

WORLD  
FAMILY  
MAP 2015

MAPPING FAMILY CHANGE AND  
CHILD WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

ESSAY

NO ONE BEST WAY:  
WORK, FAMILY, AND  
HAPPINESS THE  
WORLD OVER

*An International Report from*



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# WORLD FAMILY MAP 2015

## MAPPING FAMILY CHANGE AND CHILD WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

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# Executive Summary

*Mindy E. Scott, W. Bradford Wilcox, Renee Ryberg, and Laurie DeRose*

The *World Family Map Project* monitors the global health of the family by tracking 16 indicators of family structure, family socioeconomics, family processes, and family culture in multiple countries around the world. Each annual report of the project shares the latest data on these indicators, as well as an original essay focusing on one important aspect of contemporary family life. In both the indicators and the essay, we share the highest-quality data available for countries that are representative of each region of the world. Scholars around the globe serve as advisors and analysts for the project, stimulating a large community of researchers to gather new data and conduct innovative studies on families and children.

This third edition of the *World Family Map*, which is sponsored by Child Trends, the Social Trends Institute, and a range of international educational and nongovernmental institutions, provides updated indicators of family well-being worldwide. The *World Family Map* indicators show that there are distinct family patterns across regions, and also variation within regions. Families are changing around the world. Marriage is becoming less common. Severe economic hardships, including extreme poverty and undernutrition, are diminishing, yet remain real struggles for a significant minority of the world's population. There are many other patterns to discover in the report. Each country and region has unique strengths to offer as an example for others to follow, and each also has areas of life where families face ongoing challenges.

This year's essay examines how couples around the globe split up work and family responsibilities. International data reveal there is no one dominant pattern for dividing paid and domestic work in any world region. Moreover, no particular approach to the division of labor is consistently linked to higher levels of happiness among parents in most parts of the world, although parents who have a partner with whom to divide the labor report more happiness than parents who do not have a partner. We summarize selected findings from this year's family indicators below.

## Family Structure

Family structure refers to whom a child lives with, including parents and other family members, and the relationships between them.

- **The majority of children around the globe live in two-parent families. In all countries except South Africa, more than half of children live with two parents. Children are especially likely to live with both parents in Asia and the Middle East.**
- **Extended families, who (like parents) can provide an important measure of social and economic support to children, are most widespread in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia and Central/South America. Indeed, in Central/South America and sub-Saharan Africa, a relatively large minority of children live with only one or no parents, but the households of children in these regions are more likely to include extended family members, who may compensate for the absence of one or both parents.**
- **Children are also more likely to live with one or no parents in North America, Europe, and Oceania than in Asia and the Middle East, though living with extended families is less common in these regions.**
- **Though the prevalence of marriage varies widely around the world, the proportion of reproductive-age adults who are married is declining in almost all regions. Marriage tends to be more common in Asia and the Middle East than in other regions, whereas alternatives to marriage—including cohabitation—are more popular in Europe and Central/South America. North America, Oceania, and sub-Saharan Africa fall in between.**

- Between 20 percent (Chile) and 35 percent (Colombia) of reproductive-age adults are part of cohabiting unions in South America, with Colombia registering the highest level of cohabitation of any country in our global study. Meanwhile, cohabitation has become more prevalent in Spain, doubling in popularity from 7 percent of the adult population in 2007 to 14 percent in 2011.
- Like the prevalence of marriage, fertility rates vary widely around the world. Women in East Asia and Europe experience low fertility levels that may result in shrinking populations, while women in some sub-Saharan African countries are actually having more babies than in the recent past.
- Central/South America is home to the world's most elevated rates of nonmarital childbearing, followed by Northern and Western Europe. In South America, well over half of children are born to unmarried mothers, with Colombia registering the highest levels (84 percent). In much of Europe, between one-third and half of children are born outside of marriage, and in France and Sweden, more than 50 percent of children are. In many European countries, the average age at first marriage now exceeds the average age at first childbirth.

## Family Socioeconomics

The economic conditions people experience in childhood can exercise a large influence on their development. The indicators in this section include poverty, undernourishment, parental education and employment, and public benefits for families.

- In 2010, the world reached the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the number of people living on less than one US dollar a day between 1990 and 2015. However, progress toward this goal has been uneven, and high rates of absolute poverty persist in parts of Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central/South America.
- The global proportion of people who suffer from hunger has declined, but the United Nations' MDG to cut that number in half between 1990 and this year was not met. Undernourishment, which disproportionately affects children, remains a problem for more than one in 10 people in the developing world. It is concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, Central/South America, and parts of Asia.
- There is wide variation in levels of parental education and employment around the world. The percentage of heads of households who have completed secondary education is in the single digits in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, while secondary education is the norm in much of North America, Oceania, and Europe. The majority of household heads are employed in all countries except South Africa, and children in Asia are most likely to live with employed household heads.

## Family Processes

Family processes describe how families operate: how family members interact with one another, how often they spend time together, and whether they are satisfied with their family lives. These processes can influence the lives of individual family members, in either positive or negative directions.

- The majority of adults agree that both men and women should contribute to household income in all the countries examined in this report. In some countries, such as Australia, just over 50 percent of adults believe this, whereas in others, like the Philippines, this belief is nearly universal.
- People express a wide range of levels of satisfaction with family life around the world. As in previous years, the highest levels of family satisfaction are found in South America, where 78 percent of Argentineans and 67.5 percent of Chileans report being completely or very satisfied with their family lives. In contrast, less than one-third of adults in Asia report being satisfied with their family lives.

## Family Culture

The family culture indicators monitor national attitudes and values on family issues. They describe the cultural climate in which children grow up.

- **In all countries examined, the majority of adults agree that working mothers can establish relationships with their children that are as strong as those of stay-at-home mothers. Levels of support range from just over 50 percent in Chile to 80 percent in France.**
- **Support for single parents is lower than for working mothers. About half of adults believe that one parent can raise a child as well as two parents. Single parenthood is least accepted in China, where less than one-quarter of adults believe that one parent can bring up a child as well as two.**

## Essay on Work, Family, and Happiness the World Over

This year's essay further highlights the diversity of family processes and family culture within and across countries. Building on the previous *World Family Map Project* essays, which focused on the consequences of family structure for, respectively, children's educational attainment and health, this year's essay studies some of the factors that influence family well-being. Data on 32 countries from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2012 survey on Family and Changing Gender Roles were used to examine how married and cohabiting couples with children divide market and household work and whether couples' happiness depends on this division of labor. Specifically, the essay aims to:

- 1– **document how couples with children divide labor force participation, housework, and child care;**
- 2– **explore whether individual factors like age, education, and religiosity affect how couples divide labor in the same way across societies or whether the influence of these factors depends on region-specific contexts; and**
- 3– **assess whether and how the division of labor is associated with happiness.**

As the essay explains in greater depth, our findings suggest that there is no one dominant pattern for dividing paid and domestic work across the globe. Instead, every region is home to a variety of ways of sharing the total family workload. Men and especially women with children do more domestic work than their peers without children. Yet having children is more associated with a traditional division of labor in richer countries than in lower-income ones. Finally, the division of paid and domestic labor among couples with children is largely irrelevant to the levels of happiness they report.

We know from research and previous WFM findings that the experiences of children in different family structures are diverse, and children can flourish in all kinds of families, including single-parent families. With respect to reported happiness, this year's edition of the *World Family Map* found that how couples with children divide labor does not seem to influence the levels of happiness they report, except in Eastern and Western Europe. However, there are differences in levels of reported happiness between single parents and couples with children: couples report higher levels of happiness.

This report monitors the strength of the family globally, and provides updated indicators of family structure, family socioeconomics, family processes, and family culture. Together, the indicators and the essay present findings that can be used by policymakers, service providers, and others to identify opportunities to help families flourish, from maintaining family stability, reducing family poverty, and alleviating undernourishment to studying the diverse family processes and cultural norms that help to shape people's everyday lives.



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## WORLD FAMILY INDICATORS

*Renee Ryberg, Laura H.  
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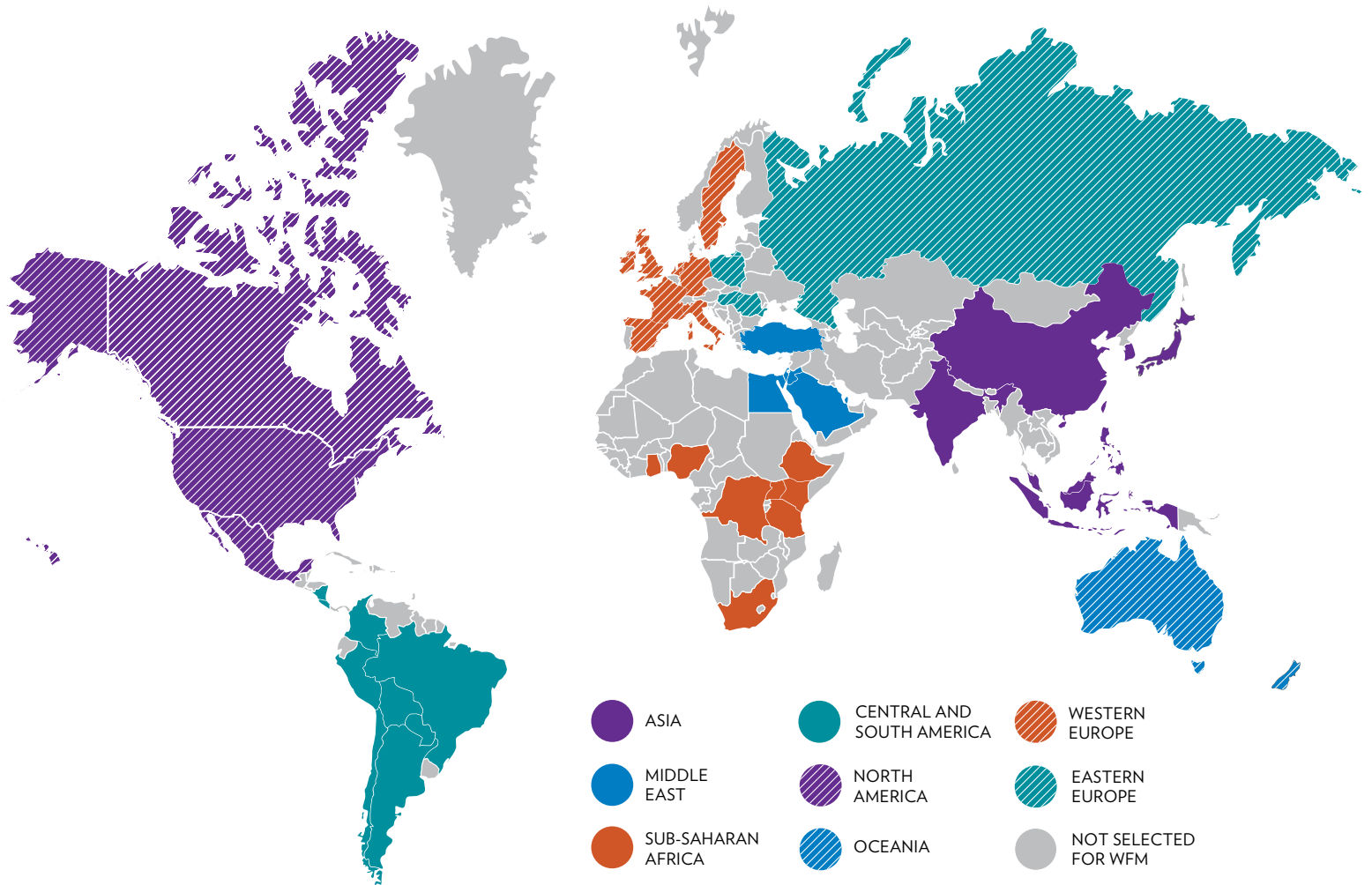
This section of the 2015 *World Family Map* report provides information on 16 indicators of family well-being in four areas—family structure, family socioeconomics, family process, and family culture—across 49 countries that are home to a majority of the world’s population.

The indicators for the *World Family Map* 2015 demonstrate the diversity of families and nations in which children are being raised. Every region of the world is home to distinct patterns of family structure, socioeconomics, family process, and culture, and there is often variation within regions. Major changes in families are taking place around the world. Marriage is becoming less common almost everywhere, while cohabitation is becoming more common in select regions. The world has made progress toward the Millennium Development Goal for reducing malnutrition; however, families continue to face stressors such as extreme poverty and parental unemployment. Parents and extended family members have limited control over some of these problems, but one avenue through which they can directly facilitate strong family relationships and positive child outcomes is parent-child communication, which takes daily efforts and participation.

This report is updated annually with new data, as available. With the exception of one indicator in the family process section, and one indicator in the family culture section, here we present the same indicators—updated when possible—as we did in the 2014 report.

