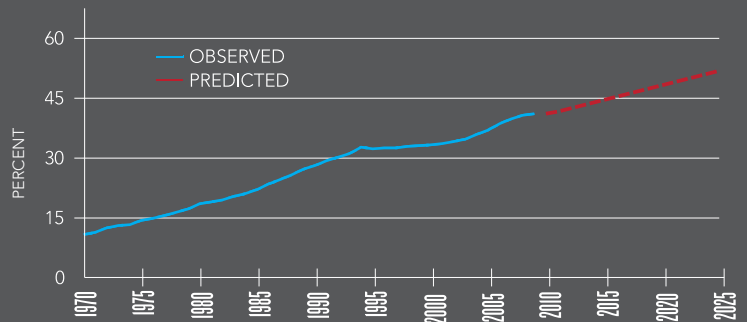
Declining real wages and increasingly insecure

THE FUTURE OF NONMARITAL CHILDBEARING IN THE U.S.

Over the course of the last forty years, nonmarital childbearing in the United States has grown in almost linear fashion. These trends are likely to continue in the near future (see Figure B1). One reason that the percent of children born to an unmarried mother is likely to rise is that the average age at first marriage is outpacing the average age at first birth (see Figure B2).³ This means that a growing percentage of women in the U.S. are marrying after, not before, they have children.

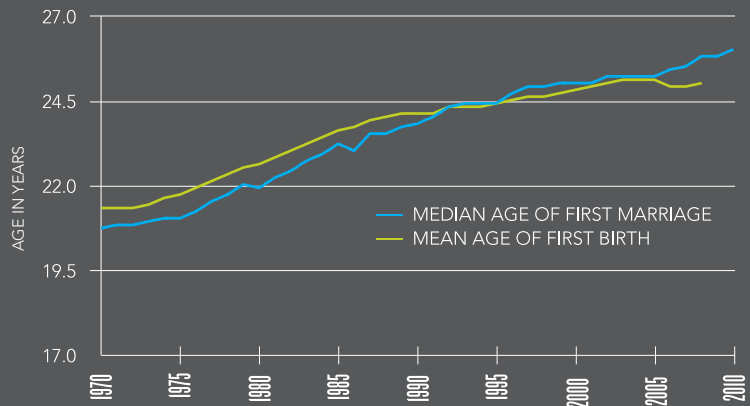
Since 1970, the average age at first marriage rose by more than five years, while the average age at first birth rose by less than four years. As a result, beginning in the early 1990s, the average age at first birth was younger than the average age at first marriage. The differential rate of increase between these two trends partially explains the rise in the percent of children born to unmarried mothers. For example, in 2008, 40.6 percent of all births were to unmarried mothers; however, the figure for first births was 48 percent.⁴ Figure B1 contains an estimate of what the percent of children born to unmarried mothers might look like through 2025 if the average age at first birth and average age at first marriage continue to increase at the same rate they have for the past forty years. According to this model, sometime around 2023 half of all children born in the United States will be born to an unmarried mother.

FIGURE B1. CHILDREN BORN TO UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1970-2025



Source: National Vital Statistics Reports. Estimates by Demographic Intelligence.

FIGURE B2. AVERAGE AGE OF FIRST MARRIAGE AND FIRST BIRTH FOR WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES, 1970-2010



Source: Current Population Survey and National Vital Statistics Reports.

¹⁴ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision* (New York: United Nations).

¹⁵ John C. Caldwell, *Theory of Fertility Decline* (New York: Academic Press, 1982).

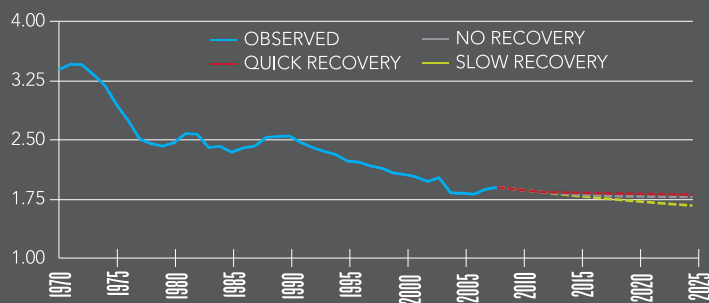
³ The U.S. Census Bureau calculates the median age at first marriage as part of the Current Population Survey. The median age at first marriage for the years 1970–2010 are taken from the following table: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/ms2.pdf>. The mean age of mother at first birth for the years 1970–2008 comes from the National Vital Statistics Reports published by the National Center for Health Statistics.

⁴ Derived by Demographic Intelligence from the National Vital Statistics System.

THE FUTURE OF CHILEAN FERTILITY

The total fertility rate (TFR) in Chile has fallen markedly over the last forty years, from 3.4 to 1.9 children per woman over this time period (see Figure C1).⁵ Part of the decline is due to increased development and urbanization, which make children more expensive.⁶ Other possible factors include declines in religious participation and the influence of the Catholic Church,⁷ increases in expressive individualism, as well as increases in women's labor force participation, and the difficulty that some Chilean women have in combining work and family.⁸ Because of these larger trends, yearly fluctuations in the economy do not appear to play as strong a role in the TFR in Chile as they do in the United States; however, economic conditions still seem to have an impact. Figure C1 projects what the TFR in Chile might look like under three separate economic recovery scenarios in light of the recent global economic downturn: quick economic recovery, slow economic recovery, and no economic recovery.⁹

FIGURE C1. TOTAL FERTILITY RATE IN CHILE, 1970-2025



Source: Rodriguez and Di Cesare, 2010. Estimates by Demographic Intelligence.

Samuel Sturgeon, Ph.D., is director of research for Demographic Intelligence, which provides U.S. fertility forecasts and demographic analysis to companies in the juvenile products, household products, and pharmaceutical industries.

job tenure have also no doubt played a big role in many young couples' conclusions that they should either remain childless or delay marrying and starting families. In a paper presented at the Social Trends Institute conference, demographers Wolfgang Lutz, Stuart Basten, and Erich Striessnig noted that over the last generation in the developed world, especially in Europe, entry into professional life after education has become more difficult. "In many European countries," they observed, "where young employees in the past enjoyed positions which were more or less permanent, today many have to jump from one short-term contract to the next. Under such conditions it becomes less attractive to establish a family and, subsequently, to avoid dedicating all of one's time and energy to pursuing a professional career."¹⁶

As women have gained more economic opportunity in advanced societies, the opportunity costs of parenthood have risen as well. Educated young women typically have no economic need to marry and would often have to give up or compromise fulfilling careers if they were to become mothers. For dual-income couples, the arrival of a child can mean the loss of half their household income.

Meanwhile, the increasing demand for education in modern, urban economies also discourages fertility. In today's advanced societies, a college degree has become for most people a prerequisite for achieving a living wage, and many people have not completed their schooling before their own or their spouse's biological fertility is already in decline. Even if a young couple

⁵ The total fertility rate for the years 1970–2008 come from Jorge Rodriguez Vignoli and Mariachiara di Cesare, "Reproducción adolescente y desigualdades en Chile: tendencias, determinantes y opciones de política," *Revista de Sociología* 23 (2010): 39–65.

⁶ John Bryant, "Theories of Fertility Decline and the Evidence from Development Indicators," *Population and Development Review* 33 (2007): 101–127.

⁷ Carla Lehman Scassi-Buffa, "Chile: ¿Un País Católico?," *Centro de Estudios Públicos: Puntos de Referencia* No. 249 (2001).

⁸ Lin Lean Lim, "Female Labour-Force Participation," in *Completing the Fertility Transition*, *Population Bulletin of the United Nations*, Special Nos. 48/49 (2009): 195–212.

⁹ The economic scenarios were modeled by using the annual unemployment rate taken from the World Bank database for the years 1981–2008. <http://data.worldbank.org/country>. The hypothetical economic patterns in the three different scenarios are similar to those used to predict the TFR in the United States in Figure A1.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Lutz, Stuart Basten, and Erich Striessnig, "The Future of Fertility" (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, "Whither the Child?" Barcelona, Spain, March 2010).

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nonetheless succeeds in starting a family, the same upward trends in the cost and duration of education will leave them scrambling to figure out how they can ever afford to endow their children with the minimum education required to succeed in 21st-century job markets.

Finally, although social-security systems around the world, as well as private pension plans, depend critically on the human capital created by parents, they paradoxically provide incentives to remain childless or to limit family size. In advanced economies, citizens no longer must have children and raise them successfully in order to secure support in old age. Instead, the elderly in developed countries have largely been able to rely on health and retirement benefits paid for by other people's children: that is, working-age adults who are currently paying taxes for public pensions.¹⁷

THE ROLE OF CULTURE

Changing values and conceptions of the good life have also played a role in driving down rates of marriage and childbearing. The initial emergence of subreplacement fertility in Scandinavia, and its subsequent spread throughout Western Europe, for example, was strongly associated with the diffusion of secular values, the decline of religious authority, and the rise of expressive individualism. Demographer Ron Lesthaeghe and his colleagues have gathered extensive data on the values revolution among the young that swept through Europe starting in the late 1960s. They looked at changing attitudes toward divorce, contraception, sex, single parenthood, and organized religion and noticed a clear geographical pattern. Attitudes once termed “counter-cultural,” and today associated with mainstream secular liberalism in Europe, first gained prominence in Scandinavia in the late 1960s. They then spread south, eventually diffusing through Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece by the later part of the 1970s and through the 1980s. And as these attitudes spread, birth and marriage rates fell almost in lockstep.¹⁸

Today there remains within the individual countries of Europe, and of the West generally, a strong and growing correlation between conservative religious values and larger-than-average family size. In France, for instance, practicing religious white women have a half-child fertility advantage over nonreligious white women and, as political scientist Eric Kaufman has pointed out, this disparity has been increasing over time.¹⁹ In Spain, women who are practicing Catholics have significantly more children than do nonpracticing Catholic women—holding income, marital status, education, and other factors constant.²⁰ Much the same story can be found throughout the globe, where the religiously observant typically have markedly higher birth rates than does the rest of the population. Our analysis of 53 countries from every region of the world, from Africa to Oceania, and from the Americas to Europe and the Middle

¹⁷ Michele Boldrin, Mariacristina De Nardi, and Larry E. Jones, “Fertility and Social Security,” NBER Working Paper No. 11146 (2005).

¹⁸ Ron Lesthaeghe, “The Unfolding Story of the Second Demographic Transition” (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, “Whither the Child?” Barcelona, Spain, March 2010).

¹⁹ Eric Kaufman, “Sacralization by Stealth? The Religious Consequences of Low Fertility in Europe” (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, “Whither the Child?” Barcelona, Spain, March 2010).

²⁰ Alicia Adsera, “Marital Fertility and Religion: Recent Changes in Spain,” IZA Discussion Paper 1399 (University of Chicago: Population Research Center, 2004).

East, indicates that men and women who attend religious services monthly or more have had about .5 more children on average than their peers who attend services less often or not at all (see Figure 4).²¹

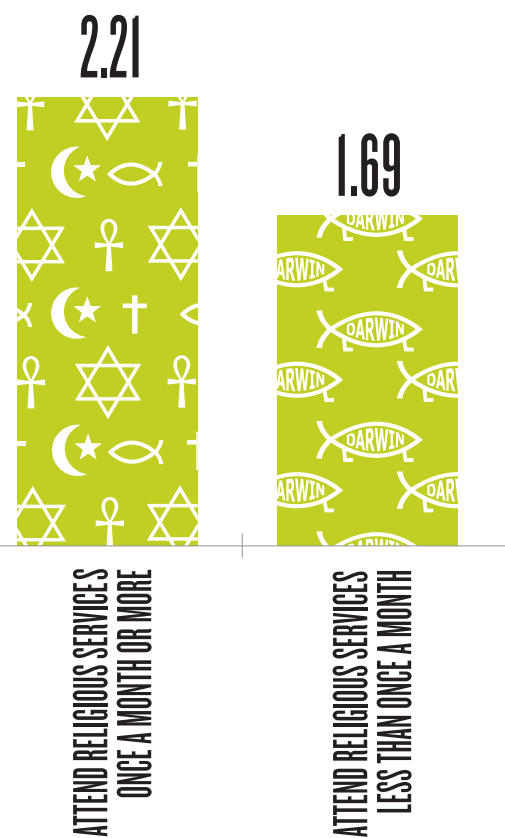
Another powerful factor appears to be the expanding influence of television and other cultural media. Even in the remotest corners of the globe, when television is introduced, birth rates soon fall. This is particularly easy to see in Brazil. There television was not introduced all at once but rather province by province, and thus it is possible to see after the fact that every place the boob tube arrived next, birth rates plummeted. Today, the number of hours a Brazilian woman spends watching domestically produced telenovelas strongly predicts how many children she will have.²² These soap operas, though rarely addressing reproductive issues directly, typically depict wealthy individuals living the high life in big cities. The men are dashing, lustful, power-hungry, and unattached. The women are litesome, manipulative, independent, and in control of their own bodies. The few characters who have young children delegate their care to nannies.

The telenovelas, in other words, reinforce a cultural message that is conveyed as well by many Hollywood films and other North American and European cultural exports: people who are wealthy, sophisticated, free, and self-fulfilled are those people who have at most one or two children and who do not let their parental roles dominate their exciting lives.

Before concluding, however, that modernity necessarily fosters sterility, one should note a still small but possibly important countertrend. In recent years, birth rates have begun to rise modestly in places that have strongly committed to gender equality and that have large shares of women in the formal labor force, such as Sweden and France.

By contrast, fertility is today lowest in nations where traditional family and religious values are still comparatively strong but on the wane, such as South Korea, Japan, Italy, and Greece. And this pattern may partly reflect differences in how well conflict over evolving gender roles has been resolved. According to cultural observers in South Korea, for example, Confucian values remain strong enough to inhibit out-of-wedlock births,

FIGURE 4 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN 53 COUNTRIES, BY RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE



Source: World Values Survey, 2005-2008.

²¹ Analysis of World Values Survey, 2005-2008; see also Alicia Adsera, "Fertility, Feminism and Faith: How are Secularism and Economic Conditions Influencing Fertility in the West?" (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, "Whither the Child?" Barcelona, Spain, March 2010).

²² Janet S. Dunn, University of Michigan, "Mass Media and Individual Reproductive Behavior in Northeastern Brazil" (paper presented at the XXIV General Population Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, August 18-24, 2001); Joseph E. Potter and Paula Miranda-Ribeiro, "Below Replacement Fertility in Brazil: Should We Have Seen it Coming?" (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, "Whither the Child?" Barcelona, Spain, March 2010).