# General Methods

**FIGURE 1** Countries in the 2015 World Family Map



- China
  - India
  - Indonesia
  - Japan
  - Malaysia
  - Philippines
  - Singapore
  - South Korea
  - Taiwan
- ASIA**

- Egypt
  - Israel
  - Jordan
  - Qatar
  - Saudi Arabia
  - Turkey
- MIDDLE EAST**

- Democratic Republic of the Congo
  - Ethiopia
  - Ghana
  - Kenya
  - Nigeria
  - South Africa
  - Tanzania
  - Uganda
- SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

- Argentina
  - Bolivia
  - Brazil
  - Chile
  - Colombia
  - Costa Rica
  - Nicaragua
  - Paraguay
  - Peru
- CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA**

- Canada
  - Mexico
  - United States
- NORTH AMERICA**

- Australia
  - New Zealand
- OCEANIA**

- France
  - Germany
  - Ireland
  - Italy
  - Netherlands
  - Spain
  - Sweden
  - United Kingdom
- WESTERN EUROPE**

- Hungary
  - Poland
  - Romania
  - Russian Federation
- EASTERN EUROPE**



**SELECTING INDICATORS:** Along with advisors representing every region of the world, the study team selected indicators using a research-based conceptual framework of family strengths. We generated indicators in the following four domains: family structure, family socioeconomics, family process, and family culture. Indicators were chosen for each domain based on their importance to family and child well-being and on data availability, as well as a concern for regional representation and balance in the number of indicators across domains.

**SELECTING COUNTRIES:** When designing this report, it was necessary to select a set of countries for which comparisons could be made. While it was not possible to include all of the approximately 200 countries in the world, countries were selected to ensure regional representation of high-, middle-, and low-income countries. Data availability for the desired time period was also considered. These factors resulted in focusing on 49 countries—an increase from 45 countries in the original 2013 report—that account for over 75 percent of the world’s population.<sup>1</sup> **Figure 1** displays the countries by region. As more data become available on key indicators of family well-being, the *World Family Map* will be able to include more countries.

**DATA SOURCES:** Numerous data sources track indicators of family well-being. The sources presented here, which are listed below, were selected for their quality, their coverage of countries, and their indicators. These sources have a reputation for using rigorous data collection methodologies across countries, or in cases where they collected data from individual country sources, such as censuses, they harmonized the data to ensure comparability across countries. In addition, we chose data sources in which multiple countries were represented; however, data from the same source may not be available for all countries or for the same year across countries, so caution is needed in making comparisons. For each indicator a primary data source was chosen. When data for a particular country were not available from that source, other sources were used to supplement. When data are available from the same source for multiple years, we note changes in indicators that are five percentage points or larger.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, DVD Edition*.

## Data Sources

**Country-level sources** When data were not available from an international survey, country-level data sources were sought. Examples include data from national statistics bureaus and country-level surveys.

**Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS):** DHS is a survey of more than 90 developing nations, focusing on population and health information. This report uses the most recent data available for each country, ranging from 2001 to 2014.

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):** As part of the United Nations, FAO compiles statistics on food and agriculture-related indicators, including undernourishment. The most recent data are projected for 2014 to 2016 and were extracted from their statistical division’s online database FAOSTAT.

**Integrated Public Use Microdata Series-International (IPUMS):** IPUMS is a compilation of harmonized censuses from countries throughout the world. This report uses the most recent data available for each country, ranging from 2000 to 2011.

**International Social Survey Programme (ISSP):** ISSP is a collaboration between annual national surveys to ensure data comparability on social science questions. This report uses their 2012 collection on family and changing gender roles. These surveys were fielded around 2012, but not necessarily in the 2012 calendar year.

**LIS (formerly known as the Luxembourg Income Study):** LIS is a collection of harmonized data on the income and wealth of individuals in middle- and high-income countries. Data from LIS used in this report date from 2002 to 2013.

**Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):** OECD’s Family Database provides cross-national statistics on the well-being of families and children throughout the member and partner countries of the OECD.

**Program for International Student Assessment (PISA):** PISA is an international tri-annual assessment of literacy in reading, mathematics, and science. PISA is administered in all OECD member countries as well as additional self-selected countries. This report uses data from the contextual part of the 2012 parent survey. Unfortunately, the items of interest were asked in a small group of countries in this iteration of the survey.

**UNICEF Innocenti Research Center:** UNICEF’s 2015 State of the World’s Children report was used for information on fertility.

**World Bank:** The World Bank provides a wealth of information on their databank at [data.worldbank.org](http://data.worldbank.org). This report utilizes their data on absolute poverty.

**World Values Survey (WVS):** WVS is a survey of political and sociocultural values in more than 50 countries. This report uses the most recent data available for each country, from the fourth through sixth survey waves, which date from 2001 to 2014.

For more information on specific sources, see e-ppendix at [worldfamilymap.org/e-ppendix](http://worldfamilymap.org/e-ppendix).

# Family Structure

## Key Findings

Children's lives are influenced by the resources and care provided by parents, siblings, and other adults that they live with, as well as by whether their parents are married. The *World Family Map* reports these key indicators of family structure in this section.

- Although two-parent families are becoming less common in many regions, they still constitute a majority of families around the globe. Children are particularly likely to live in two-parent families in Asia and the Middle East. They are more likely to live with one or no parent in the Americas, Europe, Oceania, and sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions.
- Extended families, which include parent(s) and kin from outside the nuclear family, are common in Asia, the Middle East, Central/South America, and sub-Saharan Africa, but not in other regions of the world.
- Marriage rates are declining in many regions. Adults are most likely to be married in Asia and the Middle East, and are least likely to be married in Central/South America, with Africa, Europe, North America, and Oceania falling in between. Cohabitation (living together without marriage) is more prevalent among couples in Europe, North America, Oceania, and, to an especially high degree, Central/South America.
- Childbearing rates are declining worldwide. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest fertility rates of any region; for instance, in Nigeria, a woman gives birth to an average of 6.0 children over her lifetime. Moderate rates of fertility are found in the Middle East, while the Americas and Oceania have levels of fertility that are sufficient to replace, but not expand, a country's population in the next generation (about 2.1). Below-replacement-level fertility is widespread in East Asia and Europe.
- Amid the decline in marriage rates, childbearing outside of marriage—or *nonmarital childbearing*—is increasing in many regions. Central/South America and Western Europe have the world's highest rates of nonmarital childbearing, with moderate rates found in North America, Oceania, and Eastern Europe. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa display varying rates of nonmarital childbearing, and the lowest rates are found in Asia and the Middle East.

## Living Arrangements

Family living arrangements—how many parents are present in the household and whether the household includes other relatives—shape the character and contexts of children's lives and influence the human resources available to them. As evidenced in [Figures 2 and 3](#), which are derived from IPUMS, DHS, and national censuses, the living arrangements that children experience vary substantially around the globe. And the distribution of children across these various types of family living arrangements is changing over time. The family strengths that are described in a subsequent section can be found in each type of family.

The regional patterns identified in this section suggest that children are especially likely to live with two parents and with extended family members in Asia and the Middle East. Extended families are likewise more common in Central/South America and sub-Saharan Africa, but in these two regions a relatively large minority of children's households contain a single parent or no parents. A sizeable minority of children also live with one parent in Western Europe, North America, and Oceania.

Living with kin is particularly common in much of Asia, the Middle East, Central/South America, and sub-Saharan Africa. In almost all of the countries in these regions, at least 40 percent of children live in households that include adults besides their parents, as [Figure 2](#) shows. In many cases, these adults are extended family members. Indeed, at least half of children live with adults besides their parents in parts of Africa (65 percent in Ghana, 60 percent in Nigeria, 70 percent in South Africa, and 60 percent in Tanzania); Asia (50 percent in India); South America (55 percent in Colombia and Nicaragua); and the Middle East (58 percent in Turkey). Notably, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the percentage of children who live with additional adults dropped from 58 percent in 2007 to 49 percent in 2013 to 2014. In these regions, then, children are especially likely to be affected by their relationships with non-parental adults such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins, compared with children living in regions where extended family members play smaller roles in their day-to-day lives. Living with adults other than parents can generate benefits for children, but, depending on the circumstances, it can also produce difficulties such as overcrowding, violence, and abuse.<sup>2</sup> It can also result from difficulties such as poverty, orphanhood, and parental incarceration.<sup>3</sup>

Whether in nuclear or extended family households, children are most apt to live with two parents (who could be biological parents, adoptive parents, or stepparents) in Asia and the Middle East. See [Figure 3](#). According to the data available for the specific countries examined in these regions, more than 80 percent of children in Asia and the Middle East live with two parents, ranging from 85 percent in the Philippines and Indonesia to 94 percent in Jordan. Similarly, about 80 percent of children in European countries—from 76 percent in the United Kingdom to 89 percent in Italy and Poland—live in two-parent households. In the Americas, two-parent households are somewhat less prevalent: between 62 percent (Colombia) and 78 percent (Canada) of children are part of two-parent homes. The two-parent pattern is more mixed in sub-Saharan Africa, ranging widely from 36 percent in South Africa to 78 percent in Nigeria. Some of the children living with two parents are in households that also include extended family, as noted above.

In much of Central/South America and sub-Saharan Africa, children have higher odds of living with either one or neither of their parents than children in other regions. Between 12 percent (Nigeria) and 43 percent (South Africa) of children in these regions live with a single parent, and between 4 percent (Argentina) and 20 percent (South Africa and Uganda) of them live in homes without either of their parents. Among the South American countries in this study, Colombia had the highest percentage of children living without either of their parents: 11 percent. The high percentage of South African children living with one parent or without either parent—43 percent and 20 percent, respectively—reflects the legacy of AIDS, which left many children orphaned,<sup>4</sup> and of apartheid, which produced high rates of labor migration.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> K. Kopko, "The Effects of the Physical Environment on Children's Development" (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Department of Human Development, n.d.); G. Morantz et al., "Child Abuse and Neglect among Orphaned Children and Youth Living in Extended Families in Sub-Saharan Africa: What Have We Learned from Qualitative Inquiry?," *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies: An International Interdisciplinary Journal for Research, Policy and Care* 8, no. 4 (2013).

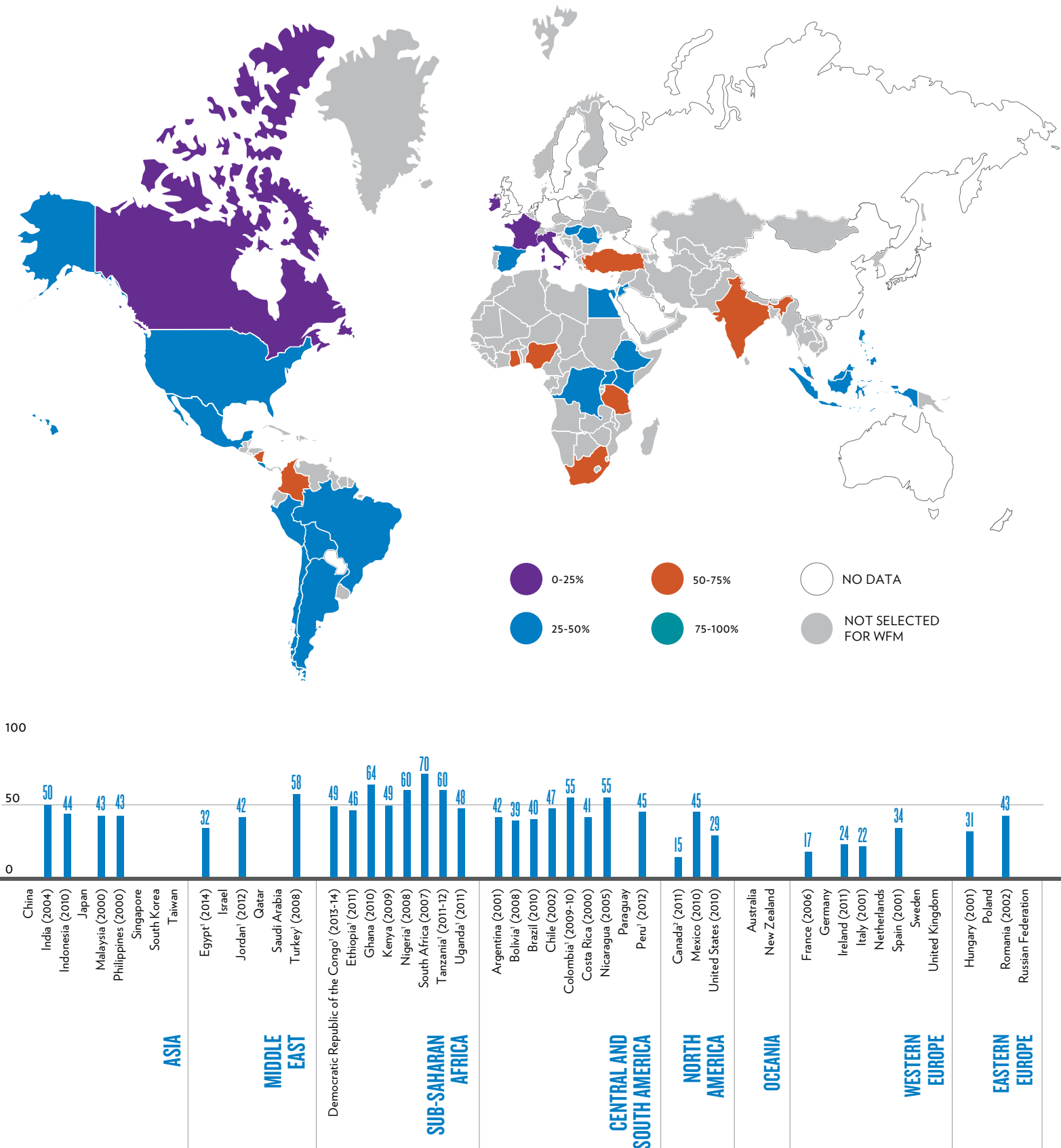
<sup>3</sup> K. Beegle, D. Filmer, A. Stokes, and L. Tiererova, "Orphanhood and the Living Arrangements of Children in Sub-Saharan Africa," The World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (2009); M. Kreidl and B. Hubatková, "Does Co-residence with Grandparents Reduce the Negative Association Between Sibship Size and Reading Test Scores?," *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, (2014); K. Turney, "The Intergenerational Consequences of Mass Incarceration: Implications for Children's Co-residence and Contact with Grandparents," *Social Forces* (2014).

<sup>4</sup> N. R. Matshalaga and G. Powell, "Mass Orphanhood in the Era of HIV/AIDS," *British Medical Journal* 324, no. 7331 (2002); A. J. McMichael et al., "Mortality Trends and Setbacks: Global Convergence or Divergence," *Lancet* 363, no. 9415 (2004).

<sup>5</sup> R. Smit, "The Impact of Labor Migration on African Families in South Africa: Yesterday and Today," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 32, no. 4 (2001).

# FIGURE 2 Living arrangements, 2000-2014

Percentage of children living with probable extended family (adults in addition to parents)



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure2](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure2)

# FIGURE 3 Living arrangements, 2000-2014

Percentage of children living with two, one, and no parents



- Means data on children living with no parents were not available

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure3](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure3)

Finally, in North America, Oceania, and Europe, a substantial minority—about one-fifth—of children live in single-parent households, and less than 6 percent of kids live in households without at least one of their parents. In Eastern Europe, 11 to 15 percent of children live with a lone parent. In these regions, the United States (27 percent), the United Kingdom (24 percent), and New Zealand (24 percent) exhibit particularly high levels of single parenthood. Many European countries have projected that the proportion of children living with single parents will grow through 2030.<sup>6</sup>

The experiences of children growing up with one parent are diverse around the world. For example, previous editions of the *World Family Map* have shown that children in low-income countries living with one parent don't necessarily have negative experiences, and living with one parent appears to be associated with benefits for some children when it comes to education.

## Marriage and Cohabitation

The nature, function, and everyday experience of marriage vary tremendously around the world. Marriage looks and feels different in Sweden than it does in Saudi Arabia; in China, compared with Canada; and in Argentina, compared with Australia. Nevertheless, across time and space, in most societies, marriage has been an important institution for structuring adults' intimate relationships and connecting parents to one another and to any children that they have together.<sup>7</sup> In particular, in many countries, marriage has played an important role in providing a stable context for bearing children, rearing them, and integrating fathers into their lives.<sup>8</sup>

However, today, the hold of the institution of marriage over the adult life course and the connection between marriage and parenthood differ significantly from one country to another. Dramatic increases in the prevalence of cohabitation, divorce, and nonmarital childbearing in the Americas, Europe, and Oceania over the last four decades suggest that the institution of marriage is becoming less relevant in these regions than in other regions.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the meaning of marriage appears to be shifting in much of the world. Marriage is becoming more of an option for adults, rather than a necessity for their and their children's survival. Cohabitation has emerged as a common precursor or alternative to marriage in many countries for any number of reasons. Adults may look for more flexibility or freedom in their relationships than marriage seems to offer, or they may feel that they do not have sufficient financial or emotional resources to marry, or they may perceive marriage as a risky undertaking, or simply unnecessary once they are cohabiting.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Doing Better for Families," OECD, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, B. Chapais, *Primeval Kinship: How Pair Bonding Gave Birth to Human Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); K. Davis, *Contemporary Marriage: Comparative Perspectives on a Changing Institution* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1985); W. J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

<sup>8</sup> Chapais, *Primeval Kinship*; P. Heuveline, J. M. Timberlake, and F. F. Furstenberg Jr., "Shifting Childrearing to Single Mothers: Results from 17 Western Countries," *Population and Development Review* 29, no. 1 (2003).

<sup>9</sup> R. Lesthaeghe, "A Century of Demographic and Cultural Change in Western Europe: An Exploration of Underlying Dimensions," *Population and Development Review* 9, no. 3 (1983); P. McDonald, *Families in Australia: A Socio-Demographic Perspective* (Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 1995); D. Popenoe, "Cohabitation, Marriage, and Child Well-Being: A Cross-National Perspective" (New Brunswick, NJ: The National Marriage Project, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> A. Cherlin, *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today* (New York: Knopf, 2009); M. Pollard and K. M. Harris, "Cohabitation and Marriage Intensity: Consolidation, Intimacy, and Commitment," working paper (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Labor and Population, 2013); Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005); W. J. Goode, *World Change in Divorce Patterns* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Heuveline et al., "Shifting Childrearing to Single Mothers."

**FIGURE 4** Marriage and cohabitation, 2000-2014



-- Means the data for cohabitation were not available

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure4](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure4)

Amid these changing patterns and perceptions, this section of the *World Family Map* measures the prevalence of marriage and cohabitation among adults in their prime childbearing and child-rearing years (18 to 49) around the globe. First we document the prevalence of the two forms of partnership combined, and then we discuss cohabitation and marriage separately.

**Figure 4** displays information on adult partnerships compiled from censuses and surveys conducted around 2010 in 45 of the 49 selected countries. In most countries throughout the world, between 50 and 70 percent of adults of reproductive age are in either marital or cohabiting relationships. Exceptionally low levels of partnerships are found in South Africa and Chile, where less than half of adults are cohabiting or married. On the opposite side of the spectrum, more than 70 percent of 18- to 49-year-olds in India, the Philippines, and Uganda are partnered.

Partnerships are generally most prevalent in Asia and the Middle East, ranging from 50 (Taiwan) to 78 percent (Philippines). The figures are more moderate in sub-Saharan Africa, where—excluding South Africa, where adults are more likely to be single than anywhere else in the world—between 51 percent (Nigeria) and 70 percent (Uganda) of reproductive-age adults are partnered. Similarly, Eastern Europe shows partnership levels from 57 (Hungary) to 65 percent (Romania). Partnerships are least prominent in the Americas, Oceania, and Western Europe, where between 49 percent (Chile) and 67 percent (Bolivia) of adults are cohabiting or married.

## Marriage

Adults aged 18 to 49 are most likely to be married in Asia and the Middle East, and are least likely to be married in Central/South America. Marriage levels fall in the moderate range (around 50 percent) in most of Europe, Oceania, and North America. Moreover, the data show that a larger percentage of adults are cohabiting in Western Europe and the Americas than in other regions.

As **Figure 4** shows, between 49 percent (Taiwan) and 75 percent (Indonesia) of the adult population in the Asian countries in our study are married, and marriage is even more common in the Middle East, where a clear majority of adults (between 55 percent in Israel, and 68 percent in Jordan) are married.

By contrast, marriage patterns fall in the middle range, or are less consistent, in the Americas, Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa. In North America and Oceania, about half of 18- to 49-year-old adults are married, ranging from 43 percent (Canada and Australia) to 63 percent (Mexico). The sub-Saharan African countries studied show a great deal of variation in marriage patterns, as well as on other family indicators noted above; anywhere between 26 percent (South Africa) and 63 percent (Ethiopia) of adults ages 18 to 49 are married. Indeed, adults in South Africa are less likely than those in any other country to be in unions (39 percent), and less likely than adults anywhere besides Colombia and Peru to be married. European countries likewise exhibit diverse marriage levels among reproductive-age adults, from 27 percent (Sweden) to 54 percent (Italy, Poland, and Romania), with marriage clearly being more common in Eastern Europe. By contrast, in Central/South America, less than half of adults are married (except in Costa Rica); in Colombia, the proportion of married adults is a worldwide low of 20 percent.

## Cohabitation

**Figure 4** indicates that cohabitation is rare in Asia and the Middle East, two regions where relatively traditional mores still dominate family life. In fact, cohabitation is such a sensitive topic in these regions that some surveys do not ask about it. North America and Oceania exhibit moderate to high levels of cohabitation: Between 9 percent (New Zealand) and 19 percent (Canada) of adults aged 18 to 49 are in cohabiting relationships in these regions.



Levels of cohabitation in sub-Saharan Africa vary considerably; they are relatively high in Uganda (25 percent) and low in Ethiopia (4 percent), Kenya (4 percent), and Nigeria (3 percent).

Levels of cohabitation are elevated in much of Western Europe. For example, about one-quarter of Swedish and French adults aged 18 to 49 are living in cohabiting relationships. Cohabitation is most common, however, among South Americans, where consensual unions—long-term cohabiting relationships, often involving childbearing, that may or may not ever lead to legal marriage—have played a longstanding role in society.<sup>11</sup> Between 20 percent (Chile) and 35 percent (Colombia) of reproductive-age adults are part of cohabiting unions in South America, with Colombia registering the highest level of cohabitation of any country in our global study.

In general, marriage is more common in Asia and the Middle East than in other regions, whereas alternatives to marriage—including cohabitation—are more common in Europe and Central/South America. North America, Oceania, and sub-Saharan Africa fall in between. Both cultural and economic forces may help to account for these regional differences.

While the prevalence of marriage varies widely, marriage is on the decline in almost all regions of the world, and in some regions cohabitation is becoming more prevalent. The proportion of adults who are married declined by about seven percentage points in South Korea and Taiwan from the mid-2000s to the early 2010s. The percentage of reproductive-age adults who were married in Egypt dropped from 80 percent in 2008 to 64 percent in 2013. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, married adults accounted for 60 percent of the adult population in 2007 versus 51 percent in 2013 while, at the same time, the proportion cohabiting increased from 8 percent to 14 percent. In Argentina, the percentage married dropped from 35 percent in 2006 to 28 percent in 2013. Australia also saw a drop from 50 percent in 2005 to 43 percent in 2012. In Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Russia between the mid-2000s and the early 2010s, the proportion married dropped an average of approximately 10 percentage points. Meanwhile, cohabitation became more prevalent in Spain, doubling in popularity from 7 percent of the adult population in 2007 to 14 percent in 2011. The only country where marriage has become more common in recent years is Turkey, where it rose from 61 percent in 2007 to 67 percent in 2011. It remains to be seen how the changing place of marriage in society and the increasing popularity of cohabitation in many regions affect the well-being of children in countries around the globe.

## Childbearing

Family size also affects the well-being of children, in part because children in large families tend to receive fewer financial and practical investments than do children in small families.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, some research suggests that children who grow up without siblings lose out on important social experiences and face an elevated risk of weight issues.<sup>13,14</sup> How, then, is region linked to family size around the globe?

**Table 1** presents each nation's total fertility rate (TFR) in 2013 (the average number of children each woman of childbearing age is expected to have over the course of her lifetime) as a proxy for family size. The data, which come from the United Nations Population Division, indicate that large families predominate in sub-Saharan Africa, where the total fertility rate ranges from 2.4 children per woman in South Africa to 6.0 per woman in Nigeria.

<sup>11</sup> T. C. Martin, "Consensual Unions in Latin America: Persistence of a Dual Nuptiality System," *Journal of Comparative Family Systems* 33, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>12</sup> D. B. Downey, "When Bigger Is Not Better: Family Size, Parental Resources, and Children's Educational Performance," *American Sociological Review* 60, no. 5 (1995).

<sup>13</sup> D. Downey and D. Condon, "Playing Well with Others in Kindergarten: The Benefit of Siblings at Home," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66, no. 2 (2004).

<sup>14</sup> A. Y. Chen and J. J. Escarce, "Family Structure and Childhood Obesity, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort," *Preventing Chronic Disease* 7, no. 3 (2010).

**TABLE 1 Total fertility rate, 2013**

*Number of children who would be born per woman if she lived to the end of her childbearing years and bore children at each age in accordance with prevailing age-specific fertility rates*

ASIA	MIDDLE EAST	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA
China 1.7	Egypt 2.8	Democratic Republic of the Congo 5.9	Argentina 2.2
India 2.5	Israel 2.9	Ethiopia 4.5	Bolivia 3.2
Indonesia 2.3	Jordan 3.2	Ghana 3.9	Brazil 1.8
Japan 1.4	Qatar 2.0	Kenya 4.4	Chile 1.8
Malaysia 2.0	Saudi Arabia 2.6	Nigeria 6.0	Colombia 2.3
Philippines 3.0	Turkey 2.0	South Africa 2.4	Costa Rica 1.8
Singapore 1.3		Tanzania 5.2	Nicaragua 2.5
South Korea 1.3		Uganda 5.9	Paraguay 2.9
Taiwan <sup>1</sup> 1.1			Peru 2.4
NORTH AMERICA	OCEANIA	WESTERN EUROPE	EASTERN EUROPE
Canada 1.7	Australia 1.9	France 2.0	Hungary 1.4
Mexico 2.2	New Zealand 2.1	Germany 1.4	Poland 1.4
United States 2.0		Ireland 2.0	Romania 1.4
		Italy 1.5	Russian Federation 1.5
		Netherlands 1.8	
		Spain 1.5	
		Sweden 1.9	
		United Kingdom 1.9	

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table1](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table1)

Amid a falling global TFR, in recent years Ethiopia and Nigeria have both experienced growth in their fertility rates (TFRs increasing by half a child). Fertility also remains comparatively high in the Middle East, ranging from a TFR of 2.0 in Qatar and Turkey to one of 3.2 in Jordan.