“The number of hours a Brazilian woman spends watching domestically produced telenovelas strongly predicts how many children she will have. The telenovelas, in other words, reinforce a cultural message that is conveyed as well by many Hollywood films and other North American and European cultural exports: people who are wealthy, sophisticated, free, and self-fulfilled are those people who have at most one or two children.”

of which there were a mere 7,774 in 2007.²³ Yet birth rates are very low, and divorce is comparatively high.²⁴ The common explanation is that women still feel social pressure, if they marry, to show exceptional deference to their husbands and mothers-in-law. For the new generation of South Korean women, who now have many opportunities to support themselves without marrying, this looks like a bad bargain. Thus many remain single, get divorced, or limit their fertility.

Looking at the modestly higher fertility found in at least some countries that have large numbers of working women, some observers have proclaimed that “feminism is the new natalism” and have called for more measures to boost gender equality and state support for working women as a way to sustain population.²⁵ The premise of this argument, however, is easily overstated. Whether the pattern really applies to the world as a whole, for example, is disputed by demographers.²⁶ Moreover, the comparatively higher annual birth rates of such “feminist” countries as Sweden or France partly reflect the temporary effect of more women having their first child at later ages, as well as a surge in out-of-wedlock births and the comparatively high fertility of their immigrant populations.²⁷

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE NEW GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHICS

What is the relationship between population growth and economic growth? Does fewer people mean there is more for each to enjoy? Or that each will have to work harder?

With the benefit of hindsight, it is not hard to see the role population growth has played over time in fueling economic growth and the emergence of affluent societies. Greater numbers often meant greater economies of scale, through assembly lines and other means of mass production, and they also allowed for more specialization of labor.²⁸ More people also means a larger workforce for businesses and, crucially, more demand for the products they sell. Population growth can also be a spur to innovation, as it causes people to look for more efficient ways to grow food, for example, or to find substitutes for depleted natural resources like whale oil and firewood. The more brains are available to work on natural-resource challenges, the sooner someone will come up with the idea that provides a solution. The more general point is that people can be resources for, rather than drains on, the economy, provided that the right cultural and policy environment is in place.²⁹

So what will happen now that the great population boom of the last two centuries is waning? A first-order effect is a slowdown in the size of the global workforce. The world’s working-age population (15–64) grew by 1.3 billion, or 40 percent, between 1990 and 2010.³⁰ But this pace cannot continue, because the people who would be necessary to make that happen were quite literally never born. Due to

²³ Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs, South Korea: http://english.mw.go.kr/front_eng/index.jsp.

²⁴ See Table 1 and Table 2 in “International Family Indicators” section, below.

²⁵ Mikko Myrskylä, Hans-Peter Kohler, and Francesco C. Billari, “Advances in Development Reverse Fertility Decline,” *Nature* 460 (2009): 741–743; Leonard Schoppa, “Feminism as the New Natalism: 21st Century Prescriptions for Addressing Low Fertility,” Social Trends Institute, “Whither the Child?” Experts Meeting (March, 2010); David Willetts, “Old Europe? Demographic Change and Pension Reform,” Centre for European Reform (2003): http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/p475_pension.pdf.

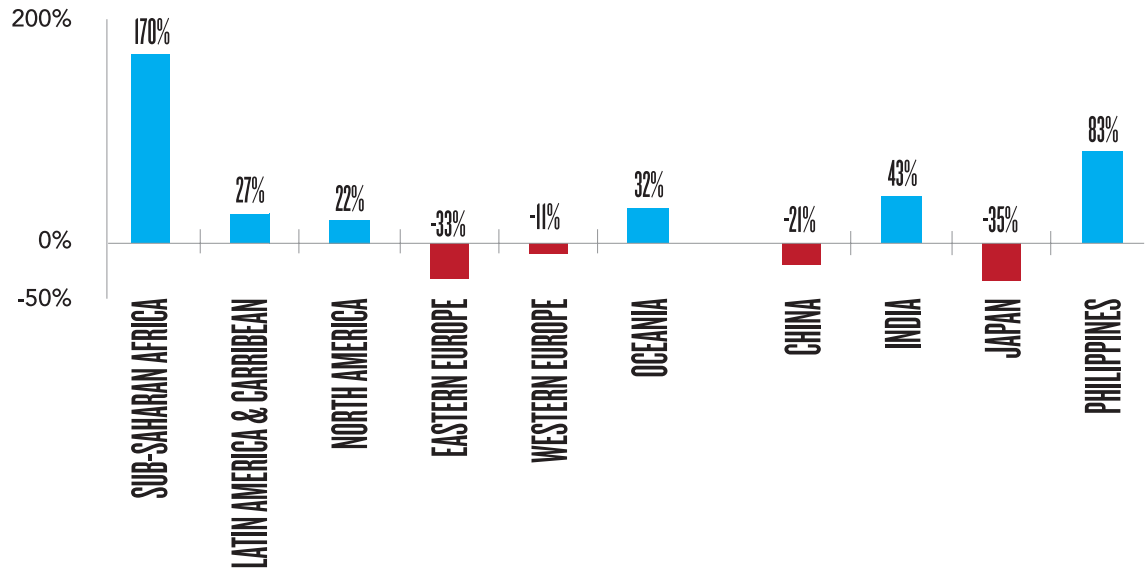
²⁶ Fumitaka Furuoka, “Looking for a J-shaped Development-fertility Relationship: Do Advances in Development Really Reverse Fertility Declines?” *Economics Bulletin* 29 (2009): 3067–3074.

²⁷ In France, for example, more than a third of the officially estimated increase in the birth rate between 1997 and 2004 came from women of foreign nationality. See France Prioux, “Recent Demographic Developments in France: Fertility at a More Than 30-Year High,” Demographic Trends, Institut National d’Etude Démographique (2007): http://www.ined.fr/en/publications/demographic_trends/bdd/publication/1345/.

²⁸ Edward Crenshaw and Kristopher Robison, “Socio-demographic Determinants of Economic Growth: Age-Structure, Preindustrial Heritage and Sociolinguistic Integration,” *Social Forces* 88 (2010): 2217–2240.

the global decline in birth rates over the last two decades, the global working-age population will likely grow by only about 900 million between 2010 and 2030, or 400 million less than the previous two decades.³¹ Indeed, over the next forty years, the working-age population will shrink throughout Europe and East Asia (see Figure 5).³²

FIGURE 5
PERCENT CHANGE
IN POPULATION
AGES 19-64 IN
SELECT REGIONS
AND COUNTRIES,
2010 TO 2050



Source: U.S. Census Bureau International Database.

For instance, the working-age population of Western Europe will shrink in absolute size even with continued high levels of immigration. Over the next twenty years, its pool of men and women age 15–64 will fall by 4 percent even if Western Europe accepts 20 million new immigrants. Meanwhile, the population over 65 will likely grow by 40 percent.³³ Coaxing more women out of the home and into the paid workforce, as is official European Union policy, would help to improve the dwindling ratio of workers to retirees, but at the risk of driving down birth rates still more. Raising the average age of retirement would also help arrest the declining size of the workforce, but here, too, there are clear political and practical limits. For example, despite all the talk of “70 being the new 60,” the health status of the next generation of seniors in the developed world is likely to be lower than that of their counterparts today. This is because of sharp increases in chronic conditions among today’s late-middle-agers, due to the global obesity epidemic and other factors.³⁴

In Europe and East Asia, the decline in the numbers of younger workers will be even sharper than the decline in older workers, with consequences that could be particularly grave for economic dynamism. In every country of the world, regardless of its stage of economic development, form of government, or age structure, the highest rates of entrepreneurial

²⁹ Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resource* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

³⁰ Nicholas Eberstadt, “World Population Prospects and the Global Economic Outlook: The Shape of Things to Come,” *The American Enterprise Institute, Working Paper Series on Development Policy* 5 (2011).

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau International Data Base: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/informationGateway.php>.

³² See also Eberstadt, “World Population Prospects.”

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Marga Gonzalo-Cirac, “El Descenso Irreversible de la Mortalidad en el Siglo XX en la Provincia de Tarragona. Analisis Demografico y Epidemiologico” (doctoral thesis, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, 2011); Linda G. Martin et al., “Trends in Disability and Related Chronic Conditions Among People Ages Fifty to Sixty-Four,” *Health Affairs* 29 (2010): 725–731.

activity are found among those age 25–34—an age group whose numbers will be shrinking in many advanced countries (see Figure 6).³⁵

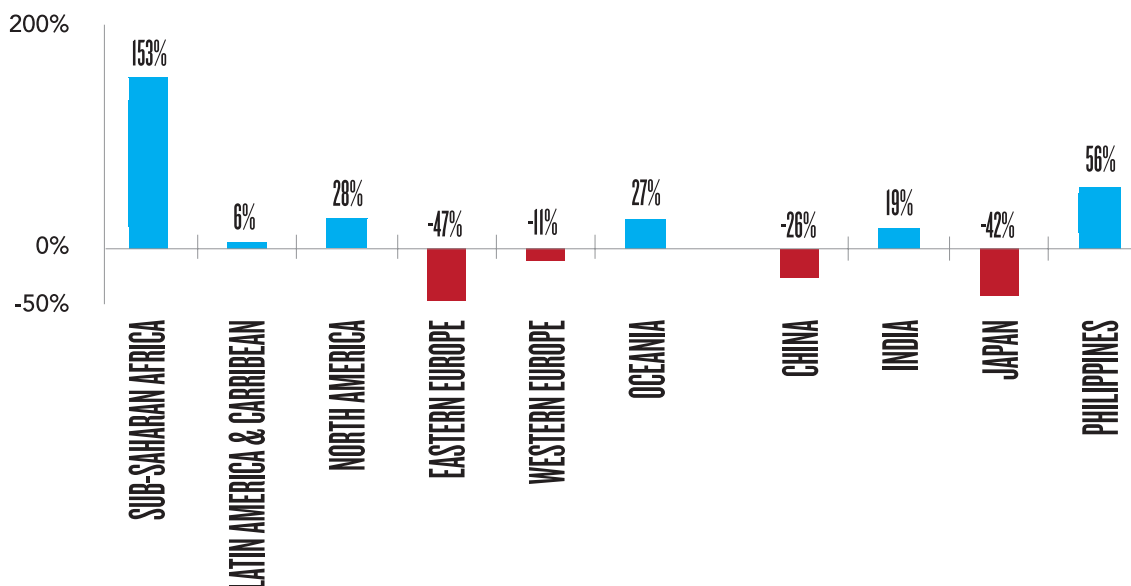


FIGURE 6
PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION AGES 25-34 IN SELECT REGIONS AND COUNTRIES, 2010 TO 2050

Source: U.S. Census Bureau International Database.

To be sure, during the early stages of fertility decline, nations often experience prosperity, a phenomenon known as the “demographic dividend.” As birth rates first turn down, a rising share of workers occupy the prime productive years of young adulthood. With fewer children around to support and care for, vast reserves of female labor are freed up to join the market economy, and adults are free to devote more money to savings, consumer durables, and real estate. Societies traversing through this early stage of population aging often find they have more resources available to invest in each remaining child, so their literacy rates, for example, improve. This phenomenon clearly happened in Japan and the other “Asian Tigers” from the 1960s to the 1990s and is still at work in China today.³⁶

But with the next generational turn, the “demographic dividend” has to be repaid. So long as birth rates remain low, there are still comparatively few children, but the proportion of productive younger workers now begins to decline even as the ranks of risk-averse, middle-aged citizens and dependent elders explodes. Population aging goes from being a positive force for economic development and innovation to being a drain on resources—as is already happening now in Japan, which is now struggling to pay for the rising costs of its public pensions as its working-age population shrinks and its elderly population surges.³⁷ This will be the story of China over the next forty years, as Figure 5 indicates. China’s working-age population will begin falling by 1 percent a year after 2016—with its population of people in their twenties and thirties specifically in even steeper decline.³⁸ Meanwhile, the population of Chinese seniors (age 65 and over) will swell from 109 million, or 8.2 percent of the population, to 279 million, or 20 percent of the population, by 2035.³⁹ Chinese demographers now speak of the

³⁵ Niels Bosma and Jonathan Levie, *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 2009 Annual Report* (Babson Park, MA: Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2010), 24.

³⁶ David E. Bloom et al., *The Demographic Dividend: A New Perspective on the Economic Consequences of Population Change* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2003).

emergence of a 4-2-1 society, in which a single child becomes responsible for two parents and four grandparents. This sets up China to experience an even worse aging crisis than Japan is undergoing.

Finally, the global retreat from marriage is also likely to depress and distort economic growth. Evidence drawn from Europe and North America indicates that children who are raised in an intact, married home are more likely to excel in school and be active in the labor force as young adults, compared to children raised in nonintact homes.⁴⁰ Married adult males also work harder than their unmarried counterparts and enjoy an income premium over single men of between 10 and 24 percent, in countries ranging from Germany to Israel to Mexico to the United States.⁴¹ These findings suggest that market economies in the Americas and Europe—from Canada to Chile, from Spain to Sweden—that are now experiencing a retreat from marriage will also reap a new crop of problems as fewer children have the opportunity to acquire the human and social capital they need to thrive in the global economy and as fewer men have the motivation that marriage brings to fully engage the world of work.

THE WELFARE STATE IN AN AGING SOCIETY

The financing of the welfare state also depends critically on population growth and strong families, as evidenced by the painful rollback of social programs in aging Europe and its sovereign debt crisis as well as Japan's deepening debt problems. Indeed, a recent report by Morgan Stanley suggests that a country's proportion of old people may now be a more important indicator of its likelihood of default than the size of its current debt, especially because older voters are not likely to support reforms in public pensions that limit their income.⁴²

The demographic sources of the current crisis in the welfare state are not hard to fathom. So long as population is growing, each new generation of retirees can get back far more in public pensions and health-care benefits than they ever paid in without creating any financial encumbrance on the future. But in the face of today's population aging, old-age benefits can no longer be financed by a rapidly expanding labor force. They must instead be limited to what a shrinking working-age population is able and willing to contribute to the elderly's support.

France, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Japan, and many other aging countries have already made draconian cuts in their promised of future pensions, even as insolvency or threat thereof is forcing many others (such as Greece, Spain, and Ireland) toward the same course.⁴³ Even the United States is now coming to grips with a similar problem; for instance, in 2010 Social Security began paying out more to the elderly than it is taking in from current workers.⁴⁴ In an aging society, growing expenditures for pensions and health

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau projection, cited by Eberstadt, "World Population Prospects," 14.