In the Americas and Oceania, fertility rates are now close to or slightly below the replacement level of 2.1. This means that women in most countries in these regions are having enough children for the population to replace itself, rather than expand or shrink, from one generation to the next. For instance, the TFR is 1.9 in Australia, 1.8 in Chile, 2.2 in Mexico, and 2.0 in the United States. It is worth noting that fertility has fallen markedly in South America in the last four decades, which is one reason that fertility rates there (which range from a TFR of 1.8 in Brazil, Chile, and Costa Rica to 3.2 in Bolivia) come close to paralleling those in North America and Oceania.<sup>15</sup>

Fertility rates in Europe have rebounded somewhat from their lows in the early 2000s, but remain below replacement level in all of the countries we investigated; their TFRs are between 1.4 and 2.0.<sup>16</sup> Eastern Europe exhibits particularly low fertility, with TFRs of 1.4 and 1.5.

Finally, fertility rates in Asia vary substantially, to the point where the TFR ranges from 1.1 (Taiwan) to 3.0 (Philippines), and have fallen dramatically in recent years, especially in East Asia.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, no East Asian country has a fertility rate that exceeds 1.7. This below-replacement fertility has caused concerns and drawn international media attention. The long-term consequences of such low fertility—both for the children themselves and for the societies they live in—are uncertain.

<sup>15</sup> A. Adsera and A. Menendez, "Fertility Changes in Latin America in Periods of Economic Uncertainty," *Population Studies* 65, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>16</sup> OECD, "Doing Better for Families."

<sup>17</sup> Social Trends Institute, "The Sustainable Demographic Dividend" (Barcelona: Social Trends Institute, 2011).

## Nonmarital childbearing

Tracking nonmarital childbearing is important because, in many societies, children whose parents are not married are more likely to experience instability in their parents' union and are less likely to have positive outcomes in many areas of life, from social behavior to academic performance.<sup>18</sup>

Nonmarital childbearing refers to the percentage of babies that are born to unmarried women, whether or not the women are in a nonmarital relationship. Data for this indicator are drawn from both surveys and official registration data. Because these two types of sources are very different, it is vital to use caution when comparing rates for this indicator. For more information on sources, see the e-appendix.

As [Figure 5](#) indicates, Central/South America is home to the world's most elevated rates of nonmarital childbearing, followed by Northern and Western Europe. In South America, well over half of children are born to unmarried mothers, with Colombia registering the highest levels (84 percent).<sup>19</sup> In much of Europe, between one-third and half of children are born outside of marriage, and in France and Sweden, more than 50 percent of children are. In many European countries, the average age at first marriage now exceeds the average age at first childbirth.<sup>20</sup>

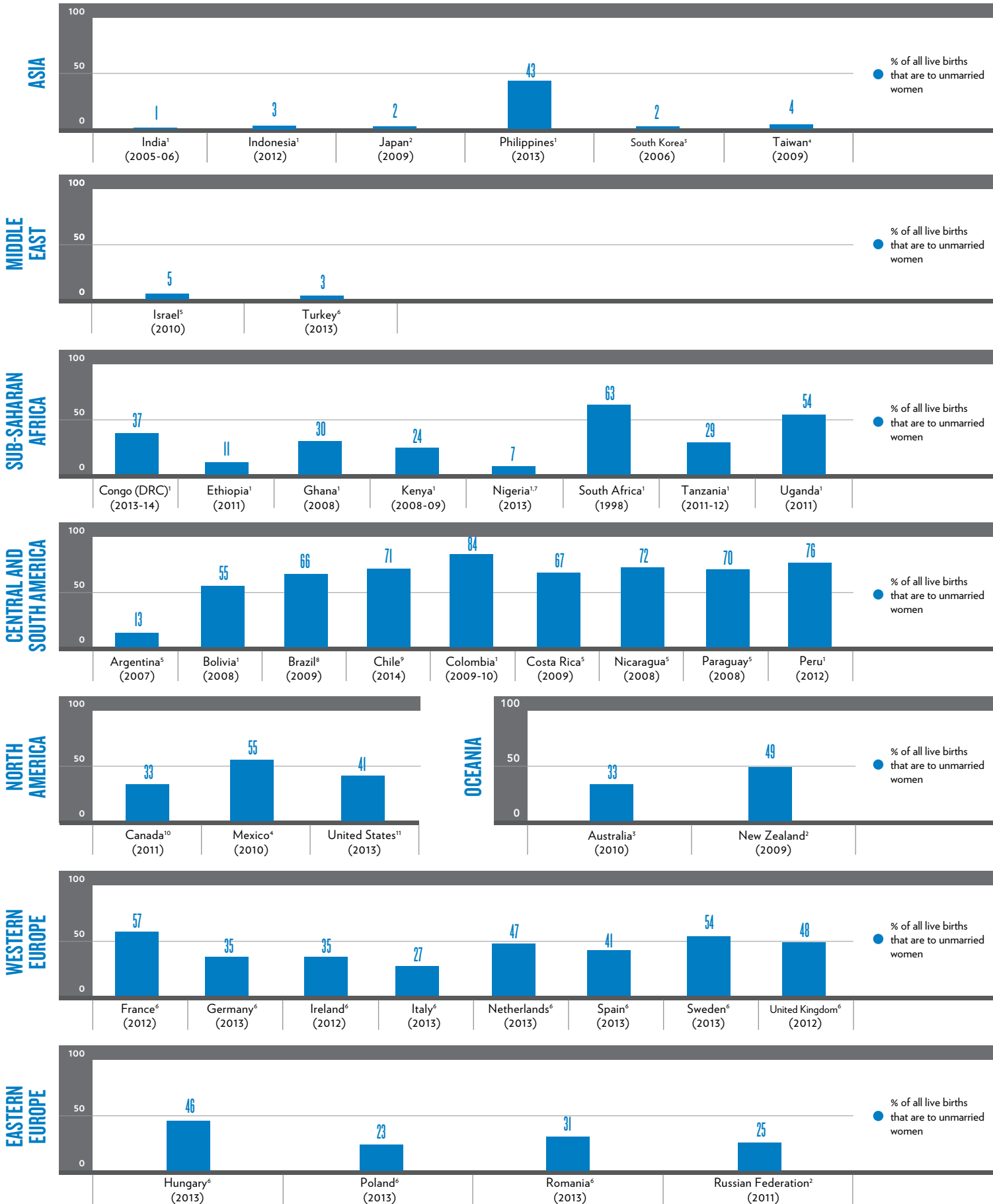
Nonmarital childbearing is also common in Oceania and North America. In these regions, about four in 10 children are born outside of marriage, with rates ranging from 33 percent (Australia and Canada) to 55 percent (Mexico), with the U.S. at 41 percent. By contrast, rates of nonmarital childbearing are wide-ranging in sub-Saharan Africa, from a low of 7 percent in Nigeria to a high of 63 percent in South Africa. Finally, nonmarital childbearing is comparatively rare throughout much of Asia and the Middle East. With the exception of the Philippines, where 43 percent of children are born to unmarried parents, the nonmarital childbearing rate is 5 percent or lower in these two regions. Not surprisingly, these patterns track closely with the marriage trends identified in [Figure 4](#) on page 15; that is, where marriage is more prevalent, the proportion of children born outside of marriage is smaller.

<sup>18</sup> S. Brown, "Marriage and Child Well-Being: Research and Policy Perspectives," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, no. 5 (2010); Martin, "Consensual Unions in Latin America"; W. B. Wilcox et al., "Why Marriage Matters: Thirty Conclusions from the Social Sciences" (New York: Institute for American Values/National Marriage Project, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Argentina appears to be an exception, but their nonmarital birth rate excludes births to women in consensual (nonmarital) unions.

<sup>20</sup> OECD, "Doing Better for Families."

**FIGURE 5 Births outside marriage, 1998-2014**



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-appendix/figure5](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-appendix/figure5)



**In many societies, children whose parents are not married are more likely to experience instability in their parents' union and are less likely to have positive outcomes in many areas of life, from social behavior to academic performance.**

# Family Socioeconomics

## Key Findings

Socioeconomic indicators measure the material, human, and government resources that promote family and child well-being. To measure families' socioeconomic status, here we examine indicators related to poverty, undernourishment (as a marker of material deprivation), parental education and employment, and public family benefits.

- In this study, poverty is calculated as *absolute poverty* (the percentage of the population living on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars per day) and as *relative child poverty* (the percentage of children living in households earning less than half their country's median household income). The prevalence of absolute poverty in the countries in our study ranges from 0 in several countries to 88 percent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The incidence of relative poverty for children is between 6 percent and 31 percent, with the lowest rates found in Europe and Oceania and the highest rates found in Central/South America.
- In the Middle East, North America, Oceania, and Europe, less than 5 percent of the population is undernourished. Families in Africa, Asia, and South America face the highest risk of undernourishment.
- Levels of parental education, as shown by completion of secondary education, vary widely around the world. The lowest levels are found in Africa, followed by Asia, the Middle East, and Central/South America, while Europe boasts the highest levels of parental education.
- Between 38 and 97 percent of parents are employed worldwide, with the highest parental employment rates found in Asia. The Middle East shows consistently high rates, and medium to high rates are found in the Americas and Europe.
- Public family benefits across countries represented in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) range from less than 1 percent up to 4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). According to the limited available data, Europe and Oceania offer the most generous benefits.

## Poverty

The ongoing fallout from the Great Recession of 2008 and sluggish economic recovery have placed a stressful financial burden on families with children around the world. Poverty is a well-documented risk factor for many negative outcomes in childhood. Children growing up in poverty face a higher risk of social, emotional, behavioral, and physical health problems than children from wealthier backgrounds.<sup>21</sup> Children who are poor also score lower on cognitive tests and are less likely to be ready to enter school than their more affluent peers.<sup>22</sup>

Poverty affects children differently depending on the age at which they experience it. Developmental differences

<sup>21</sup> J. D. Lempers, D. Clark-Lempers, and R. Simons, "Economic Hardship, Parenting, and Distress in Adolescence," *Child Development* 60, no. 1 (1989); D. Seith and E. Isakson, "Who Are America's Poor Children? Examining Health Disparities among Children in the United States" (New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> T. Halle et al., "Background for Community-Level Work on School Readiness: A Review of Definitions, Assessments, and Investment Strategies. Part II: Reviewing the Literature on Contributing Factors to School Readiness" (Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2000); K. A. Moore et al., "Children in Poverty: Trends, Consequences, and Policy Options," in *Child Trends Research Brief* (Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2009).

between children who are poor and those who are not can be detected by the time the children turn two.<sup>23</sup> In adolescence, poverty can lead parents to be less nurturing and provide more inconsistent discipline, leading young people to feel lonely and depressed.<sup>24</sup>

Prolonged poverty is especially detrimental to healthy child development. In the United States, for instance, spending half (or more) of childhood in poverty is linked with an increased risk for teenage pregnancy, school failure, and inconsistent employment in adulthood.<sup>25</sup>

In the United States and elsewhere, poverty is often related to family structure: Children living in single-parent households, especially those headed by a woman, are more likely to grow up in poverty.<sup>26</sup> This report considers two measures of poverty as indicators of family socioeconomics: absolute poverty and relative poverty.

### *Absolute poverty*

A measure of absolute poverty allows for a comparison of the living conditions of one country to those of others. Here we use the World Bank's international poverty line of living on 1.25 U.S. dollars a day in 2005 purchasing power, and we study the percentage of each country's population living below that line. One of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which were adopted in 2000, was to cut the global proportion of people who live on less than one U.S. dollar a day in half by 2015—a goal achieved in 2010.<sup>27</sup> But progress in reducing extreme poverty has been uneven. Sub-Saharan Africa, where the Millennium Development Goal is not expected to be met, continues to suffer from very high rates of extreme poverty.<sup>28</sup> Altogether, approximately 1 billion people, concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, still live in extreme poverty worldwide. Almost 60 percent of the people living in extreme poverty live in India, Nigeria, China, Bangladesh, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>29</sup> The United Nations' next set of proposed goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, includes eradicating extreme poverty entirely: ensuring that no person in the world subsists on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars a day.<sup>30</sup>

Data for this indicator come from the World Bank, which has compiled information from individual countries' government statistical agencies based on household surveys. Because individuals and countries themselves—not a more objective source—provide the information on poverty levels, it is possible that these numbers understate the true prevalence of absolute poverty.

Absolute poverty rates vary widely in Asia, but have decreased in recent years, ranging from 0 percent in Malaysia and Japan to 24 percent in India. The remaining Asian countries have absolute poverty rates between 6 percent and 19 percent, as shown in **Figure 6**. China and India have achieved great progress on this indicator in recent years. In China, the rate of absolute poverty dropped from 23 percent in 2008 to 6 percent in 2011. In India, the proportion of people living on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars a day dropped from 33 percent in 2009 to 24 percent in 2011.

The selected Middle Eastern countries have relatively low levels of absolute poverty. Two percent of people at most live on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars a day in these countries.

<sup>23</sup> Moore et al., "Children in Poverty."

<sup>24</sup> Lempers et al., "Economic Hardship, Parenting, and Distress in Adolescence."

<sup>25</sup> C. E. Ratcliffe and S. McKernan, "Childhood Poverty Persistence: Facts and Consequences" (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, "America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2012" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012).

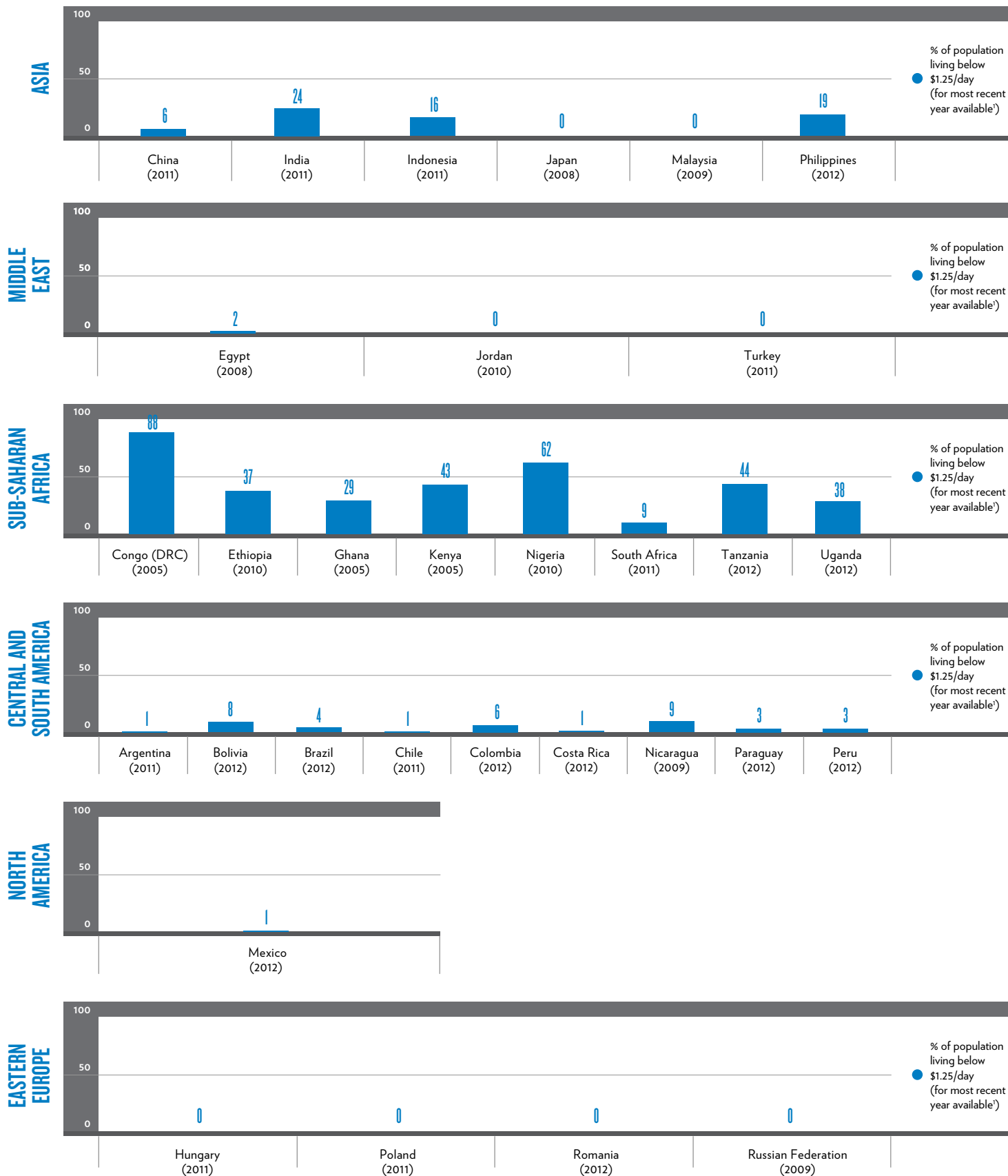
<sup>27</sup> United Nations, "The Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015" (United Nations, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015" (United Nations, 2015).

<sup>29</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015."

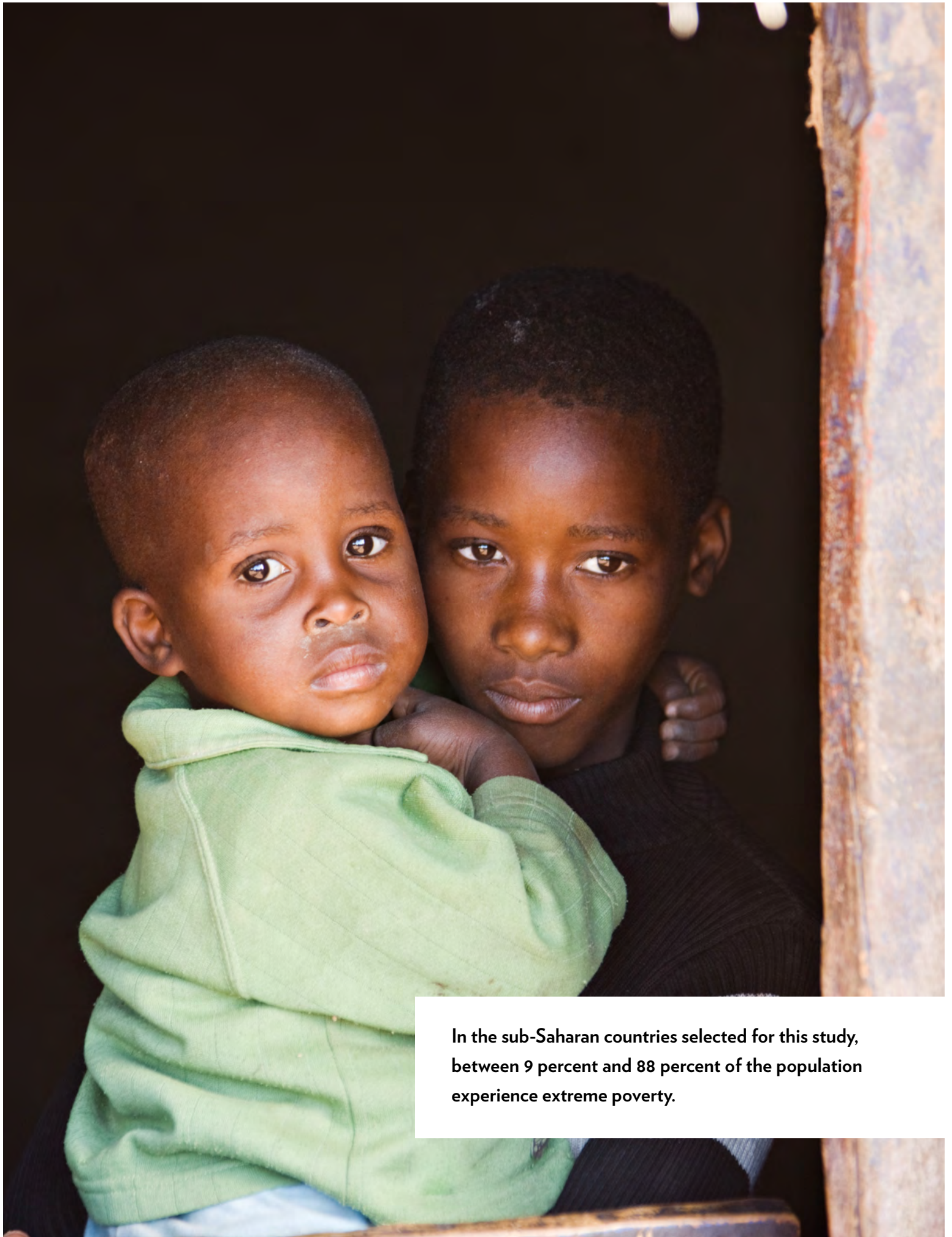
<sup>30</sup> United Nations, "Sustainable Development Goals" (United Nations, 2015), <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.

**FIGURE 6** Absolute poverty, 2005-2012



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure6](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure6)





**In the sub-Saharan countries selected for this study, between 9 percent and 88 percent of the population experience extreme poverty.**

The world's highest rates of absolute poverty are found in Africa. In the sub-Saharan countries selected for this study, between 9 percent and 88 percent of the population experience extreme poverty. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has the highest poverty rate: 88 percent of the population falls below the international poverty line. In Nigeria, 62 percent of the population does. Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania have the next highest poverty rates, at approximately 40 percent. South Africa is home to the lowest absolute poverty rate in sub-Saharan Africa at 9 percent in 2011, down from 17 percent in 2006. Other sub-Saharan countries have also reduced the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty. In Tanzania, for instance, there has been a remarkable decline in absolute poverty from 68 percent of the population in 2006 to 43.5 percent (still a high rate) in 2012.

In Central and South America, two countries (Bolivia and Nicaragua) have poverty rates that, at 8 and 8.5 percent, respectively, exceed those of the rest of the region. Bolivia, however, has recently reduced this rate significantly; it stood at 16 percent in 2006. In Colombia, 6 percent of people live on less than 1.25 USD per day. In the remaining Central and South American countries, less than 5 percent of people live in poverty.

In most countries in the remaining regions of the world—North America, Oceania, and Europe—less than 2 percent of people live on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars a day. Spain is the exception: 2.3 percent of people there live in absolute poverty.

### **Relative child poverty**

The *World Family Map* also presents rates of relative poverty to measure the well-being of children in middle- and high-income countries. These rates speak to the poverty experienced by children whose families are poor relative to other families in that country, rather than families in other countries. Specifically, the relative poverty indicator describes the share of children who live in households with household incomes that are less than half of the country's median income.<sup>31</sup> The higher the relative poverty rate, the more children live in poverty in comparison with the average household with children in that country. This indicator also speaks to the income distribution within a country.

Data for this indicator, which date from between 2002 and 2013, come from household surveys, as reported by UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre's Measuring Child Poverty report card and LIS.<sup>32</sup>

Throughout the countries for which relative child poverty was measured, between 6 percent and 31 percent of children live in households with incomes that are below half of the national median income. There is wide regional variation on this indicator, as [Figure 7](#) depicts.

The selected Asian countries have moderate rates of relative child poverty. In Taiwan and South Korea, 10 percent of children live in households with incomes that are below 50 percent of the population's median income. The rate is slightly higher for Japan, at 15 percent. Meanwhile, relative child poverty rates are much higher for China and India, at 29 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

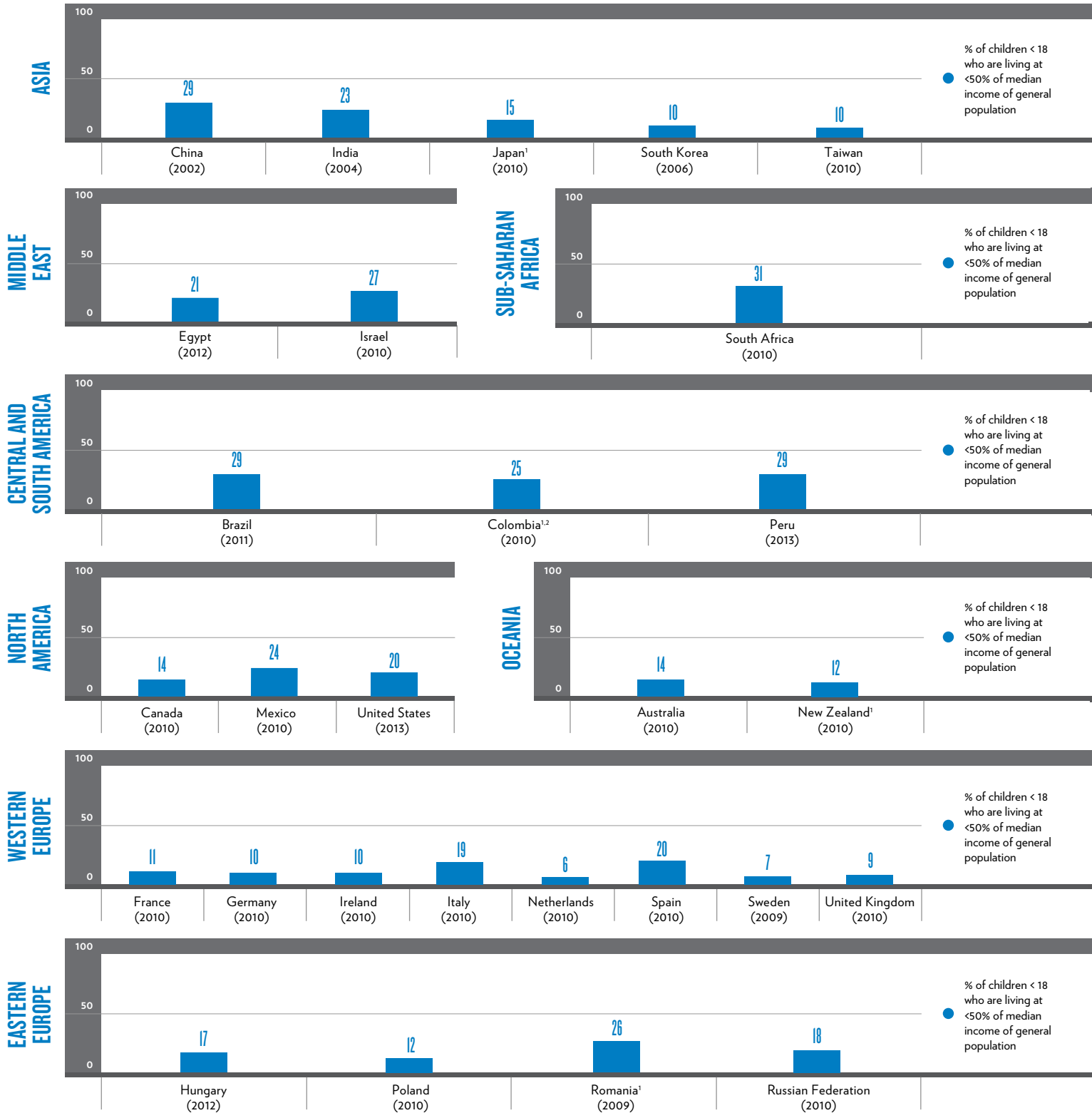
Israel, the sole representative of the Middle East on this indicator due to data limitations, has a relative child poverty rate of 27 percent.