³⁹ Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*, medium variant.

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Amato, "Impact of Family Formation Change"; John F. Ermisch and Marco Francesconi, "Family Structure and Children's Achievements," *Journal of Population Economics* 14 (2001): 249-270.

⁴¹ Avner Ahituv and Robert Lerman, "How Do Marital Status, Labor Supply, and Wage Rates Interact?" *Demography* 44 (2007): 623-647; Claudia Geist, "The Marriage Economy: Examining the Economic Impact and the Context of Marriage in Comparative Perspective" (doctoral thesis, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana, 2008); Wilcox et al., *Why Marriage Matters*.

⁴² Arnaud Mares, "Ask Not Whether Governments Will Default, But How," *Sovereign Subjects* (Morgan Stanley: August 25, 2010).

care for the elderly also inevitably compete with the resources available to invest in children and families. Faced with a mounting budget deficit, the United Kingdom has cut child benefits while largely protecting pensioners.⁴⁵ Thus, fertility declines and growth in aging populations pose a fundamental challenge to the financial viability of the welfare state in much of the developed world.

APPROPRIATE FAMILY POLICY IN AN AGING SOCIETY

What then are the appropriate policy responses to the unsustainable state of family life in many advanced societies? Here are ten proposals that might be helpful:

1 PROMOTE FAMILY ENTERPRISE.

The last generation has seen a rapid increase in corporate consolidation. Whereas rigorous enforcement of antitrust and other policies preserved an important role for small-scale family farms and businesses until the 1980s, today there is almost no check on the growth of giant retailers, agribusinesses, and industrial concerns. As British social theorist Philip Blond has written, “Our fishmongers, butchers, and bakers are driven out—converting a whole class of owner occupiers into low wage earners, employed by supermarkets.”⁴⁶ Though it is not possible, or even desirable, to entirely reverse these trends toward monopolization, it is possible to moderate them and thereby carve out more space for family enterprise and entrepreneurship, which will in turn help to rebuild the economic foundation of the family. A good start would be to offer payroll tax breaks to small businesses and to more rigorously enforce existing antitrust laws.

2 INCREASE INCOME SECURITY FOR YOUNG COUPLES.

Young couples contemplating starting a family now face far greater risk than their parents typically did that they will face repeated spells of un- and underemployment. As political scientist Jacob Hacker has demonstrated, even before the Great Recession of 2008, the size of swings in pretax family income from year to year had doubled in the United States since the early 1970s.⁴⁷ In Europe, many young adults typically find themselves maneuvering from contract to contract, rather than being able to settle into a secure career that will support a family. In the developing world, young adults often find themselves trying to get ahead amid the swirl of hypercompetitive megacities that seem to have literally no room for children.

There is no single policy lever to pull that will put the family back into a healthy and sustainable balance with global market forces. We must grapple with issues like foreign trade, offshore employment, and downsizing. Yet it is essential that measures of efficiency not be so narrowly defined that they discount the vital role that secure, functioning families play in sustaining economic progress. To soften the blows young adults face from income and employment instability associated with globalization, countries should ensure access to affordable health care and lifetime learning to keep job skills from becoming obsolete.

⁴³ Richard Jackson, Neil Howe, and Keisuke Nakashima, *The Global Aging Preparedness Index* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010).

⁴⁴ Social Security and Medicare Boards of Trustees, *A Summary of The 2011 Annual Reports* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, 2011).

⁴⁵ Chris Giles, “Today’s Austerity is Tomorrow’s Indignation,” *Financial Times* (June 29, 2011): <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/40be7044-a286-11e0-9760-00144feabdc0.html#axzzISUZkiiEI>.

⁴⁶ Philip Blond, “Rise of the Red Tories,” *Prospect* (February 28, 2009): <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2009/02/riseofthered Tories/>.

3 EASE THE TENSION BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND FAMILY FORMATION.

A woman's education strongly predicts how many children she will have. For American women age 40–44 in 2008, the average number of children among those with advanced degrees was just 1.6, compared to 2.4 for those who never graduated from high school. Fully 21.5 percent of highly educated woman remain childless throughout their lives, compared to only 15 percent of high-school dropouts.⁴⁸

To some extent, these disparities simply reflect differing individual priorities and preferences. They also reflect, however, the severe obstacles placed in the way of couples who want to start families while they are still biologically capable of doing so and at the same time want to pursue higher education. Under our current system of higher education, a woman who wants to, say, interrupt her education at age 20 to start a family and then return to school at age 30 will face steep handicaps in gaining admission. Institutions of higher learning, as well as employers, should include parents in their attempts to build diversity and overcome historical patterns of discrimination.⁴⁹

4 BUILD LIVABLE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES.

Around the world, high-cost housing is closely associated with low birth rates. This is particularly true in Japan, South Korea, Europe, and coastal China.⁵⁰ Though housing is comparatively affordable in most parts of the United States, deteriorating public schools in many areas force parents into bidding wars for homes in good school districts or compel them to pay for private school or limit their family size. At the same time, underinvestment in transportation—particularly efficient, affordable mass transit—is forcing parents in many parts of the United States and Canada to endure long commutes that have a negative financial and emotional impact on family life.⁵¹ Suburbia, once a fount of fertility, needs to be refitted and modernized to make it family friendly again.

The policy responses needed to address these threats to the family are much easier to state than to achieve. Yet such vital reforms as improving public education, reducing automobile dependency, and fostering walkable communities will perhaps be easier if these goals are tied to the needs of the family. Salt Lake City, which has the highest birth rate of any American metropolitan area, has since the late 1990s made a huge and successful commitment to containing sprawl and building light-rail under the influence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.⁵²

5 HONOR WORK-FAMILY IDEALS OF ALL WOMEN.

Women are diverse in their life preferences, no less so when it comes to the balance of motherhood and career than in any other realm. For example, in the United States, about one-fifth of married mothers state that their ideal preference is to remain in full-time employment; almost half prefer to work part-time only, and a full one-third prefer to avoid working outside the home while they

⁴⁷ Jacob S. Hacker, *The Great Risk Shift* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁴⁸ Jane Lawler Dye, "Fertility of American Women: 2006," *Current Population Reports*, P20-563 (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008), Table 2.

⁴⁹ Phillip Longman and David Gray, "Family-Based Social Contract, New Social Contract Initiative," New America Foundation (November 2008): http://workforce.newamerica.net/publications/policy/family_based_social_contract.

⁵⁰ Lesthaeghe, "Unfolding Story"; Sidney B. Westley et al., *Very Low Fertility in Asia* (Honolulu, HI: East-West Center, 2010).

⁵¹ National Resources Defense Council, *Reducing Foreclosures and Environmental Impacts through Location-Efficient Neighborhood Design* (January 2010): <http://www.nrdc.org/energy/files/LocationEfficiency4pgr.pdf>.

⁵² Patrick Doherty and Christopher B. Leinberger, "The Next Real Estate Boom," *Washington Monthly* (November/December 2010): <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2010/1011.doherty-leinberger.html>.



“Market economies in the Americas and Europe—from Canada to Chile, from Spain to Sweden—that are now experiencing a retreat from marriage will also reap a new crop of problems as fewer children have the opportunity to acquire the human and social capital they need to thrive in the global economy and as fewer men have the motivation that marriage brings to fully engage the world of work.”

raise children.⁵³ Though the proportions of women expressing preference for one of these three broad options varies over time and among countries, research shows that the ratios are remarkably consistent. In general in developed nations, about 20 percent of women favor a home-centered life, 60 percent prefer a life that combines career and family, and about 20 percent are primarily concerned with career only.⁵⁴

Unfortunately, government family policy often ignores this diversity among women. Instead, there is often bias toward the needs of working mothers and neglect of those of home-centered mothers. Pronatalist policies are not likely to be effective if they primarily target career-oriented women; such women are not only a minority in any national population but are generally the most resistant to increased childbearing. As sociologist Catherine Hakim points out, family policy that is aimed only at the particular problems of two-paycheck families fails “to recognize and accept the heterogeneity of women’s (and men’s) lifestyle preferences.”⁵⁵

Policy makers should embrace programs such as the highly successful Finnish homemaker allowance, which provides parents who do not use public childcare with a stipend that they can use for their own family budget—or to pay a grandparent, neighbor, friend, or nanny to care for their children. In Finland, the allowance is less expensive than the cost of public childcare and is linked to increases in fertility.⁵⁶ Most importantly, it has allowed women to choose the best caregiving option for themselves and their families.

6 SUPPORT MARRIAGE AND RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD.

There are limits to what any government can or should do to promote marriage as an institution. Nonetheless, public policy should stop penalizing marriage and should also support initiatives to educate the public about the benefits of marriage and the hazards of single parenthood. This is no different in kind from government efforts to educate the public about the benefits of properly installed car seats for children or the hazards of smoking.

First, many public policies unintentionally penalize marriage by reducing or eliminating public benefits to parents who marry and thereby have access to two incomes rather than one.⁵⁷ Public policies aimed at families should either be offered on a universal basis or should allow the two parents to split their income when it comes to determining the family’s eligibility for public support.

Second, governments should test the effectiveness of social-marketing campaigns on behalf of marriage—especially those connecting marriage and parenthood. Experience has shown that well-designed social-marketing campaigns aimed at changing sexual behavior, drug use, and smoking habits can have a positive

⁵³ W. Bradford Wilcox and Jeffrey Dew, “No One Best Way: Work-Family Strategies, the Gendered Division of Parenting, and the Contemporary Marriages of Mothers and Fathers,” in W. Bradford Wilcox and Kathy Kovner Kline (eds.), *Gender and Parenthood: Natural and Social Scientific Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁵⁴ Catherine Hakim, “What Do Women Really Want? Designing Family Policies for All Women” (presented at Social Trends Institute experts meeting, “Whither the Child?” Barcelona, Spain, March 2010), Table I.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Adam Carasso and C. Eugene Steurle, “The Hefty Penalty on Marriage Facing Many Households with Children,” *The Future of Children* 15 (2005): 157–175.

impact.⁵⁸ In some cases, the impact of these campaigns has proved to be modest. Yet the extraordinary cost, both to individuals and society, of contending with, for example, out-of-wedlock births, makes social marketing aimed at changing such behaviors likely to be cost effective. These campaigns can also generate a larger, salutary conversation in the society at large about the importance of marriage for raising children.

7 PROMOTE THRIFT.

Young adults in today's developed countries, and increasingly in developing nations as well, are encumbered by debt to an unprecedented degree. According to the Project On Student Debt, the average American college graduate in the class of 2009 faces \$24,000 in student loans, a figure that has risen by 6 percent every year since 2003.⁵⁹ Mountains of credit-card debt also now typically encumber young couples contemplating whether to start a family; this is an obvious discouragement to fertility.

Better consumer-finance-protection laws and enforcement are part of the solution, from putting caps on usurious lending to enforcing standardized, easy-to-understand contracts for credit cards and mortgages. So is restoring the ethos of thrift that historically was a pillar of the thriving working-class and middle-class family. Until it petered out in the 1960s, Americans celebrated "Thrift Week" pegged to Benjamin Franklin's birthday on January 17. Until the 1960s, public schools ran their own small banks for students, allowing millions of American children to better learn financial literacy and the habits of thrift. Savings and loans encouraged thrift through Christmas savings plans. And so on. We need to renew this ethos for our day. Restoring thrift is a generational project but also a prerequisite to restoring the health and fertility of the modern family.⁶⁰

8 ADJUST THE FINANCING OF THE WELFARE STATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF AN AGING SOCIETY.

All pension and health-care benefits, including those conveyed through the private sector, are ultimately financed by babies and those who raise and educate them. Yet in modern societies, the "nurturing sector" of the economy is starved for resources. Parents in particular rarely receive any material compensation for the sacrifices they make on behalf of their children.

Here is a suggestive policy idea for allowing the nurturing sector to keep a greater share of the value it creates for society: Say to the next generation of young adults, have one child, and your payroll taxes, which support the elderly, will drop by one-third. A second child would be worth a two-thirds reduction in payroll taxes. Have three or more children, and pay no payroll taxes until your youngest child turns 18. When it comes time to retire, your benefits (and your spouse's) will be calculated just as if you had both been contributing the maximum tax during the period in which you were raising children, provided that all your children have graduated from high school.

⁵⁸ G. Hastings, M. Stead, and M.L. McDermott, "The Meaning, Effectiveness and Future of Social Marketing," *Obesity Reviews* 8 (2007): 189-193; Leslie B. Snyder et al., "A Meta-Analysis of the Effect of Mediated Health Communication Campaigns on Behavior Change in the United States," *Journal of Health Communication* 9, supplement 1 (2004): 71-96.

⁵⁹ Project on Student Debt, *Student Debt and the Class of 2009* (Oakland, CA: Project on Student Debt, 2010): <http://projectonstudentdebt.org/files/pub/classof2009.pdf>.

⁶⁰ For a history of the American thrift movement of the Progressive Era and for policy ideas for rekindling it, see Phillip Longman and Ray Shara, *The Next Progressive Movement: A Blueprint for Broad Prosperity* (Sausalito, CA: Polipoint, 2008).

9 CLEAN UP THE CULTURE.

Television and other global media, as we've already seen, appear to have played a big role in driving birth and marriage rates down. From pop stars' efforts to push the sexual envelope, to Hollywood films, violent video games, and ubiquitous Internet pornography, the global media sends a strong message to young people around the world that a family-centered way of life is passé.

To some extent, these cultural excesses and distortion can be expected to correct themselves. Just as during the Victorian age, when fear of underpopulation, particularly among elites, led to a reformation in manners and morals, there will be less and less tolerance for those who do not contribute children to society or whose activities contribute to children's moral corruption. But Hollywood film makers, advertisers, and other cultural merchants need to catch up with the new demographic reality and become aware that we now live in a world in which strong families can no longer be taken for granted—much less endlessly mocked and trivialized.

10 RESPECT THE ROLE OF RELIGION AS A PRONATAL FORCE.

Childlessness and small families are increasingly common among secularists. Meanwhile, in Europe and the Americas, as well as in Israel, the rest of the Middle East, and beyond, there is a strong correlation between adherence to orthodox Christian, Islamic, or Judaic religious values and larger, stable families.

In recognition of the contribution that religion makes to family life and fertility, governments should not persecute people of faith for holding or expressing views that are informed by religious tradition, including ones that buck progressive or nationalist sensibilities. Alas, such persecution is now common in some countries around the world, from Canada to China to France.⁶¹ Faith brings hope, and ultimately it is hope that replenishes the human race.

None of these ten proposals is anywhere near adequate to solve the challenges created by the new demographics of the twenty-first century. Yet they are suggestive of the philosophical approach that is needed—one that emphasizes the critical role of the intact, nurturing, and financially secure family in sustaining and renewing the human, social, and financial capital of aging societies around the globe. ■

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⁶¹ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Rising Restrictions on Religion* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center).

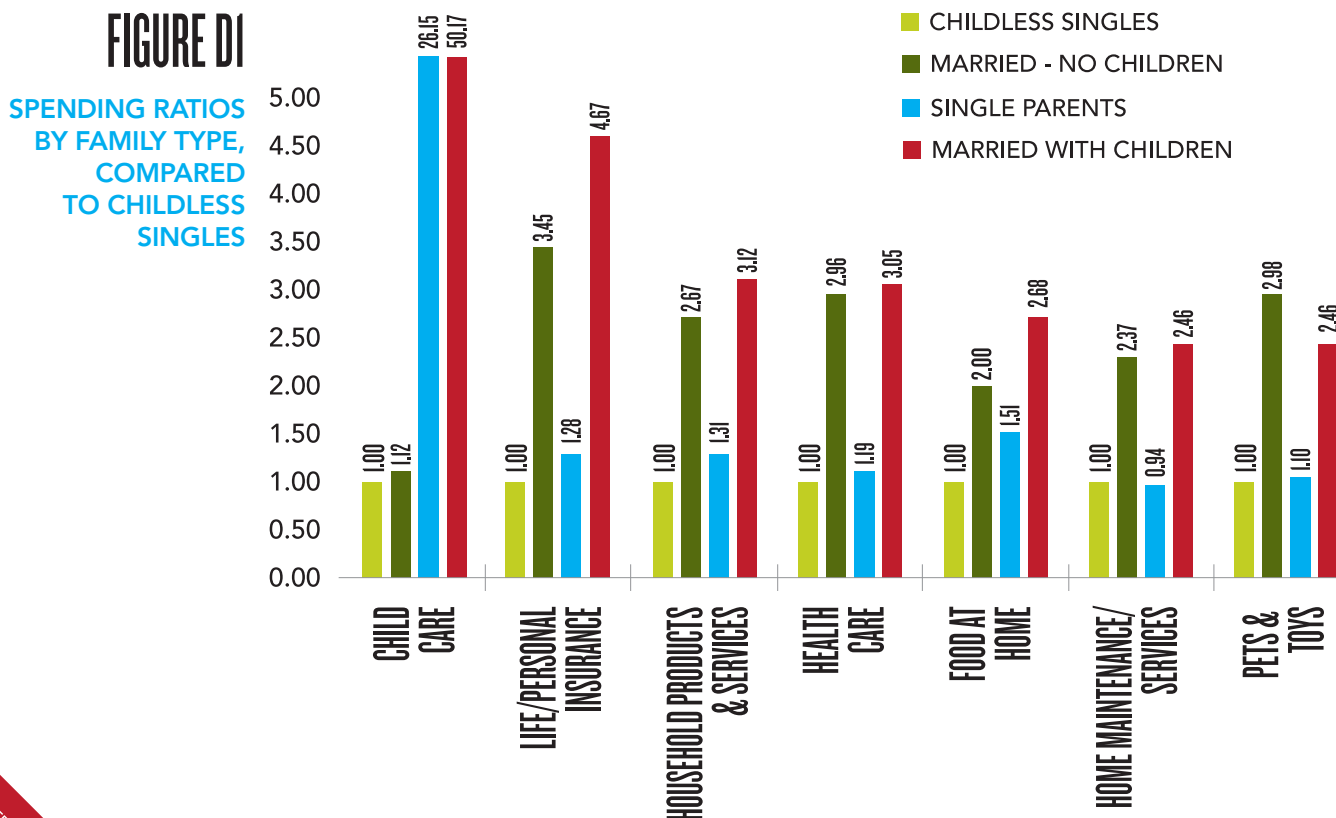
MARRIAGE AND THE BABY CARRIAGE: WHICH SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY BENEFIT MOST?

by W. Bradford Wilcox
and Kathryn Sharpe

Strong, sustainable families pay long-term dividends to the entire economy. But some sectors of the economy appear to do especially well when adults marry and have children.

In the United States, married parents (age 18-50) spend markedly more money—on a household and a per-capita basis—on child care, food at home, healthcare, home maintenance, household products and services, life/personal insurance, and pets and toys, compared to single, childless adults of the same age (see Table D1 and Figure D1). They outspend other households in each of these spending categories, except for “pets and toys,” where childless marrieds spend more—probably because they are laying down big bucks for Fido.

This means that the bottom-line performance of companies that focus on these sectors of the economy is likely to be linked to the health of the family in the United States—and much of the globe, for that matter. Companies as varied as Home Depot (home maintenance), Johnson & Johnson (healthcare), Kellogg (cereal), Kroger (groceries), Mars (sweets), Mattel (toys), Northwestern Mutual (life insurance), Procter & Gamble (household products), UnitedHealth (health insurance), and Target (general merchandise) are probably more likely to profit when men and women marry and have children.



Source: Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2008. Note: Ratios are reported by household.

WHAT MAY BE DRIVING THE LINKS BETWEEN FAMILY TYPE AND CONSUMER SPENDING IN THESE INDUSTRIES?

1 HOUSEHOLD SIZE. Adults who are married with children typically have more people in their households than do other adults. To serve the needs of all the adults and children in their homes, they are more likely to buy many brands in bulk, from Bounty to Tide, and to fill their shopping carts at the local grocery store.

2 CHILDREN. Obviously, adults who are married with children at home spend more money on child-related products than childless singles. But they also spend more money on their children than do single parents. This is largely because their household mean income (\$91,119) is higher than that of single parents (\$35,845).¹ Married parents are far more likely than single parents to drop money on Huggies Diapers or the latest developmental toy from Sassy. They also spend more on private schooling and tutoring than any other family type—Sylvan Learning, take note.

3 DOMESTICITY. Compared to singles and single parents, married parents devote more time and attention to home maintenance, home improvements, and domestic chores—from cooking to lawn care. Their spending patterns reflect this domestic orientation. For instance, because married parents have more time to cook meals than do single parents, they spend a greater share of weekly expenditures on fresh fruit and vegetables than do single parents, and they spend a lesser share on processed fruits and vegetables than do single parents.² For the same reason, [Figure D1](#) suggests they are also more likely to make a Saturday afternoon visit to Costco than are other adults.

4 RESPONSIBILITY. Adults, especially men, become more responsible after they marry. This shapes their consumption habits. For example, men put more hours in at the office and fewer hours at the local bar after they marry.³ Indeed, as [Table D1](#) indicates, the product that men and women who are married with kids spend less money on than childless singles is alcohol. Married parents—especially married men, who continue to be the primary earners in most families today—also spend more money on life insurance than other households. Thus, Anheuser-Busch takes a hit when men and women get in the family way, whereas Northwestern Mutual sees its market share expand.

Clearly, some industries—from household products to juvenile products to life insurance—seem more likely to profit when families are strong. In all likelihood, then, many companies would be performing much better today if the U.S. marriage rate had not fallen by half since 1970.⁴ Rising rates of divorce, single parenthood, and lifelong singleness—not to mention childlessness—have degraded the market for companies that depend on married families.



¹ Estimates for 2009 household income from Consumer Expenditure Survey, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, October, 2010.

² Margaret Mietus Sanik and Teresa Mauldin, "Single versus Two Parent Families: A Comparison of Mothers' Time," *Family Relations* 30 (1986): 53-56; Kathleen Ziol-Guest, Thomas DeLeire, and Ariel Kalil, "The Allocation of Food Expenditure in Married- and Single-Parent Families," *The Journal of Consumer Affairs* 40 (2006): 347-371.

³ Steven Nock, *Marriage in Men's Lives* (New York: Oxford, 2011).

⁴ W. Bradford Wilcox, *When Marriage Disappears: The New Middle America* (Charlottesville, VA: National Marriage Project/Institute for American Values, 2010): 62.

TABLE D1 SPENDING BY FAMILY TYPE IN U.S., AGE 18-50

	CHILDLESS SINGLES	MARRIED NO CHILDREN		SINGLE PARENTS		MARRIED WITH CHILDREN	
WEEKLY EXPENDITURES	DOLLARS SPENT	DOLLARS SPENT	RATIO TO SINGLES	DOLLARS SPENT	RATIO TO SINGLES	DOLLARS SPENT	RATIO TO SINGLES
FOOD AWAY FROM HOME	\$35.00	\$55.14	1.58	\$24.58	0.70	\$54.10	1.55
FOOD AT HOME	\$33.66	\$70.84	2.10	\$50.84	1.51	\$90.22	2.68
CEREAL	\$1.40	\$3.06	2.19	\$2.86	2.04	\$4.44	3.17
BAKED GOODS	\$2.92	\$5.98	2.05	\$4.66	1.59	\$8.52	2.92
BEEF	\$1.81	\$4.58	2.53	\$3.09	1.71	\$5.86	3.24
PORK	\$1.28	\$3.10	2.42	\$2.27	1.77	\$3.61	2.82
OTHER MEAT	\$0.97	\$2.06	2.12	\$1.49	1.54	\$2.57	2.65
POULTRY	\$1.50	\$3.49	2.33	\$2.65	1.76	\$3.84	2.56
SEAFOOD	\$1.48	\$2.37	1.60	\$1.65	1.12	\$2.81	1.90
EGGS	\$0.48	\$0.77	1.60	\$0.82	1.71	\$1.17	2.44
MILK/OTHER DAIRY	\$3.96	\$7.96	2.01	\$5.77	1.46	\$10.78	2.72
FRESH FRUIT	\$1.84	\$4.37	2.38	\$2.09	1.14	\$5.45	2.96
FRESH VEGETABLES	\$1.93	\$4.64	2.40	\$2.18	1.13	\$4.78	2.48
PROCESSED FRUIT	\$1.08	\$1.94	1.80	\$1.58	1.46	\$2.89	2.68
PROCESSED VEGETABLES	\$0.97	\$2.00	2.06	\$1.44	1.49	\$2.54	2.62
SWEETS	\$1.03	\$2.31	2.24	\$1.64	1.59	\$3.10	3.01
BEVERAGES (NON ALCOHOLIC)	\$3.45	\$7.20	2.09	\$5.13	1.49	\$8.28	2.40
OILS	\$0.96	\$1.88	1.96	\$1.55	1.61	\$2.37	2.47
MISC. FOOD	\$6.60	\$13.13	1.99	\$9.98	1.51	\$17.21	2.61
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	\$9.25	\$11.36	1.23	\$2.73	0.30	\$6.70	0.72
TOBACCO PRODUCTS & SUPPLIES	\$3.94	\$5.10	1.29	\$2.84	0.72	\$4.16	1.06
PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS & SERVICES	\$7.06	\$13.96	1.98	\$6.56	0.93	\$13.36	1.89
HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS & SERVICES	\$5.35	\$12.62	2.36	\$7.00	1.31	\$16.70	3.12
MONTHLY EXPENDITURES							
HOME MAINTENANCE & SERVICES ¹	\$109.28	\$259.28	2.37	\$103.15	0.94	\$268.82	2.46
FURNISHINGS & APPLIANCES	\$116.37	\$257.70	2.21	\$87.03	0.75	\$250.22	2.15
CLOTHING	\$147.41	\$201.18	1.36	\$156.61	1.06	\$262.10	1.78
GASOLINE AND MOTOR OIL	\$269.17	\$566.92	2.11	\$261.24	0.97	\$573.68	2.13
HEALTHCARE	\$139.42	\$412.38	2.96	\$166.02	1.19	\$425.28	3.05
INSURANCE	\$76.81	\$236.70	3.08	\$99.14	1.29	\$242.14	3.15
SERVICES	\$42.79	\$114.16	2.67	\$47.42	1.11	\$132.14	3.09
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS	\$14.90	\$50.48	3.39	\$14.22	0.95	\$37.96	2.55
SUPPLIES	\$4.92	\$11.04	2.24	\$5.24	1.07	\$13.04	2.65
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION	\$65.20	\$100.50	1.54	\$48.50	0.74	\$142.66	2.19
TV/CABLE	\$113.51	\$201.84	1.78	\$105.30	0.93	\$182.64	1.61
PETS AND TOYS	\$39.72	\$117.54	2.96	\$43.56	1.10	\$97.84	2.46
READING	\$11.95	\$19.24	1.61	\$6.58	0.55	\$16.62	1.39
EDUCATION	\$156.00	\$171.18	1.10	\$68.91	0.44	\$211.68	1.36
CASH CONTRIBUTIONS	\$189.54	\$374.76	1.98	\$85.13	0.45	\$261.70	1.38
LIFE/PERSONAL INSURANCE	\$12.51	\$43.18	3.45	\$16.02	1.28	\$58.42	4.67
MORTGAGE OR RENT	\$1,361.24	\$2,108.72	1.55	\$1,111.72	0.82	\$2,003.10	1.47
UTILITIES	\$313.87	\$626.70	2.00	\$416.07	1.33	\$681.08	2.17
TELEPHONE	\$120.64	\$200.44	1.66	\$137.01	1.14	\$218.16	1.81
CHILD CARE	\$3.37	\$3.76	1.12	\$88.02	26.12	\$169.08	50.17

Source: Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2008.

Note: Expenditures and ratios are reported by household.

¹ Home maintenance & services refers to expenses such as remodeling, appliance repair, plumbing, security systems, and pest control.

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WHAT CAN CORPORATIONS THAT DEPEND ON STRONG FAMILIES DO TO INCREASE THEIR CUSTOMER BASE AND BOTTOM LINE?

For a start, we recommend three steps:

1 PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS. Broad swaths of the United States and the developed world (see Table 3 in the “Global Family Culture” section) are unaware of the fact that marriage is not just a “piece of paper” but rather an institution that delivers a whole range of benefits to adults, children, and communities. Companies whose fortunes are linked to the health of the family could get behind existing social marketing campaigns—such as the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center’s “Two of Us” campaign—to educate the broader public about the value of marriage and family life and thereby foster more family-friendly attitudes among the general public.