Children in the three countries included in the study from South America have slightly higher relative poverty rates of 25 to 29 percent. The North American countries' relative child poverty rates fall between 14 percent and 24 percent. Canada has the lowest levels of relative child poverty in North America, with 14 percent of children living in households with incomes below half of the country's median income. The United States and Mexico have relative child poverty rates of 20 and 24 percent, respectively. In fact, the United States has one of the highest relative child poverty rates of the selected high-income nations.

<sup>31</sup> Income is adjusted according to household size and composition.

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, "Measuring Child Poverty: New League Tables of Child Poverty in the World's Rich Countries," in *Innocenti Report Card 10* (Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2012). Data come from EU-SILC 2009, HILDA 2009, PSID 2007, the Japanese Cabinet Office, Gender Equality Bureau (2011), and B. Perry, "Household Incomes in New Zealand: Trends in Indicators of Inequality and Hardship 1982 to 2010" (Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Social Development, 2011).

**FIGURE 7** Relative poverty, 2002-2013



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure7](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure7)

In Oceania, Australia has a relative child poverty rate of 14 percent, and New Zealand one of 12 percent.

Western Europe experiences the lowest rates of relative child poverty of any region, led by the Netherlands and Sweden at 6 percent and 7 percent, respectively, which are the lowest rates in the world. France, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom all have rates of approximately 10 percent. Italy and Spain have higher rates, around 20 percent.

In Eastern Europe, between 12 percent and 26 percent of children live in households with incomes below 50 percent of the country's median income. Poland has the region's lowest relative poverty rate, at 12 percent, whereas Romania has the highest, at 26 percent. In Hungary, where the relative poverty rate had been the lowest in the region at 11 percent in 2007, the proportion of children living in relative poverty increased by six percentage points to 17 percent in 2012.

## Undernourishment

Another of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals was to cut the proportion of people who suffer from hunger in half between 1990 and 2015.<sup>33</sup> While this goal has not been achieved, the percentage of people who are undernourished in developing regions decreased from 23 percent in 1990 to 1992 to less than 13 percent projected for 2014 to 2016. More than half of the monitored developing countries met their goal of cutting hunger in half.<sup>34</sup> Regions not projected to reach that milestone in 2015 include sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, southern and western Asia, and Oceania.<sup>35</sup>

The percentage of the population of each country that is undernourished is an indicator of material deprivation, which disproportionately affects families with children. In an effort to protect their children, mothers tend to go hungry before their children in some cultures.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, this practice means that undernourishment is passed from generation to generation, because pregnant women and their babies are especially vulnerable to the effects of hunger. For example, undernourished mothers are more likely to give birth to undernourished babies.<sup>37</sup>

Not having enough to eat and being poor are related in a cyclical fashion. Children growing up in families that lack the means to provide adequate and nutritious food are more likely to suffer physical ailments, such as blindness, stunted growth, iron deficiencies, and overall poor health. Children who are undernourished are also more likely to experience delays in mental development, to show symptoms of depression, and to have behavior problems. Academically, undernourished youth have lower achievement and lower IQs. All of these problems make it harder for young people to work and escape poverty later in life. Undernourishment is a factor in one in three deaths of children under five throughout the world.<sup>38</sup> In addition to causing a great deal of human suffering, undernourishment among children gives rise to a loss of productivity that can cost a country up to 3 percent of its gross domestic product.<sup>39</sup>

The *World Family Map* presents information on undernourishment for countries' entire population rather than for families with children specifically because the available data are limited. As it is, the data on undernourishment come from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the World Bank.<sup>40</sup> The FAO defines undernourishment as "a state, lasting for at least one year, of inability to acquire enough food, defined as a level of food intake insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements."<sup>41,42</sup>

<sup>33</sup> United Nations, "United Nations Millennium Development Goals," United Nations, <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

<sup>34</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), "The State of Food Insecurity in the World: Meeting the 2015 International Hunger Targets: Taking Stock of Uneven Progress" (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015."

<sup>36</sup> United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition, "The Impact of High Food Prices on Maternal and Child Nutrition," in *SCN Side Event at the 34th Session of the Committee on World Food Security* (Rome: United Nations System Standing Committee on Nutrition, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> E. Munoz, "New Hope for Malnourished Mothers and Children," in *Briefing Paper 7* (Washington: Bread for the World Institution, 2009).

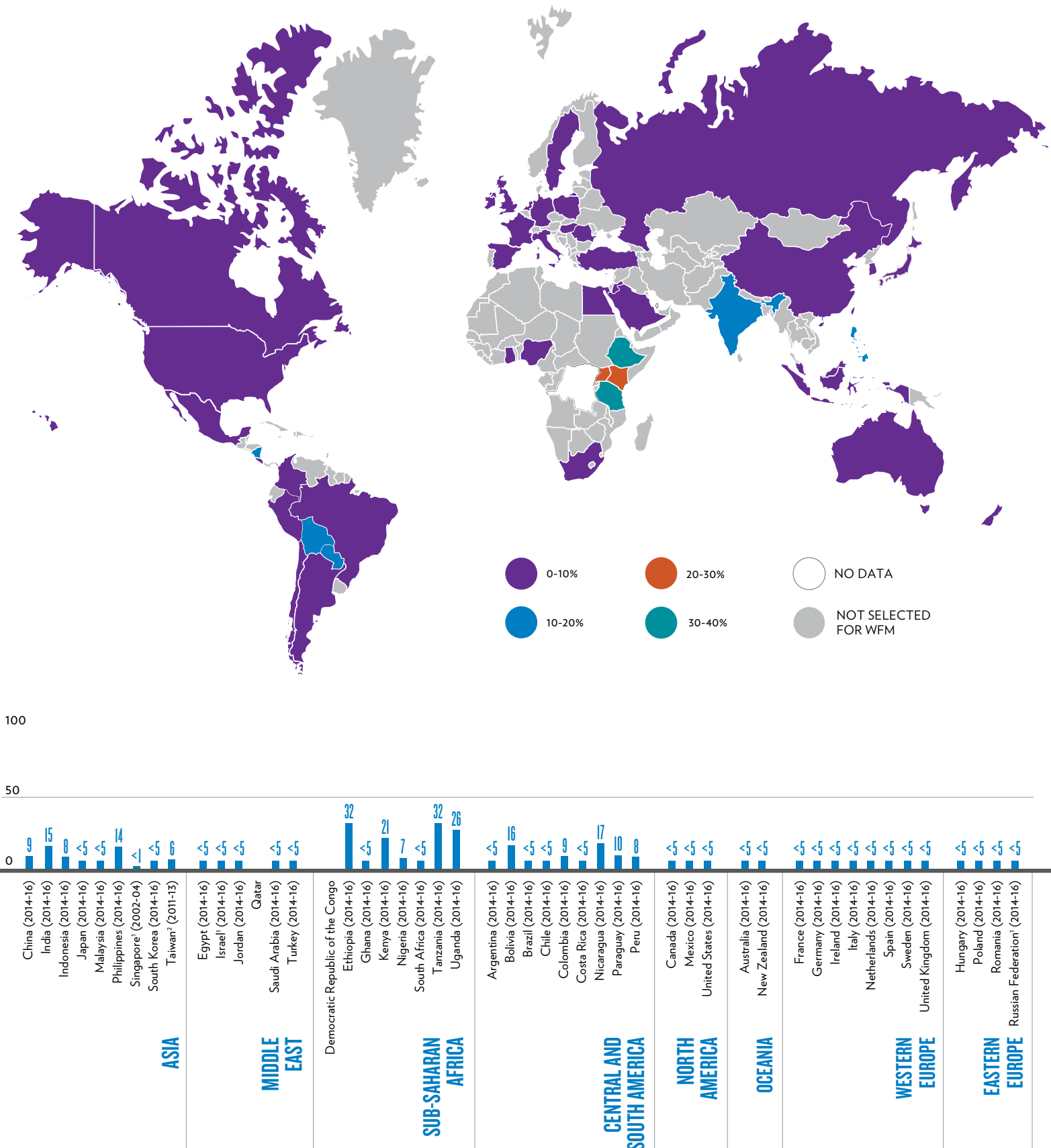
<sup>38</sup> M. Nord, "Food Insecurity in Households with Children: Prevalence, Severity, and Household Characteristics," in *Economic Information Bulletin* (Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2009); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "The State of the World's Children 2012" (New York, NY: UNICEF, 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Munoz, "New Hope for Malnourished Mothers and Children."

<sup>40</sup> Data for Taiwan come from C. Y. Yeh et al., "An Empirical Study of Taiwan's Food Security Index," *Public Health Nutrition* 13, no. 7.

**FIGURE 8** Undernourishment, circa 2015

*Percentage of total population who are undernourished*



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure8](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure8)

In the majority of countries throughout the world with available data, less than 5 percent of the population is undernourished. All countries in Europe, the Middle East, North America, and Oceania have undernourishment rates under 5 percent. Countries with higher levels of undernourishment are concentrated in Africa, Asia, and South America, as **Figure 8** illustrates.

Undernourishment rates vary significantly in Asia, from under 5 percent (Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea) to 15 percent (India). Following India, the Asian countries with the highest levels of undernourishment are the Philippines and China, at 14 and 9 percent, respectively.

The countries in sub-Saharan Africa for which data are available suffer the world's highest levels of undernourishment. In Ethiopia and Tanzania, almost one in three people is undernourished; in Uganda, one out of four; and in Kenya, one out of five. Rates are much lower in Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa, where less than one in 10 people is undernourished. Despite decreases in the percentage of undernourished Africans, the number of undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa has actually increased due to high population growth.<sup>43</sup>

In Central and South America, rates of undernourishment are also inconsistent. The highest rates of undernourishment are found in Nicaragua and Bolivia, where approximately 16 percent of people are undernourished. Paraguay also has a high undernourishment rate, at 10.4 percent. Colombia and Peru have more moderate rates, at around 8 percent of the population. In the remaining countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Costa Rica, less than 5 percent of people are undernourished.

As these numbers show, the percentage of the population that suffers from undernourishment varies widely throughout the world, and does not always follow the level of absolute poverty in a given country. Some countries manage to protect their populations from undernourishment despite relatively high levels of poverty. While the absolute poverty data predate the undernourishment data, the percentage of the population living in absolute poverty (on less than 1.25 U.S. dollars a day) is greater than the percentage of the population that is undernourished in almost all of the Asian and sub-Saharan African countries for which data are available: India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Strikingly, in Nigeria 62 percent of people live on less than \$1.25 a day while only 7 percent are undernourished. A similar, though less extreme, story holds in Ghana, where 29 percent of people live in absolute poverty and less than 5 percent are undernourished. South America shows the opposite pattern: a larger proportion of the population is undernourished than living in absolute poverty. Why these differences? Some countries are able to make combating hunger a high priority among expenditures; in addition, private-sector programs, international food aid, food pricing differences, and a country's food distribution infrastructure may play a role.<sup>44</sup>

## Parental Education

Parents' level of education influences their parenting behaviors and their children's well-being. Better-educated parents are more likely to read to their children and provide them with extracurricular activities, books, cognitive stimulation, and high educational expectations. Such parents are also more likely to be active in their children's schools and are less likely to use negative discipline techniques.<sup>45</sup> Internationally, children of well-educated parents demonstrate

<sup>41</sup> FAO, "The State of Food Insecurity in the World."

<sup>42</sup> Note that dates are not comparable. See Figure 8 for detail.

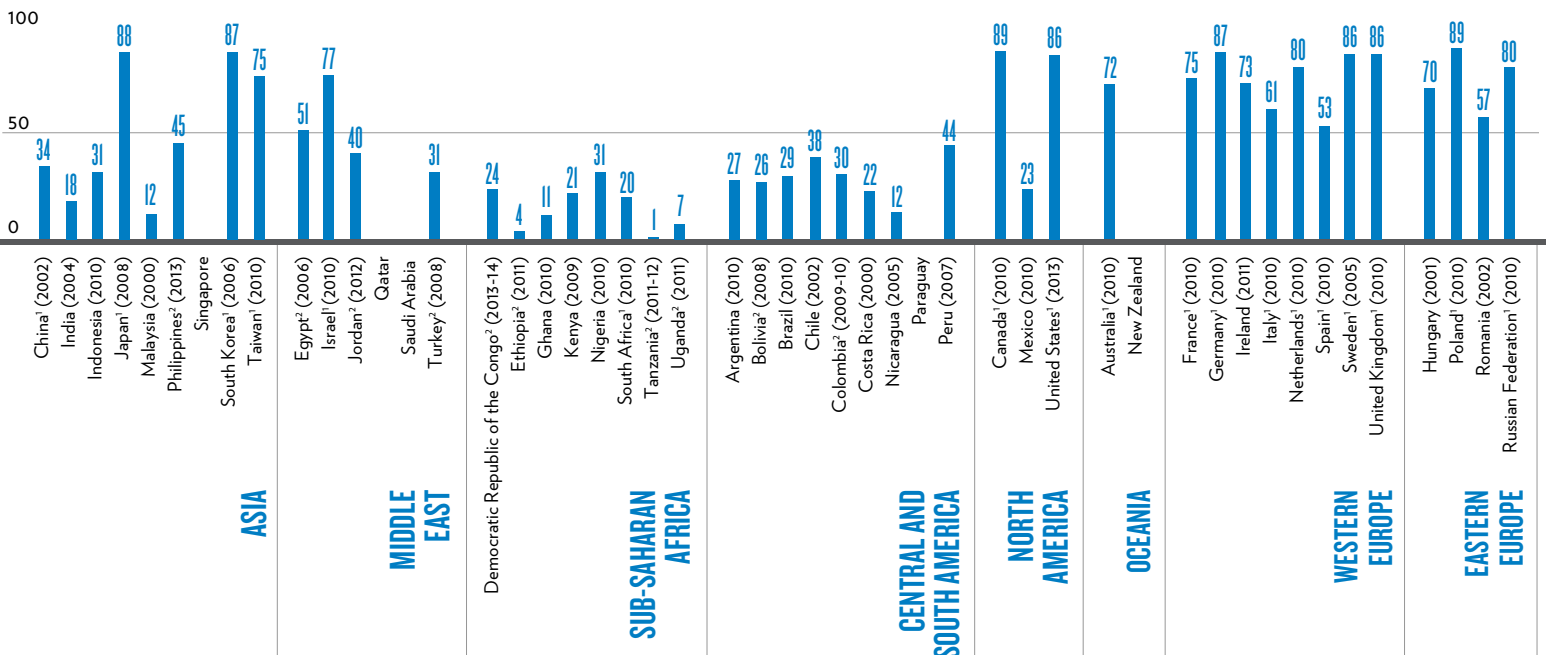
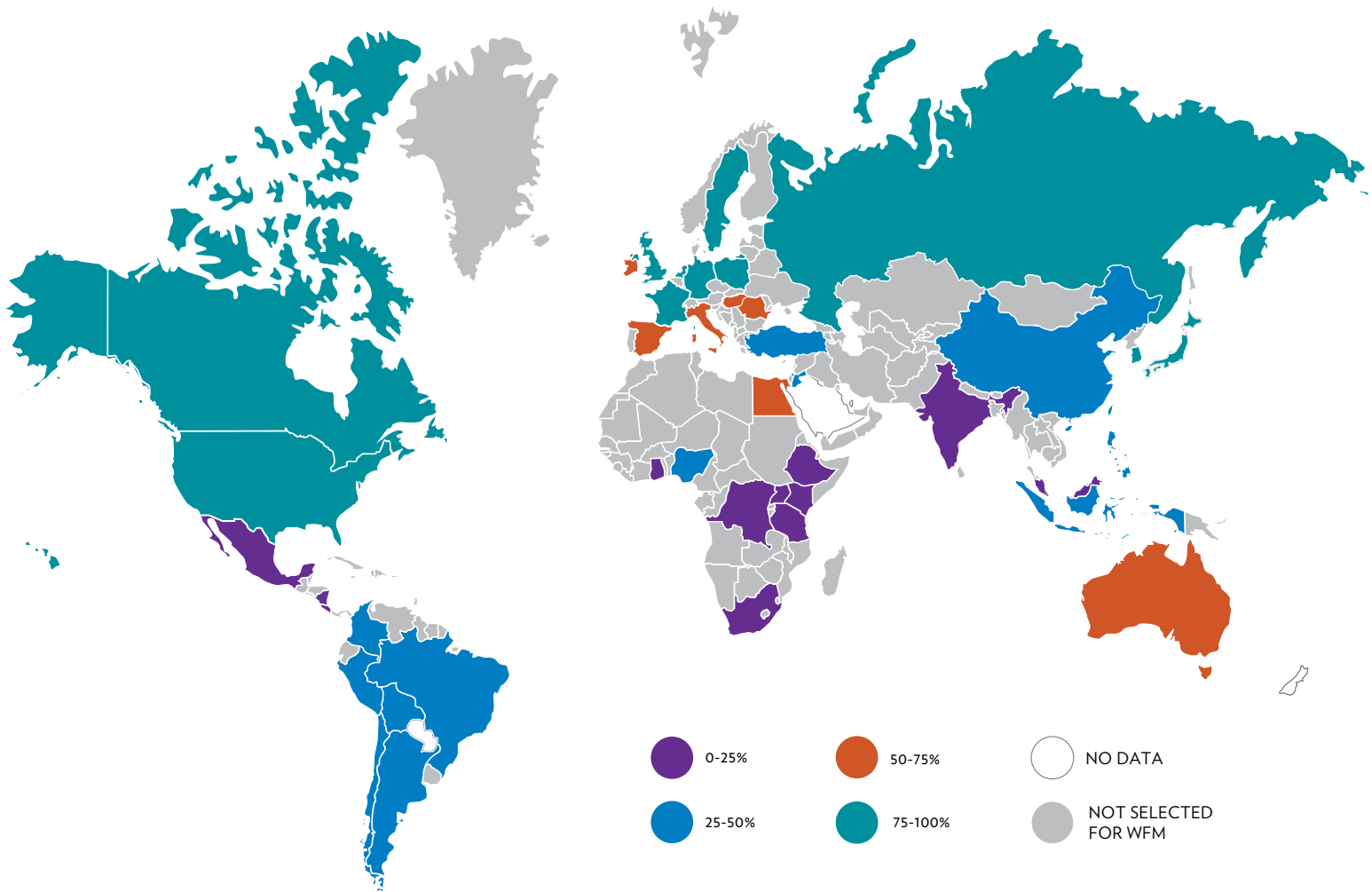
<sup>43</sup> United Nations, "Millennium Development Goals Report: 2015."

<sup>44</sup> FAO, WFP, and IFAD, "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012: Economic Growth Is Necessary but Not Sufficient to Accelerate Reduction of Hunger and Malnutrition" (Rome: FAO, 2012).

<sup>45</sup> P. Davis-Kean, "The Influence of Parent Education and Family Income on Child Achievement: The Indirect Role of Parental Expectations and the Home Environment," *Journal of Family Psychology* 19, no. 2 (2005); E. Hair et al., "Parents Matter: Parental Education, Parenting and Child Well-Being" (paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, 2007); S. L. Hofferth and J. F. Sandberg, "How American Children Spend Their Time," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63, no. 2 (2001); K. R. Phillips, "Parent Work and Child Well-Being in Low-Income Families" (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2002).

**FIGURE 9** Parental education, 2000-2014

Percentage of children in households in which household head has a secondary education



higher academic achievement and literacy.<sup>46,47</sup> Parents transmit their education, knowledge, skills, and other aspects of human capital to their sons and daughters, and parents' levels of education directly influence their access to social networks and well-paying jobs with benefits. They confer these advantages, in turn, to their children.

Due to data limitations, we use a proxy measure to gauge parental education: the percentage of children who live in households in which the household head has completed secondary education. [Figure 9](#) displays the results. The household head could be one of the child's parents, or else a grandparent (the most common non-parental head of household), or another type of relation. In Russia, 20 percent of children live in a household headed by their grandparents. In South Africa, 36 percent do.

In the United States, completing secondary education equates to earning a high school diploma or GED. Data for this indicator come from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International (IPUMS), the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), and LIS.<sup>48</sup>

Asian countries exhibit a huge range of parental education levels. In 2000, 12 percent of Malaysian children lived with a household head who had completed secondary education. Eighteen percent of children did so in India in 2004. In China, Indonesia, and the Philippines, between 31 percent and 45 percent of children lived with household heads who had completed secondary education. Education rates are much higher in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, where 88 percent, 87 percent, and 75 percent of children, respectively, live with educated household heads. Children in Taiwan have grown more likely to live with educated household heads: the percentage of children living with household heads with secondary education increased from 67 percent in 2005 to 75 percent in 2010.

Of the Middle Eastern countries studied, Turkey has the lowest percentage of children living in a home with a household head who has completed secondary education, at 31 percent in 2008. In the remaining surveyed Middle Eastern countries, between 40 percent (Jordan in 2012) and 77 percent (Israel in 2010) of children live with a household head who has completed secondary education. The figure for Jordan increased by five percentage points between 2009 and 2012.

Parental education is lower in sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions. In the sub-Saharan African countries studied, between 1 and 31 percent of children live in households in which the household head has completed secondary education. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, and Nigeria, at least one in five children lived in such households in 2007 to 2010.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, in Ethiopia, 4 percent of children lived in such households in 2011, and less than 1 percent of children did so in Tanzania in 2011 to 2012. The low education levels of household heads may reflect those of female household heads with little formal education, or, since living with extended family members is common in sub-Saharan Africa, the low education level of children's grandparents.

In Central and South America, there is great variation in the percentage of children living in a household in which the household head has completed secondary education, from 12 percent in Nicaragua to 44 percent in Peru. In many of the selected countries, between 26 and 30 percent of children lived with a household head with secondary education between 2008 and 2010. Notably, the percentage of Brazilian children who lived in a household in which the head of the household has completed secondary education increased almost 13 percentage points from 17 percent in 2000 to 29 percent in 2010.

North America also displays variation on this indicator. Twenty-three percent of Mexican children lived in a household in which the head of the household had completed secondary education in 2010, while 86 percent of American and 89 percent of Canadian children lived in such households in 2012.

Europe exhibits some of the highest rates of parental education. In Western Europe, between 53 percent (Spain) and 87 percent (Germany) of children live in a household in which the head of the household has completed secondary

<sup>46</sup> M. Lemke et al., "Outcomes of Learning: Results from the 2000 Program for International Student Assessment of 15-Year-Olds in Reading, Mathematics, and Science Literacy" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> I. V. S. Mullis et al., "TIMSS 1999 International Mathematics Report: Findings from IEA's Repeat of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study at the Eighth Grade" (Boston: International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College, 2000).

<sup>48</sup> In this report, we generally present data for the most recent year available, giving priority to use the same source as much as possible, which differs across countries. As with other indicators, we caution readers to refrain from making direct comparisons between countries that have data from different years.

<sup>49</sup> In South Africa, 19.7 percent of children lived in such households.



education. Spain and Italy have the lowest levels of parental education in Western Europe, at 53 percent and 61 percent, respectively. In contrast, over 85 percent of children live in such households in Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

In Eastern Europe, between 57 percent (Romania) and 89 percent (Poland) of children live with household heads with a secondary education, while in Hungary and Russia, the figures stand at 70 percent and 80 percent, respectively.

## Parental Employment

Researchers agree that poverty has detrimental effects on child and adolescent outcomes. Employed parents are more likely to be able to provide for their children, to connect their families to important social networks, and to serve as important role models for productive engagement. Having an employed parent gives children greater access to goods and services that are especially valuable during childhood, such as health care. In fact, adolescents of unemployed parents report lower levels of health.<sup>50</sup>

Parental unemployment can create stress in a family. The financial and emotional strain associated with it can lead to depression and lower levels of satisfaction with a spouse or partner.<sup>51</sup> The family conflict this strain creates, whether in the setting of an intact family or one separated by divorce, is detrimental to children's flourishing.<sup>52</sup>

Parental employment is also related to the number of parents present in a household. Children living with two parents are less likely to live in a jobless household than children living with one parent.<sup>53</sup>

Data limitations restrict the measurement of parental employment to the percentage of children who live in households in which the household head has a job. This measure is limited in a number of ways. It does not describe whether the employment is full-time or year-round, paid or unpaid, or say how many hours a day the provider is working. Again, the household head is not necessarily a parent of the child, but could be a grandparent or other relative. In addition, the measure does not shed light on what the parent's work means in the context of the child's life. For example, the data about parental employment do not reveal whether one or multiple adults in the household are working, where and with whom the child spends time while the parent is working, how old the child is while the parent is working, or what hours of the day the parent is working, all of which can impact child well-being.

The data we use to calculate parental employment are drawn from LIS and Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International (IPUMS) and date from 2000 to 2013. This indicator is very sensitive to country economic conditions and general economic climate, so comparisons across countries for different years should not be made.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the world, between 38 and 97 percent of children under the age of 18 live in households in which the head of the household is employed. See [Table 2](#) for more details.

As a region, Asia has the highest percentages of children living in households with an employed household head, ranging from 76 percent in Japan in 2008 to 97 percent in Taiwan in 2010.