2 ADVERTISING. Companies whose fortunes are linked to the health of the family, such as Procter & Gamble, spend billions of dollars each year on advertising. Brand managers are often given the task of maximizing a specific product’s sales without considering the subtle and not-so-subtle signals their advertising could send off that could impact the parent firm’s overall sales. Executives with oversight across brands should ask themselves a simple question: Do the messages used in our advertising make family life look attractive? Or do they exalt single living? Obviously, it’s in their long-term interest to do more of the former.



FOR EXAMPLES VISIT:

www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-appendix/video

3 PHILANTHROPY. There are thousands of nonprofits, ministries, and think tanks working to help marriages and families in the United States and around the globe. Family-dependent companies should make a point of supporting organizations whose family-friendly goals align with their bottom-line interest in families.

In recent decades, numerous corporations have supported initiatives to help sustain the physical environment. Now it’s time for companies to be similarly attentive to the sustainability of the family, an institution that socializes and supplies not only future workers but current and future customers. Corporate profits in industries whose fortunes are linked to the health of the family—from grocery chains to insurance companies—are likely to perform particularly well when families are strong. Companies in these industries should take the lead in doing all they can to increase the odds that, among adults, love is followed by marriage and the baby carriage. ■

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INTERNATIONAL FAMILY INDICATORS

GLOBAL FAMILY STRUCTURE *by Laurie DeRose*

KEY FINDINGS: Marriage remains the anchor for the adult life course in Asia and the Middle East, with generally high rates of marriage and low rates of cohabitation in these regions. Marriage plays a less dominant role in Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania, regions where cohabitation or nonmarriage are more common. Finally, divorce rates have converged across much of the globe in recent years, but there is still considerable variation in divorce trends, even within regions, with the Americas registering both the highest and lowest crude divorce rates in this survey of global family structure.

Throughout history and in most countries, marriage has played an important role in anchoring the adult life course. But in recent years, and in some regions, marriage plays a less central role in the adult life course than it once did. By examining crude marriage and divorce rates (i.e., annual divorces and marriages per 1,000 adults), and by looking at the percentage of adults cohabiting, this report allows us to paint a portrait of the structure and stability of adult family life around the globe.¹

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Crude marriage and divorce rates suggest strong regional differences in the centrality of marriage across countries.

Marriage rates are high in Asia and the Middle East (see Table 1). Countries like China (7.2) and Egypt (9.9) have rates that are well above average. In contrast, most European, North American, and Oceanic countries have mid-tier marriage rates, with Australia (5.5), Canada (4.6), France (4.0), Germany (4.6), and Spain (3.8) all falling in the middle. Only Poland (6.6) and the United States are clear outliers (7.3) in these regions. Those in Latin America and South Africa are low, with countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and South Africa registering marriage rates below 4. The rates in these countries may be particularly low owing to a relatively youthful population, the popularity of cohabitation (see below), and the prevalence of long-term migration, which makes marriage more difficult. These are also countries where marriage is becoming increasingly delayed.²

The crude divorce rates do not display as clear a regional pattern (see Table 1). Both Asian and Latin American countries are represented at both the top and the bottom of the distribution. Also in Asia,

¹Marriages and divorces per 1,000 population depend not only on how normative and stable marriage is, but also what proportion of the population is of marriageable age. Changes over time and differences between countries nonetheless gauge cultural changes and cultural differences.

²Debbie Budlender, Ntebaleng Chobokoane, and Sandile Simelane, "Marriage patterns in South Africa: Methodological and substantive issues," *South African Journal of Demography* 9 (2004): 1-26; Luis Rosero-Bixby, Teresa Castro-Martin, and Teresa Martin-García, "Is Latin America starting retreat from early and universal childbearing?" *Demographic Research* 20 (2009): 169-194.

TABLE I

		MARRIAGES ¹	DIVORCES ¹	PERCENT OF ADULTS COHABITATING ²
AFRICA	KENYA	-	-	4
	NIGERIA	-	-	1
	SOUTH AFRICA	3.5	.6	11
ASIA	CHINA	7.2	1.5	1
	INDIA	-	-	4
	INDONESIA	7.6	.8	<1
	JAPAN	5.7	2.0	2
	MALAYSIA	6.9	.9	2
	PHILIPPINES	6.1	-	11
	SOUTH KOREA	7.1	2.6	<1
	TAIWAN	5.1	2.5	<1
EUROPE	FRANCE	4.0	2.1	16
	GERMANY	4.6	2.3	8
	ITALY	4.0	.9	5
	POLAND	6.6	1.7	3
	SPAIN	3.8	2.4	5
	SWEDEN	5.2	2.3	18
	UNITED KINGDOM	4.4	2.4	9
LATIN AMERICA	ARGENTINA	3.4	-	15
	CHILE	3.5	3.0	10
	COLOMBIA	2.2	.2	31
	MEXICO	5.6	.7	10
	PERU	2.8	2.9	25
MIDDLE EAST	EGYPT	9.9	1.8	<1
	SAUDI ARABIA	5.1	1.1	<1
NORTH AMERICA	CANADA	4.6	2.2	12
	UNITED STATES	7.3	3.6	7
OCEANIA	AUSTRALIA	5.5	2.3	8
	NEW ZEALAND	5.1	2.3	10

* PER 1000 POPULATION

HIGH ■ MED ■ LOW ■

divorce is illegal in the Philippines, which means the divorce rate there is essentially 0. The Middle East has comparatively low rates. Most European and Oceanic countries have moderately high rates, and the United States has the highest crude divorce rate among this survey of global family structure. South Africa's extremely low divorce rate is not a reliable indicator of marital stability because it is common for spouses there to separate permanently without legal divorce.³

It is also worth noting that divorce rates have converged in the target countries over time. >>

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Around 1970, crude divorce rates were 2.0 or below except in the United States, and those exhibiting divorce rates in excess of 1.0 were predominantly Western countries. By 1985, divorce was comparatively common in most countries, and by 1995 East Asian countries began to achieve divorce rates that rivaled other industrialized countries. Between 1995 and 2005, divorce rates declined in New Zealand, Australia, and other countries in Europe and North America, further narrowing the divorce-rate gap between countries across the world. Today, the vast majority of developed countries have divorce rates that exceed 2.0 divorces per 1,000.

COHABITATION

Not surprisingly, cohabitation is more common in countries with comparatively low marriage rates, and uncommon where marriage is stronger (see Table I and Figure 1).

There are several countries where less than 2 percent of adults are living together but unmarried: China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria. This list primarily consists of the high marriage-rate countries of Asia and the Middle East, but it does not include the Philippines where marriage is quite common, but where cohabitation is as well (11 percent).

There is considerable variation in cohabitation levels across Africa. For example, Nigeria's inclusion in the list above reflects a recent shift: the cohabitation rate fell from 7 percent in 1990 to 1 percent in 2008.⁴ (The decline in cohabitation in Nigeria may be linked to religious

Sources: www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources.
¹ Most data are from 2005-2010; see www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources for exact years for each country.

"Throughout history and in most countries, marriage has played an important role in anchoring the adult life course. But in recent years, and in some regions, marriage plays a less central role in the adult life course than it once did."

³ Tapologo Maundeni, "The Impact of Parental Separation and Divorce on Children: A Southern African Perspective," in Apollo Rwomire, (ed.), *African Women and Children: Crisis and Response* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publishers, 2001): 27-48.

⁴ Demographic and Health Surveys, Measure DHS, Calverton, MD.

changes in the country, as Islamic and evangelical Protestant groups have tried to assert more control over young adult sexuality in recent years. For instance, the imposition of Islamic Sharia law in much of the core north of Nigeria appears to have reduced premarital sex.⁵ Further, a significant percentage of born-again Christian youth in eastern Nigeria report either never having had sexual intercourse or adopting secondary sexual abstinence.⁶) In contrast, cohabitation is 4 percent in Kenya and 11 percent in South Africa.

Among European countries, Poland, Spain, and Italy have relatively low cohabitation rates while France and Sweden have some of the highest rates. Cohabitation is obviously common in the Americas, but Colombia is still an outlier at 31 percent, 13 percentage points higher than even Sweden, the leader in cohabitation in Europe at 18 percent. However, it is important to note that consensual unions have a long history in Latin America, where they often function much like legal marriages and are typically more stable than cohabiting unions in North America.

CONCLUSIONS

When these statistics are taken together, adults in Asian countries are more likely to marry and less likely to cohabit than their counterparts in other regions, but the stability of their marriages has declined over time. Middle Eastern countries have not witnessed this same rise in divorce, and for them cohabitation is essentially nonexistent; consequently, these countries appear to maintain a traditional attitude toward marriage. Countries in Latin America exhibited low divorce rates in the 1970s (divorce was illegal in some of our target countries in 1970), but since that time rising rates of divorce and high rates of cohabitation in many South and Central American countries demonstrate that marriage is not as normative a part of the adult life course in this region as it is in Asia and the Middle East. African adults are also spending fewer of their adult years married than they did in the past.⁷

European adults also have a relatively low likelihood of being married, though this generalization pertains mostly to Western Europe. Marriage is common and cohabitation uncommon in the United States compared to Western Europe, but a high divorce rate prevails. Canada more closely resembles a European country than its neighbor, the United States. Similarly, Australia and New Zealand have marriage, divorce, and cohabitation rates that look more like Europe than like their Southeast Asian neighbors. Overall, then, marriage continues to play a strong role in guiding the adult life course in Asia and the Middle East, while its hold is somewhat weaker on nations in Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania.

⁵Blessing Uchenna Mberu and Michael J. White, "Internal migration and health: Premarital sexual initiation in Nigeria," *Social Science & Medicine* 72 (2011): 1284-1293.

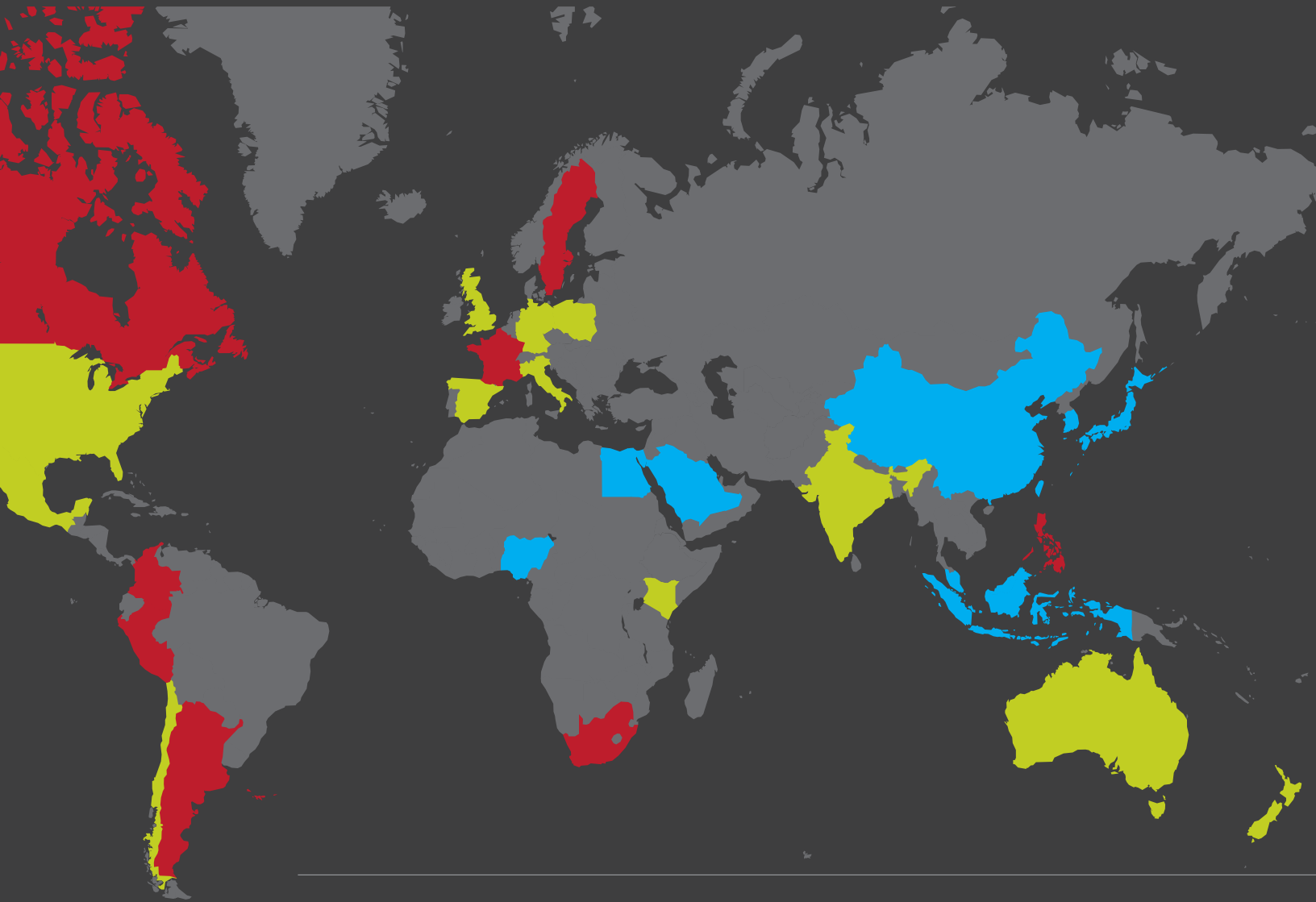
⁶Blessing Uchenna Mberu, "Protection before the harm: The case of condom use at the onset of premarital sexual relationship among youths in Nigeria," *African Population Studies* 23 (2008): 57-83.

⁷The data we present provide little evidence for Africa, but other sources establish a decline in marriage in many African countries: M. Marston et al., "Trends in marriage and time spent single in sub-Saharan Africa: a comparative analysis of six population-based cohort studies and nine Demographic and Health Surveys," *Sexually Transmitted Infections* 85 (2009): i64-i71; Victoria Hosegood, Nuala McGrath, and Tom Moultrie, "Dispensing with marriage: Marital and partnership trends in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa 2000-2006," *Demographic Research* 20 (2009): 9-312.



FIGURE 1

COHABITING ADULTS, 2005-2009



"Not surprisingly, cohabitation is more common in countries with comparatively low marriage rates, and uncommon where marriage is stronger."

GLOBAL CHILDREN'S TRENDS

KEY FINDINGS: In most countries, substantial numbers of children are reared by single parents; these proportions are conditioned but not determined by nonmarital childbearing. The regions where children are most likely to be reared by a married parent are Asia and the Middle East, regions where nonmarital childbearing is rare. Children are now most likely to grow up in comparatively small families in East Asia and Europe, mid-sized families in the Americas and Oceania, and large families in Africa, the Middle East, and South/Southeast Asia, though high mortality reduces the number of surviving siblings for African children.

NONMARITAL CHILDBEARING

Not surprisingly, the same countries that exhibit high marriage rates and low cohabitation rates exhibit low rates of nonmarital childbearing: these are concentrated in Asia and the Middle East (see Table 2). Even India, which has a high rate of cohabitation relative to other Asian countries (4 percent), still has less than 1 percent of its children born out of wedlock. Thus, children in Asia and the Middle East are more likely to have married parents than in other regions. Among the target countries, the only other country where nonmarital childbearing occurs at a low rate is Nigeria (6 percent).

In sharp contrast, 18 percent or more of births in the remaining countries are to unmarried mothers, a number that has climbed dramatically in recent years throughout much of the world. The highest rates of nonmarital childbearing occur in Latin America (55–74 percent). The only other countries to share these high rates are South Africa (59 percent) and Sweden (55 percent). The range within Europe is huge: from 18 percent (Italy) to 55 percent (Sweden). Those in North America and Oceania are also high and rising, though New Zealand (47 percent) and the United States (41 percent) stand out, with more than four out of ten births outside of marriage in these two countries.

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TABLE 2

		% OF BIRTHS OUTSIDE OF MARRIAGE, 2008-2009 ¹	% OF CHILDREN IN SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS ²	TOTAL FERTILITY RATE, 2010	NET REPRODUCTION RATE, 2005-2010
AFRICA	KENYA	19	26	4.6	1.96
	NIGERIA	6	13	5.7	1.84
	SOUTH AFRICA	59	58	2.4	1.04
ASIA	CHINA	<1	4	1.5	0.77
	INDIA	<1	9	2.6	1.17
	INDONESIA	1	10	2.4	1.02
	JAPAN	2	12	1.3	0.61
	MALAYSIA	-	6	2.6	1.23
	PHILIPPINES	37	10	3.2	1.46
	SOUTH KOREA	2	-	1.2	0.57
	TAIWAN	4	4	1.0	0.51
EUROPE	FRANCE	53	15	2.0	0.91
	GERMANY	32	14	1.3	0.64
	ITALY	18	10	1.4	0.66
	POLAND	20	17	1.4	0.63
	SPAIN	32	18	1.4	0.68
	SWEDEN	55	22	1.9	0.90
	UNITED KINGDOM	45	24	1.9	0.89
LATIN AMERICA	ARGENTINA	58	19	2.3	1.08
	CHILE	68	-	1.9	0.94
	COLOMBIA	74	33	2.4	1.15
	MEXICO	55	13	2.2	1.05
	PERU	69	21	2.6	1.21
MIDDLE EAST	EGYPT	<1	5	3.0	1.34
	SAUDI ARABIA	<1	-	3.8	1.52
NORTH AMERICA	CANADA	25	22	1.7	0.75
	UNITED STATES	41	29	2.0	1.01
OCEANIA	AUSTRALIA	33	20	1.9	0.88
	NEW ZEALAND	47	21	2.1	0.97

HIGH ■
 MED ■
 LOW ■

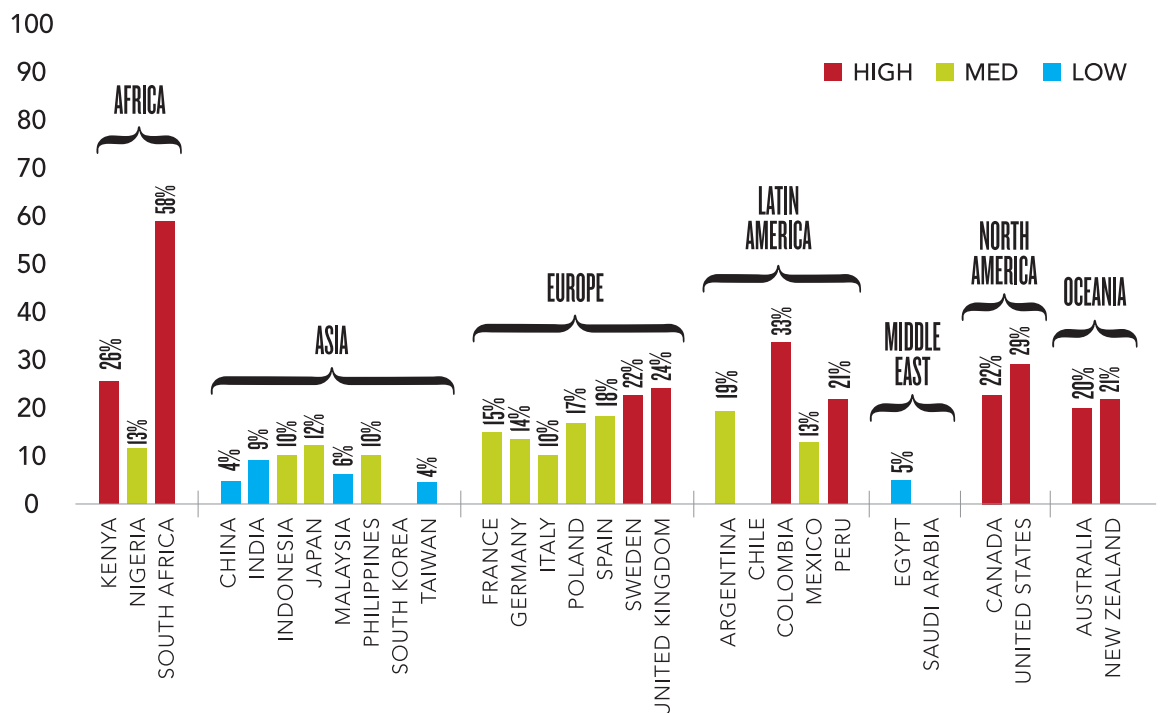
Sources: www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources.
¹ Rates for Canada, Italy, India, and Indonesia are slightly older; rates for Argentina and South Africa are substantially older; see notes at www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources.
² 1999-2000; Data for China are from 1990.

“Not surprisingly, the same countries that exhibit high marriage rates and low cohabitation rates exhibit low rates of nonmarital childbearing.”

SINGLE PARENTHOOD

The percent of children living in single-parent families around the globe has risen in recent years (see Table 2 and Figure 2), partly because of parallel increases in divorce and nonmarital childbearing. Single parenthood is especially common in Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania. For instance, children in South Africa are by far the least likely to live in a two-parent home (58 percent do not). HIV-related orphanhood and labor migration contribute heavily to this figure, as does nonmarital childbearing. In Latin America, high rates of nonmarital childbearing also contribute to single parenthood, though many children live in consensual unions. In Colombia, where 74 percent of children are born outside of marriage, “only” 33 percent are reared outside of a partnership. The United States has the third highest proportion of children with single parents (29 percent) because of its high divorce rate and relatively low cohabitation rate. In Kenya, where both cohabitation and nonmarital childbearing are moderately low by world standards, still 26 percent of children are living with a single parent: as in South Africa, both parental mortality and labor migration likely contribute to this high rate.

FIGURE 2
% OF CHILDREN
IN SINGLE PARENT
HOUSEHOLDS



In contrast, several of the countries with low nonmarital childbearing have a higher proportion of children being reared by a single parent. In Indonesia, 10 percent of children under age 15 live with a sole parent, and in Japan it is 12 percent. Divorce has been rising in Japan, but remarriage for women with children seems particularly low.⁸ In Indonesia, where divorce rates have dropped, abandonment may also be an important part of the picture.⁹ But in much of the rest of Asia, as well as in the Middle East, children are quite likely to live in two-parent homes, both because nonmarital childbearing and divorce are comparatively rare.

⁸ Himomi Ono, “The Socioeconomic Status of Women and Children in Japan: Comparisons with the USA,” *International Journal of Law, Policy, and the Family* 24 (2010): 151–176.

⁹ See Gavin W. Jones, “Modernization and Divorce: Contrasting Trends in Islamic Southeast Asia and the West,” *Population and Development Review* 23 (1997): 95–114 for falling divorce rates and Gavin W. Jones, Yahya Asari, Tuti Djuartika, “Divorce in West Java,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 25 (1994): 395–416 for increased difficulty in obtaining divorce leading to abandonment.

FERTILITY

Another important aspect of children's lives is the number of siblings they have. Here the East Asian countries are distinctly different from most of the rest of the world. While other parts of Asia displayed marked similarities with respect to trends affecting marriage, fertility is lowest in East Asia (see Table 2 and Figure 3). Both India and Saudi Arabia have much higher fertility (2.6 and 3.8 children per woman, respectively) than even the East Asian country registering the highest fertility rate (China at 1.5). The Southeast Asian countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines also have relatively high fertility (2.4 to 3.2). After East Asia, Europe is the next lowest fertility region (1.3 to 2.0). The countries of North America and Oceania have slightly higher fertility than in Europe (1.7 to 2.2). Chile falls within the European range, but all of the other countries in Latin America have slightly higher fertility (2.2 to 2.6), and the African countries have markedly higher fertility (2.4 to 5.7).

Differences in mortality—both in infancy and early adulthood—mean that not all children born will complete their own reproductive years. The Net Reproduction Rate reflects the number of surviving daughters per woman (rather than the total children per woman given by the Total Fertility Rate). Because the highest fertility countries are also the highest mortality countries, this adjustment reveals a greater convergence in family size than is apparent from the Total Fertility Rate (see Table 2). While there are 5.7 times as many births in Nigeria as in Taiwan, there are only 3.6 times as many surviving daughters. Most of the convergence in family size across the globe historically is a result of declining fertility, but at this stage persistently high mortality in sub-Saharan Africa also contributes to convergence in family size.

Still, global fertility trends indicate that children in Africa generally come from large families, as is also the case in much of the Middle East and South/Southeast Asia. In other regions of the world, children are most likely to have one or no siblings.

CONCLUSIONS

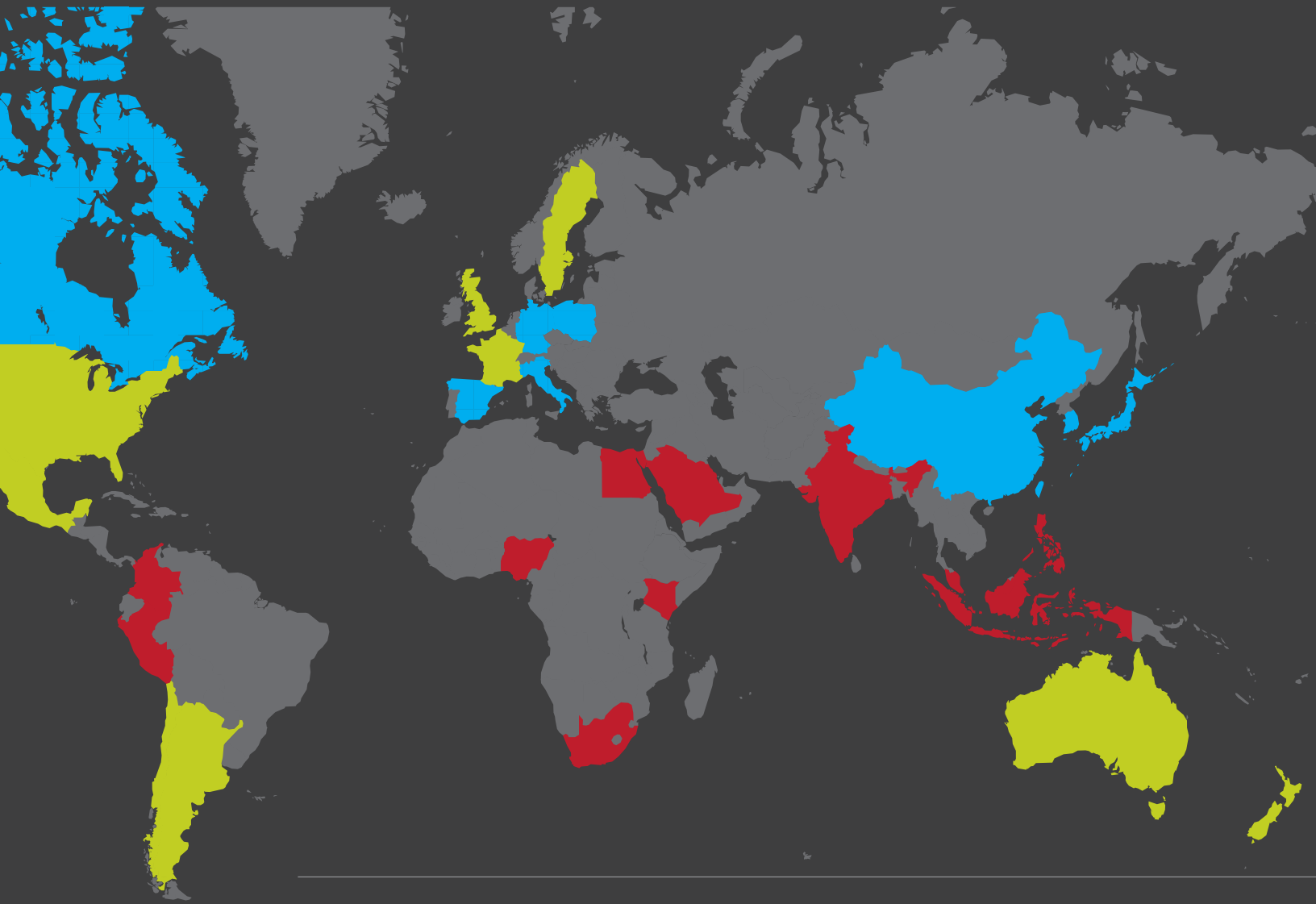
Many countries have witnessed dramatic demographic changes over the last half-century. From the perspective of children, two trends are particularly noteworthy. In much of the world, children are growing up in families that are, by historical standards, quite small; indeed, demographers describe current trends in East Asia and Europe as “lowest-low” fertility.¹⁰ Likewise, more and more children grow up in single-parent families, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania. It remains to be seen how recent shifts in fertility and family structure are affecting the emotional, social, and economic welfare of the world's contemporary children.

¹⁰ Hans-Peter Kohler, Francesco C. Billari, and José A. Ortega, “The emergence of lowest-low fertility in Europe during the 1990s,” *Population and Development Review* 28 (2002): 641–681; Makoto Atoh, Vasantha Kandiah, and Serguey Ivanov, “The Second Demographic Transition in Asia? A Comparative Analysis of the Low Fertility Situation in East and South-East Asian Countries,” *The Japanese Journal of Population* 2 (2004): 42–75.



FIGURE 3

TOTAL FERTILITY RATES, 2010



HIGH



MED



LOW

"Many countries have witnessed dramatic demographic changes over the last half-century...In much of the world, children are growing up in families that are, by historical standards, quite small."

GLOBAL FAMILY CULTURE

KEY FINDINGS: Throughout the world, support for the institution of the family is strong. In every country examined except Sweden, men and women agree that a child needs a mother and father to grow up happily. In all 29 countries, a majority of adults believes marriage is still relevant and that an additional emphasis on family life would be a good thing. Nevertheless, support for marital permanence is weaker, with adults in many countries taking a relatively permissive stance toward divorce.

Marriage is a near-universal institution around the globe. The meaning of marriage, however, varies from country to country and has changed across time. In many places around the world, marriage has become about love and companionship—a stark contrast to pre-Industrial Revolution marriages that were to a large degree about economic survival. Still, marriage continues to be viewed by many as the “gold standard” in relationships, as the optimal arrangement for childrearing, and as a relationship that should not easily be terminated. Precisely how many hold these views around the world is not clear.

To shed light on adults’ attitudes toward marriage and family life around the world, we present data from the World Values Survey, collected between 1999 and 2007, on four cultural indicators in 29 countries: (1) agreement that a child needs a home with a mother and father to grow up happily, (2) disagreement that marriage is an outdated institution, (3) agreement that more societal emphasis on family life would be a good thing, and (4) opinions about how justified divorce is. Because the World Values Survey has been collected since the early 1980s in many of the 29 countries of interest, we are also able to paint a portrait of changes in family culture over the last 25 years or so.

DO CHILDREN NEED A MOTHER AND FATHER?

The vast majority of adults around the world believe a child needs to be raised in a home with both a mother and a father in order to grow up happily (see [Table 3](#) and [Figure 4](#)). This sentiment is strong in South America; more than 75 percent of adults in Argentina (88 percent), Chile (76 percent), Colombia (86 percent), and Peru (93 percent) believe a two-parent home is necessary for a happy childhood. North Americans are less likely to agree to this idea, but still 63 percent of U.S. adults and 65 percent of Canadians affirm the mother-father household as optimal for raising happy children.

Agreement with the mother-father family ideal is even stronger in Europe than in the Americas, with the sole exception of Sweden. There, only 47 percent of adults agree that a child needs to be raised by a mother and father to be happy. Notably, Sweden is the only country in the world where a minority agrees with this sentiment. Agreement with a mother-father ideal exceeds 90 percent in Italy (93 percent) and

TABLE 3

% AGREEING THAT CHILDREN NEED "A MOTHER AND FATHER TO GROW UP HAPPILY"
 % DISAGREEING THAT "MARRIAGE IS AN OUTDATED INSTITUTION"
 % AGREEING THAT "MORE EMPHASIS ON FAMILY LIFE WOULD BE A GOOD THING"
 MEAN VALUE FOR HOW UNJUSTIFIED DIVORCE IS (1=ALWAYS JUSTIFIED, 0=NEVER JUSTIFIED)

Region	Country	% Agreeing that children need "a mother and father to grow up happily"	% Disagreeing that "marriage is an outdated institution"	% Agreeing that "more emphasis on family life would be a good thing"	Mean value for how unjustified divorce is (1=always justified, 0=never justified)
AFRICA	KENYA	-	-	-	-
	NIGERIA	97	85	94	8.5
	SOUTH AFRICA	91	77	86	7.1
ASIA	CHINA	97	88	92	8.3
	INDIA	90	80	75	7.1
	INDONESIA	81	96	87	8.0
	JAPAN	89	94	87	4.6
	MALAYSIA	92	86	78	7.4
	PHILIPPINES	97	83	92	7.8
	SOUTH KOREA	92	87	89	6.4
	TAIWAN	87	89	97	6.3
EUROPE	FRANCE	86	64	93	4.1
	GERMANY	88	78	87	4.3
	ITALY	93	81	93	6.0
	POLAND	95	91	94	6.3
	SPAIN	78	67	92	3.9
	SWEDEN	47	78	81	2.6
	UNITED KINGDOM	67	74	93	4.6
LATIN AMERICA	ARGENTINA	88	70	94	4.5
	CHILE	76	72	90	5.0
	COLOMBIA	86	75	99	6.3
	MEXICO	84	71	97	5.7
	PERU	93	80	96	7.2
MIDDLE EAST	EGYPT	99	96	96	6.0
	SAUDI ARABIA	95	83	90	6.4
NORTH AMERICA	CANADA	65	78	95	5.0
	UNITED STATES	63	87	88	5.2
OCEANIA	AUSTRALIA	70	82	90	4.3
	NEW ZEALAND	68	85	92	4.3

HIGH ■
 MED ■
 LOW ■

Source: World Values Survey, 1998-2008.

"The vast majority of adults around the world believe a child needs to be raised in a home with both a mother and a father in order to grow up happily."

Poland (95 percent) and 80 percent in France (86 percent) and Germany (88 percent). More than three-quarters (78 percent) of Spaniards view this family arrangement as best for children, as do two-thirds (67 percent) of British adults.

Support for the mother-father family type is nearly unanimous in the Middle Eastern and African countries: Egypt (99 percent), Saudi Arabia (95 percent), Nigeria (97 percent), and South Africa (91 percent). Asian support for children being raised by a mother and father is also strong. Most of the Asian countries profiled exceed 90 percent agreement: China (97 percent), India (90 percent), Malaysia (92 percent), Philippines (97 percent), and South Korea (92 percent); and the remainder exceed 80 percent: Indonesia (81 percent), Japan (89 percent), and Taiwan (87 percent). Australians (70 percent) and New Zealanders (68 percent) express less agreement, resembling Americans, Canadians, and British attitudes on this issue.

There is not clear evidence that this attitude is changing drastically over time in one particular direction. In most cases, support for a mother-father family type has remained relatively stable, or has fluctuated in a nonlinear fashion. Two notable exceptions to this are Chile, which saw agreement with this statement drop from 93 percent in 1990 to 76 percent in 2006; and Sweden, which fell from 71 percent agreement in 1982 to 47 percent in 2006. South African support for the mother-father family ideal may have even grown from 83 percent in 1982 to 91 percent in 2006.

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www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix

MARRIAGE AN OUTDATED INSTITUTION?

Like agreement that children need a mother and father to be happy, the overwhelming majority of adults around the world disagree that marriage is outdated (see Table 3). In none of the 29 countries did fewer than 64 percent of adults (France) feel this way. Between 70 and 80 percent of adults in most American countries disagree marriage is outdated: Argentina (70 percent), Canada (78 percent), Chile (72 percent), Colombia (75 percent), Mexico (71 percent), and Peru (80 percent). The United States stands out a bit from its neighbors, with 87 percent disagreeing marriage is outdated.

European support for marriage as a relevant institution is similarly strong in most countries. French (64 percent) and Spanish (67 percent) adults are the least likely to disagree marriage is outdated, but support for marriage as an institution exceeds 70 percent in Germany (78 percent), Sweden (78 percent), and the United Kingdom (74 percent). More than 80 percent believe marriage remains relevant in Italy (81 percent), and support for marriage surpasses 90 percent in Poland (91 percent).

Belief in marriage's relevance is even stronger—these data suggest—in most other parts of the world. The two Middle Eastern countries examined here exhibit strong support for the institution of marriage: Egypt (96 percent) and Saudi Arabia (83 percent). In Africa, 85 percent of Nigerians believe marriage is not outdated; a relatively low (but still high in absolute terms) percentage of South Africans (77 percent) feel the same way. Marriage receives high levels of support throughout Asia and Oceania as well: China (88 percent), India (80 percent), Indonesia (96 percent), Japan (94 percent), Malaysia (86 percent), Philippines (83 percent), South Korea (87 percent), Taiwan (89 percent), Australia (82 percent), and New Zealand (85 percent).

There is some evidence of a decline in this attitude around the world, though it is clearly not universal and not precipitous. Double-digit declines in support for marriage occurred in Chile from 1990 to 2006 (85 percent to 72 percent), in Mexico from 1981 to 2005 (81 percent to 71 percent), in Great Britain from 1981 to 1999 (86 percent to 74 percent), and in India from 1990 to 2006 (95 percent to 80 percent). Double-digit increases, however, took place in Japan (76 percent to 94 percent). Still, decline in support for marriage seems to be the more common trend, as modest declines in support for the institution can be seen in many of the other countries examined here.

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MORE EMPHASIS ON FAMILY LIFE A GOOD THING?

Around the world, adults overwhelmingly believe that family life deserves more emphasis (Table 3). When asked whether more emphasis on family life would be a good thing, a bad thing, or something they wouldn't mind, vast majorities report that this would be a good thing. In most countries in the Americas, 90 percent or more believe additional emphasis on family life would be a good thing: Argentina (94 percent), Canada (95 percent), Chile (90 percent), Colombia (99 percent), Mexico (97 percent), and Peru (96 percent). Desire for more emphasis on family is 88 percent in the United States.

European desire for a greater focus on family life is also strong. Swedes are the least likely Europeans to report such a development would be a good thing, but even 81 percent of Swedish

adults believe it would be good. Additional family emphasis would clearly be welcomed by most in France (93 percent), Germany (87 percent), Great Britain (93 percent), Italy (93 percent), Poland (94 percent), and Spain (92 percent).

Throughout the Middle East [Egypt (96 percent) and Saudi Arabia (90 percent)] and Africa [Nigeria (94 percent) and South Africa (86 percent)], adults view positively an added emphasis on family life. Asians would also welcome this added focus, although India (75 percent) and Malaysia (78 percent) less so than other countries [China (92 percent), Indonesia (87 percent), Japan (87 percent), Philippines (92 percent), South Korea (89 percent), and Taiwan (97 percent)]. In Oceania, too, a heightened focus on family life would be embraced by most [Australia (90 percent) and New Zealand (92 percent)].

If anything, the desire for added emphasis on family life appears to be growing around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix

» Relatively large increases in this attitude can be seen in Mexico (9 percentage points from 1981 to 2005), Great Britain (9 percentage points from 1981 to 2006), Spain (8 percentage points from 1981 to 2007), China (18 percentage points from 1990 to 2007), and Japan (7 percentage points from 1981 to 2005). Some countries have witnessed declines in this sentiment, however, including Chile (7 percentage points from 1990 to 2006) and the United States (7 percentage points from 1982 to 2006).

DIVORCE ATTITUDES

While support for mother-father families, marriage, and family life in general is strong around the world, attitudes toward divorce vary widely by region (see Table 3). On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being permissive and 10 being restrictive, countries range from the very permissive (Sweden, 2.6) to the very restrictive (Nigeria, 8.5). In the Americas, the countries with the most conservative attitudes about divorce are Peru (7.2) and Colombia (6.3). All other American countries fall below the scale midpoint of 5.5: Argentina (4.5), Canada (5.1), Chile (5.0), Mexico (5.7), and the United States (5.2).

The European countries range from moderate to permissive in their divorce attitudes, with Poland (6.3) and Italy (6.0) being the most restrictive. Swedish adults (2.6) believe divorce is almost always justifiable. Spain (3.9), France (4.1), Germany (4.3), and Great Britain (4.6) are also quite permissive.

The Middle East, Africa, and Asia have the most conservative attitudes toward divorce, though even here the numbers are not always extreme. Egypt (6.0) and Saudi Arabia (6.4) are fairly moderate in their stance on divorce. Nigeria (8.5) is the most conservative nation on this attitude, and South Africa (7.1) is also relatively restrictive. Asian countries vary somewhat widely in their attitudes,

ranging from Japan at 4.6 to China at 8.3. In between these extremes are moderate countries like South Korea (6.4) and Taiwan (6.3), and somewhat more conservative countries like India (7.1), Indonesia (8.0), Malaysia (7.4), and the Philippines (7.8).

Oceania, like Europe, is fairly permissive when it comes to divorce. Both Australia and New Zealand have average scores of 4.3, indicating divorce is justifiable more often than not.

There is a clear pattern of liberalization of divorce attitudes in the Americas, Europe, and Oceania. With the exceptions of Colombia, Peru, and Italy, countries in these regions

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have become more permissive in their divorce attitudes. We do not have longitudinal data for the Middle East,

but in Nigeria divorce attitudes appear to have become more conservative, and attitudes have been generally consistent across time in South Africa. China has seen attitudes become more restrictive—especially since 1995—but other Asian countries, specifically India, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, have become more permissive in their attitudes about divorce. So too have Australia and New Zealand.

CONCLUSIONS

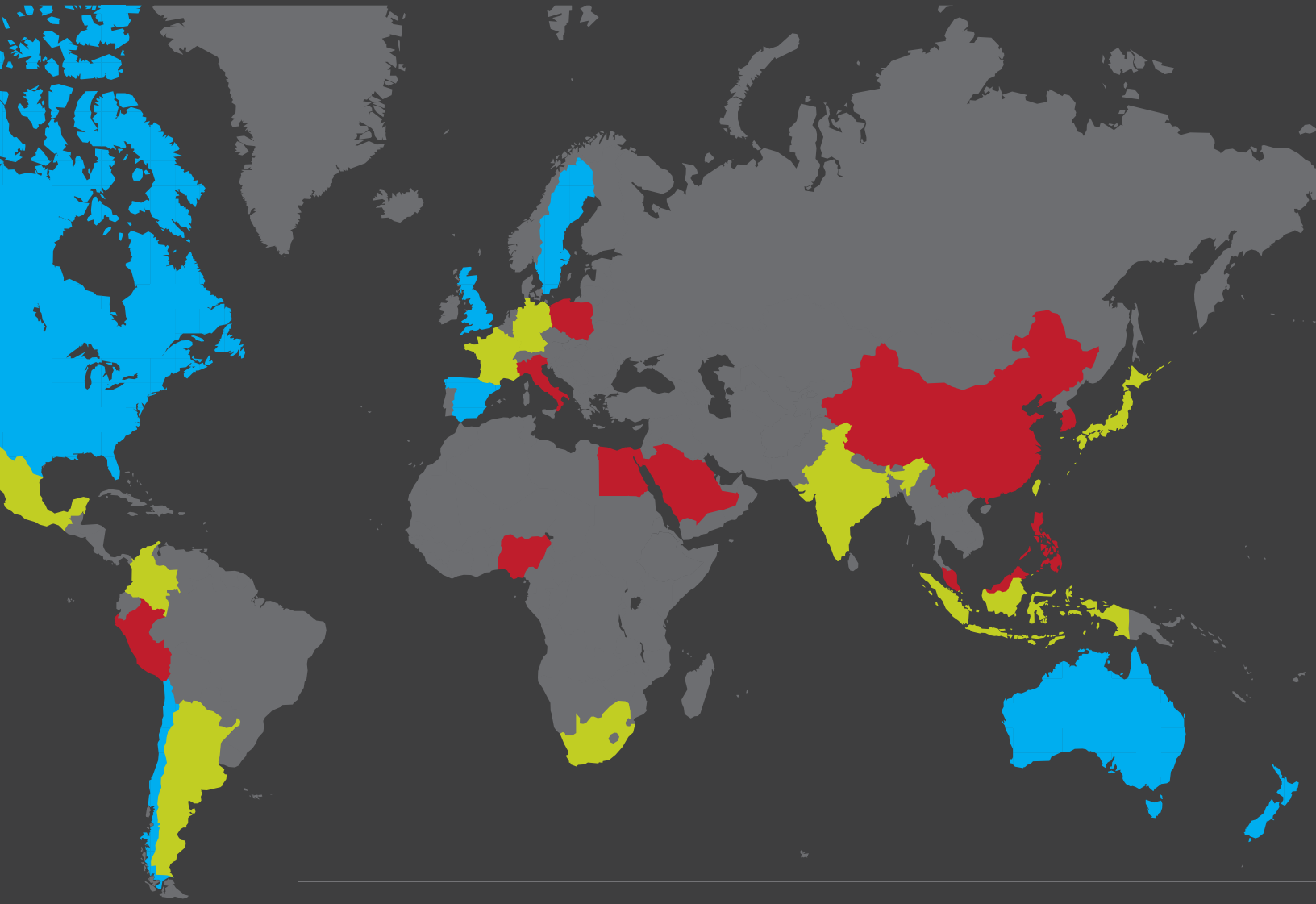
Taken together, these findings suggest that in most countries around the world, adults have relatively traditional family attitudes. They believe children need to be raised by a mother and father to grow up happily. They endorse marriage as an institution, and they wish that there were more emphasis placed on family life. Nevertheless, they hold relatively permissive attitudes toward divorce. This suggests that in many places around the world, adults are wrestling with the meaning of marriage and what an ideal family should look like. On the one hand, they value the institution and its childrearing benefits; on the other hand, they are more open to an individualistic understanding of marriage that allows for the termination of the relationship under many circumstances.

While these are the dominant patterns, there are clearly variations in family culture around the world. North America, Oceania, and Scandinavia generally take a more laissez-faire view of family matters, whereas Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America embrace a more familistic view of things. These differences can be attributed to variations in religiosity, economic development, political culture, and the relative importance of community vis-à-vis the individual in these different regions of the world.



FIGURE 4

PERCENT AGREEING THAT CHILDREN NEED “A MOTHER AND A FATHER TO GROW UP HAPPILY”, 1998-2008



HIGH



MED



LOW

“Taken together, these findings suggest that in most countries around the world, adults have relatively traditional family attitudes. They believe children need to be raised by a mother and father to grow up happily. They endorse marriage as an institution, and they wish that there were more emphasis placed on family life.”

GLOBAL FAMILY ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

KEY FINDING: Childhood mortality and undernourishment are both indicators of poverty, but there are variations in how well countries translate resources into good health outcomes.

Generally speaking, national income per capita is a good predictor of family economic well-being, and therefore the wealthier countries in our sample exhibit healthier outcomes related to poverty within families.¹¹ However, family economic well-being also varies with social and cultural factors. Here we map two outcomes that are indicative of material deprivation: childhood mortality and undernourishment in the entire population. While national income levels generally help predict the extent of deprivation in our target countries, there are notable outliers.

CHILDHOOD MORTALITY

Figure 5 indicates that Sweden and Japan share extremely low childhood mortality with a rate of 3 deaths before age five per 1,000 live births (see also Table 4). A lower rate is virtually inconceivable because many infants die in the first minutes of life due to genetic causes. The other East Asian countries and all of our European countries besides Poland have childhood mortality rates of 6 or lower, and Poland's 7 is still quite respectable given that its national income per capita is less than 60 percent of the next poorest European country in our sample (Italy).¹² Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also have childhood mortality of 6 or lower, but the United States does not; despite having higher per capita income than Sweden, its childhood mortality rate is 8. Racial inequality within the United States is the most widely accepted reason for persistently high childhood mortality, as infant deaths among U.S. blacks are more than twice as common as in the white population.¹³

Childhood death is as rare in Malaysia as it is in the rich industrialized countries at 6 per 1,000 live births. The Philippines and Indonesia have rates in the 30s, much more typical of their income levels. In Latin America, Chile stands as an example of positive deviance with a childhood mortality rate of 9, while other countries in the region range from 14–21. Chile's advantage could derive from having a greater share of its population living in urban areas and from a low fertility rate correlating with fewer high-risk births. Additionally, the data from Chile support a long-standing theory that high levels of political participation result in better national health care delivery.¹⁴

¹¹ Mortality declined dramatically in today's developed countries before the rise of modern medicine for income-related reasons, including the spread of covered sewage systems, the use of soap, and stabilization of food supplies (see Thomas McKeown, *The Modern Rise of Population* [London: Edward Arnold, 1976]).

¹² Population Reference Bureau, *World Population Data Sheet 2010* (Washington DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2010).

¹³ W. Frisbie, "Infant Mortality," in Dudley Poston and Michael Micklin (eds.), *Handbook of Population* (Springer, 2005): 251–282.

¹⁴ See John C. Caldwell, "Routes to Low Mortality in Poor Countries," *Population and Development Review* 12 (1986): 171–220; Frank W. Young, "The structural causes of infant mortality decline in Chile," *Social Indicators Research* 31 (1994): 27–46.

TABLE 4

CHILDHOOD MORTALITY, 2009
% OF POP. UNDERNOURISHED,
2004-2008

Region	Country	Childhood Mortality, 2009	% of Pop. Undernourished, 2004-2008
AFRICA	KENYA	84	31
	NIGERIA	138	9
	SOUTH AFRICA	62	<2.5
ASIA	CHINA	19	12
	INDIA	66	20
	INDONESIA	39	6
	JAPAN	3	<2.5
	MALAYSIA	6	3
	PHILIPPINES	33	18
	SOUTH KOREA	5	<2.5
	TAIWAN	6	4
EUROPE	FRANCE	4	<2.5
	GERMANY	4	<2.5
	ITALY	4	<2.5
	POLAND	7	<2.5
	SPAIN	4	<2.5
	SWEDEN	3	<2.5
	UNITED KINGDOM	6	<2.5
	LATIN AMERICA	ARGENTINA	14
CHILE		9	4
COLOMBIA		19	13
MEXICO		17	5
PERU		21	12
MIDDLE EAST	EGYPT	21	4
	SAUDI ARABIA	21	4
NORTH AMERICA	CANADA	6	<2.5
	UNITED STATES	8	<2.5
OCEANIA	AUSTRALIA	5	<2.5
	NEW ZEALAND	6	<2.5

Sources: www.sustaindemographicdividend.org/e-ppendix/sources.

“Generally speaking, national income per capita is a good predictor of family economic well-being, and therefore the wealthier countries in our sample exhibit healthier outcomes related to poverty within families.”

China’s childhood mortality rate of 19 looks very poor within East Asia, but is not at all an outlier given China’s much lower per capita income than its neighbors. In the Middle East, Egypt and Saudi Arabia both have rates of 21. Saudi income levels would predict a single-digit rate, all else being equal; however, distribution of oil wealth is far from equal in Saudi Arabia.

The countries with high childhood mortality rates are South Africa (62), India (66), Kenya (84), and Nigeria (138). South Africa has more than three times the national income per capita that India does, but is one of the highest HIV-prevalent countries in the world. In contrast, even though Kenya suffers more from the HIV/AIDS epidemic than does Nigeria, Kenya’s childhood mortality rate is lower than Nigeria’s.¹⁵ This is largely because Nigeria has comparatively high rates of malaria, inadequate sanitation, and underdeveloped infrastructure.

UNDERNOURISHMENT

Much the same story emerges when the proportion of the population that is undernourished is considered as a measure of poverty instead of the childhood mortality rate, and again the exceptions are the interesting part of the story (see Table 4). The United States is not a negative outlier here; like other wealthy countries, less than 2.5 percent of its population is undernourished. Poland and Malaysia remain positive outliers, though Chile no longer stands out with its 4 percent falling between Argentina’s 3 and Mexico’s 5. The poorest Latin American countries in our sample, Colombia and Peru, have higher rates of undernourishment (12-13 percent). Taiwan seems to have an unusually high rate for its income level at 4 percent, but the actual rate may be 2.5 percent.¹⁶ Egypt and Saudi Arabia again come in at the same level (4); this is a success story for Egypt, where income levels more closely resemble its African neighbors than its Middle Eastern neighbors.

Indonesia far outperforms the Philippines on this measure, even though mortality is higher in Indonesia than in the Philippines. Nigeria is not a negative outlier with respect to malnourishment,

¹⁵ Population Reference Bureau, *World Population Data Sheet 2010*.

¹⁶ Undernourished population for Taiwan as calculated using FAO methodology is 3.98 percent as shown here; Yeh et al. “An Empirical Study of Taiwan’s Food Security Index,” *Public Health Nutrition* 13 (2010): 1056-63 argue for methodological adjustments that would put Taiwan in line with other developed countries.

again pointing to disease rather than poverty alone as the reason for its high childhood mortality. Similarly but even more dramatically, less than 2.5 percent of the South African population is undernourished.

CONCLUSIONS

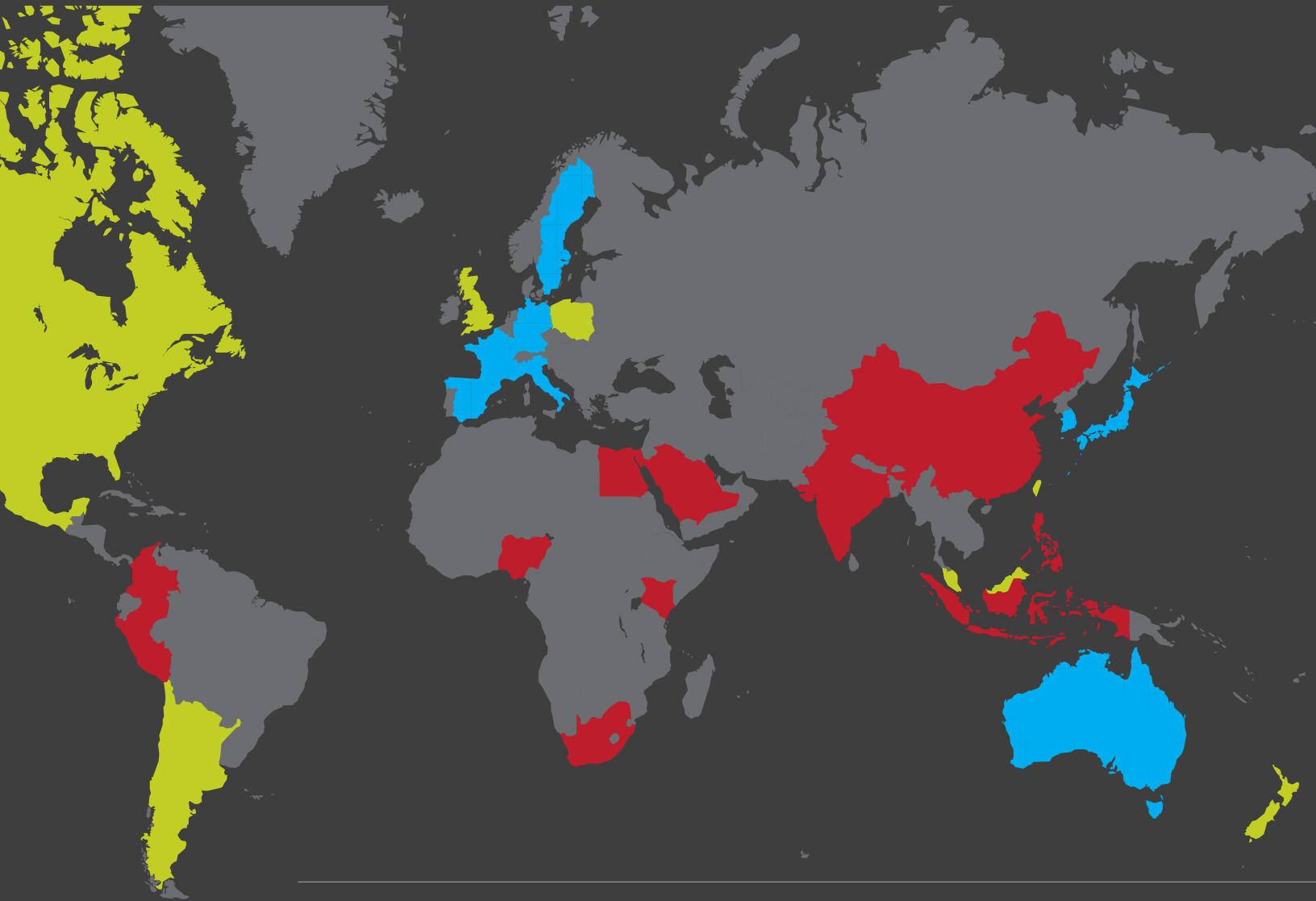
Both childhood mortality and undernourishment are indicators of poverty, but childhood mortality is more heavily influenced by how well families are able to control infectious disease. There are clearly national-level factors that aid and inhibit family well-being in these two domains. The range of these factors is quite varied, including racial inequality, political participation, income distribution, sanitation, malaria, and HIV/AIDS.

Laurie DeRose is research assistant professor in the Maryland Population Research Center at the University of Maryland, College Park.



FIGURE 5

CHILDHOOD MORTALITY, 2009



HIGH



MED



LOW

"Both childhood mortality and undernourishment are indicators of poverty, but childhood mortality is more heavily influenced by how well families are able to control infectious disease."

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