Parental employment levels are slightly lower in the selected Middle Eastern countries. Israel, Jordan, and Turkey have parental employment rates of less than 80 percent. In Egypt, 85 percent of children lived in a household with an employed head of household in 2002.

The selected sub-Saharan African countries show the largest regional variation in parental employment rates. Thirty-eight percent of children live in a household with an employed household head in South Africa, whereas 87 percent do in Ghana and Tanzania. Reflecting the global recession, the percentage of children who live in a household with an employed household head decreased from 45 percent to 38 percent between 2008 and 2010 in South Africa.

<sup>50</sup> M. Sleskova et al., "Does Parental Unemployment Affect Adolescents' Health?," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 38, no. 5 (2006).

<sup>51</sup> A. D. Vinokur, R. H. Price, and R. D. Caplan, "Hard Times and Hurtful Partners: How Financial Strain Affects Depression and Relationship Satisfaction of Unemployed Persons and Their Spouses," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71, no. 1 (1996).

<sup>52</sup> G. D. Sandefur and A. Meier, "The Family Environment: Structure, Material Resources and Child Care," in *Key Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being: Completing the Picture*, ed. B.V. Brown (New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> OECD, "Doing Better for Families."

<sup>54</sup> Note that dates are not comparable. See Table 2 for detail.

**TABLE 2 Parental employment, 2000-2013***Percentage of children under 18 in households in which the household head is employed*

ASIA		MIDDLE EAST		SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA		CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA	
China (2002)	92	Egypt (2012)	85	Democratic Republic of the Congo	-	Argentina <sup>1</sup> (2010)	82
India (2004)	89	Israel (2010)	76	Ethiopia	-	Bolivia <sup>1</sup> (2001)	71
Indonesia <sup>1</sup> (2010)	93	Jordan <sup>1</sup> (2004)	72	Ghana <sup>1</sup> (2000)	87	Brazil (2011)	78
Japan (2008)	76	Qatar	-	Kenya <sup>1</sup> (2009)	85	Chile <sup>1</sup> (2002)	68
Malaysia <sup>1</sup> (2000)	88	Saudi Arabia	-	Nigeria <sup>1</sup> (2010)	92	Colombia (2010)	82
Philippines	-	Turkey <sup>1</sup> (2000)	77	South Africa (2010)	38	Costa Rica <sup>1</sup> (2000)	80
Singapore	-			Tanzania <sup>1</sup> (2002)	87	Nicaragua <sup>1</sup> (2005)	76
South Korea (2006)	93			Uganda <sup>1</sup> (2002)	75	Paraguay	-
Taiwan (2010)	97					Peru (2013)	90
NORTH AMERICA		OCEANIA		WESTERN EUROPE		EASTERN EUROPE	
Canada (2010)	88	Australia (2010)	83	France (2010)	88	Hungary (2012)	74
Mexico <sup>1</sup> (2010)	82	New Zealand	-	Germany (2010)	81	Poland (2010)	91
United States (2013)	74			Ireland (2010)	55	Romania <sup>1</sup> (2002)	63
				Italy (2010)	77	Russian Federation (2010)	73
				Netherlands (2010)	87		
				Spain (2010)	73		
				Sweden (2005)	90		
				United Kingdom (2010)	79		

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-appendix/table2](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-appendix/table2)

Central and South America's parental employment rates exhibit a smaller range, from 68 percent in Chile to 90 percent in Peru. Notably, in Argentina the percentage of children who live with an employed household head increased from 68 percent in 2001 to 82 percent in 2010; however, these figures include those working even minimally in the informal sector.

In North America, parental employment rates range from 74 percent in the United States to 82 percent in Mexico and 88 percent in Canada. In Australia, the sole country for which we have data in Oceania, the parental employment rate was 83 percent in 2010.

In Western Europe, parental employment rates range from 55 percent in Ireland to 90 percent in Sweden.<sup>55</sup> In the majority of remaining selected countries in this region, approximately eight in 10 children live in a household in which the head of household is employed. In this region, between 2004 and 2010 the parental employment rate decreased by at least five percentage points in Ireland and Spain, while it actually increased in the Netherlands by five percentage points.

Eastern Europe's levels of parental employment, which fall between 73 and 91 percent, resemble those of Western Europe. Romania is an exception to these relatively high rates: 63 percent of children in the country lived in a household in which the head of the household was employed in 2002. In Russia, parental employment fell from 84 percent in 2000 to 73 percent in 2010, while in Hungary, parental employment rose between 2004 and 2010 from 85 to 91 percent and then fell back down to 74 percent in 2012.

## Public Spending on Family Benefits

Government spending on benefits for families provides them with many types of support. For instance, government benefits allow parents to take time off work to take care of a newborn, and help replace lost income during this time. As the children grow older, government-provided child care and education support parents' employment.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports family benefits, including child care supports, parental leave benefits, child allowances, and family tax breaks. Unfortunately, these data are only available for members of the OECD, which are middle- and high-income nations. These data are also limited because funding plans

<sup>55</sup> Interpret Sweden's rate with caution. More than 15 percent of data is missing.

differ between countries, and in certain places the measures may not include local expenditures.<sup>56</sup>

The level of public spending on family benefits serves as one potential measure of governmental spending priorities. Here, we focus on the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) that a country allocates to family benefits. As presented in **Table 3**, governments spent between less than half of a percent and 3.9 percent of their GDP on benefits exclusively for families circa 2011. There were no changes in this indicator exceeding five percentage points between 2009 and 2012.

In Asia, Japan spent 1.4 percent of its GDP on family benefits and South Korea 1.2 percent. Israel spent 2.0 percent of its GDP on family benefits, despite a hefty military budget.

In North America, spending on family benefits hovers around 1 percent, ranging from 0.7 percent in the United States to 1.2 percent in Canada. Chile, the only South American country for which data are available, devotes slightly more government spending to families, at 1.4 percent of its GDP.

Oceanic countries place more monetary emphasis on family benefits: New Zealand spent 3.3 percent of its GDP in this area, and Australia spent 2.7 percent.

Western European countries are home to the highest levels of government spending on family benefits. Ireland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom led the selected countries by spending approximately 4 percent of their GDP on family benefits. France and Germany also spent more than 2 percent of their GDP on family benefits, whereas the remaining European countries spent approximately 1.5 percent.

In Eastern Europe, Hungary spent more than 3 percent of its GDP on family benefits, whereas Poland and Romania spent 1.3 and 1.7 percent, respectively. Hungary's generous spending could help counteract the large rise in the rate of relative child poverty that it experienced between 2007 and 2012.

<sup>56</sup> OECD, "Public Spending on Family Benefits," [http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF1\\_1\\_Public\\_spending\\_on\\_family\\_benefits\\_Oct2013.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF1_1_Public_spending_on_family_benefits_Oct2013.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Data reported for Romania are from 2007, as updated data were not available from the OECD.

**TABLE 3** Public spending on family benefits, circa 2011  
*Public spending on family benefits in cash, services, and tax measures, in percent of GDP*

#### ASIA

China	-
India	-
Indonesia	-
Japan	1.4
Malaysia	-
Philippines	-
Singapore	-
South Korea	1.2
Taiwan	-

#### MIDDLE EAST

Egypt	-
Israel <sup>1</sup>	2.0
Jordan	-
Qatar	-
Saudi Arabia	-
Turkey	0.0

#### SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Democratic Republic of the Congo	-
Ethiopia	-
Ghana	-
Kenya	-
Nigeria	-
South Africa	-
Tanzania	-
Uganda	-

#### CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina	-
Bolivia	-
Brazil	-
Chile	1.4
Colombia	-
Costa Rica	-
Nicaragua	-
Paraguay	-
Peru	-

#### NORTH AMERICA

Canada	1.2
Mexico	1.1
United States	0.7

#### OCEANIA

Australia	2.7
New Zealand	3.3

#### WESTERN EUROPE

France	2.9
Germany	2.2
Ireland	3.9
Italy	1.5
Netherlands	1.6
Spain	1.4
Sweden	3.6
United Kingdom	4.0

#### EASTERN EUROPE

Hungary	3.3
Poland	1.3
Romania <sup>2</sup>	1.7
Russian Federation	-

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table3](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table3)

# Family Processes

## Key Findings

Family process indicators describe the interactions between members of a family, including their relationships, views on the roles of family members, time spent together, and satisfaction with family life. It is challenging to obtain data on family processes that allow for international comparisons, but there has been some improvement in this situation with the release of new data.

Here we discuss several indicators of family process that can influence child and family well-being: self-reported family satisfaction; views on partners' contribution to household income; how regularly parents and children discuss school; how often families eat meals together; and how much time parents and teenagers spend talking. There is wide variation on these measures across the few countries that have data available.

- **Between 30 percent (South Korea) and 78 percent (Argentina) of adults around the world are completely or very satisfied with their family life (17 countries with information).**
- **More than half of adults agree that both men and women should contribute to household income, with agreement ranging from 54 percent (Australia) to 92 percent (Philippines) (18 countries).**
- **Across surveyed countries, between 44 percent and 92 percent of 15-year-olds spend time just talking to their parents every day or almost every day. The percentage of 15-year-olds who eat the main meal with their families varies widely throughout the world, ranging from 60 percent in South Korea to 94 percent in Italy (seven countries).**

## Family Satisfaction

Satisfaction with family life both influences and is influenced by family structure, economics, and culture. The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) recently released new data, collected circa 2012, so these figures update the 2002 data presented in earlier editions of the *World Family Map*.

As in previous years, the highest levels of family satisfaction are found in South America, where 78 percent of Argentinians and 67.5 percent of Chileans report being completely or very satisfied with their family life, as seen in [Figure 10](#). Adults in Asia experience the lowest levels of family satisfaction, with only 30 percent of South Korean adults and 32 percent of Chinese adults expressing satisfaction with their family life. In India and the Philippines, however, adults report more family satisfaction, with 51.5 percent and 68 percent reporting satisfaction, respectively. The surveyed countries in North America and Eastern and Western Europe fall in the middle, with satisfaction rates between 34 and 66.5 percent.

There have been some notable changes in levels of satisfaction with family life in the past decade. The reasons for these changes in satisfaction are not immediately apparent, and the changes may simply be due to methodological differences between years of the study.<sup>58</sup> In 2002, Eastern Europe had the lowest levels of family satisfaction of any region. In the past decade, however, the proportion of adults reporting being satisfied with their families increased by 18 percentage points in Poland. Similarly, the proportion of adults reporting satisfaction increased by almost 11 percentage points in the Philippines. Conversely, rates of satisfaction decreased by more than five percentage points in Chile and Ireland.

<sup>58</sup> For example, in Poland, only citizens were surveyed in 2002, whereas in 2012 adults of any nationality in Poland were sampled.

## Views on Contributions to Household Income

Around the world, one-half of all working-age women work. The percentage of women working has actually decreased over the past couple years, and remains highly variable by country and region.<sup>59</sup> Here, for the first time, we are reporting the percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that both the man and the woman should contribute to household income. Data come from the 2012 ISSP and are displayed in [Figure 10](#). In all countries with data available, more than half of adults agree that both partners should contribute financially, with rates of agreement ranging from a low of 54 percent in Australia to a high of 92 percent in the Philippines.

Regionally, the highest rates of support for dual-income families are in sub-Saharan Africa (represented by South Africa), South America (represented by Argentina and Chile), and non-English-speaking parts of Western Europe. In each of these regions, over 80 percent of adults say that both men and women should contribute to household income. Rates of agreement are similar in Eastern Europe, at 76 percent in Russia and Poland, and more varied in Asia, where they range from 67 percent in South Korea to 92 percent in the Philippines.

The lowest rates of agreement are found in English-speaking countries of several different regions: in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, and the United States, less than 65 percent of adults agree that both the man and woman should earn income for the family. In spite of this fact, over half of women are part of the labor force in each of these countries,<sup>60</sup> and support for working moms is moderately high (as described below). Though it may seem surprising, English-speaking countries tend to hang together with more traditional values.<sup>61</sup>

With all attitude-based indicators, it is important to keep in mind that attitudes and behaviors do not always align.<sup>62</sup> For additional information on the distribution of household labor and gender attitudes, see the essay section of this report.

## Discussions With Parents

Communicating with children, both generally and about school, is a positive family activity that any parent can do, and that can enhance parent-youth relationships as well as student academic outcomes.<sup>63</sup> Here we will report on two different indicators of parent-adolescent communication: how often they talk in general and how often they discuss school. Data for this indicator come from the 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey. The PISA sample contains primarily middle- and higher-income countries, and only eight countries included in the *World Family Map* chose to include questions on parental communication with students. PISA asks parents of 15-year-olds how frequently they discuss their son or daughter's school performance with them and how often the two spend time talking about anything. The indicators report the percentage of 15-year-olds whose parents report that they have such conversations every day or almost every day.

How often students discuss school with and spend time just talking to their parents varies widely throughout the world. In some regions, discussing school is more popular, while in others general conversation occurs more often. Across surveyed countries, between 44 and 92 percent of 15-year-olds spend time just talking to their parents every day or almost every day, and between 19 and 79 percent of teens discuss how well they are doing at school with their parents as frequently, as seen in [Figure 11](#).

<sup>59</sup> World Bank, "World Development Indicators: Labor Force Structure Table 2.2" (World Bank, 2015).

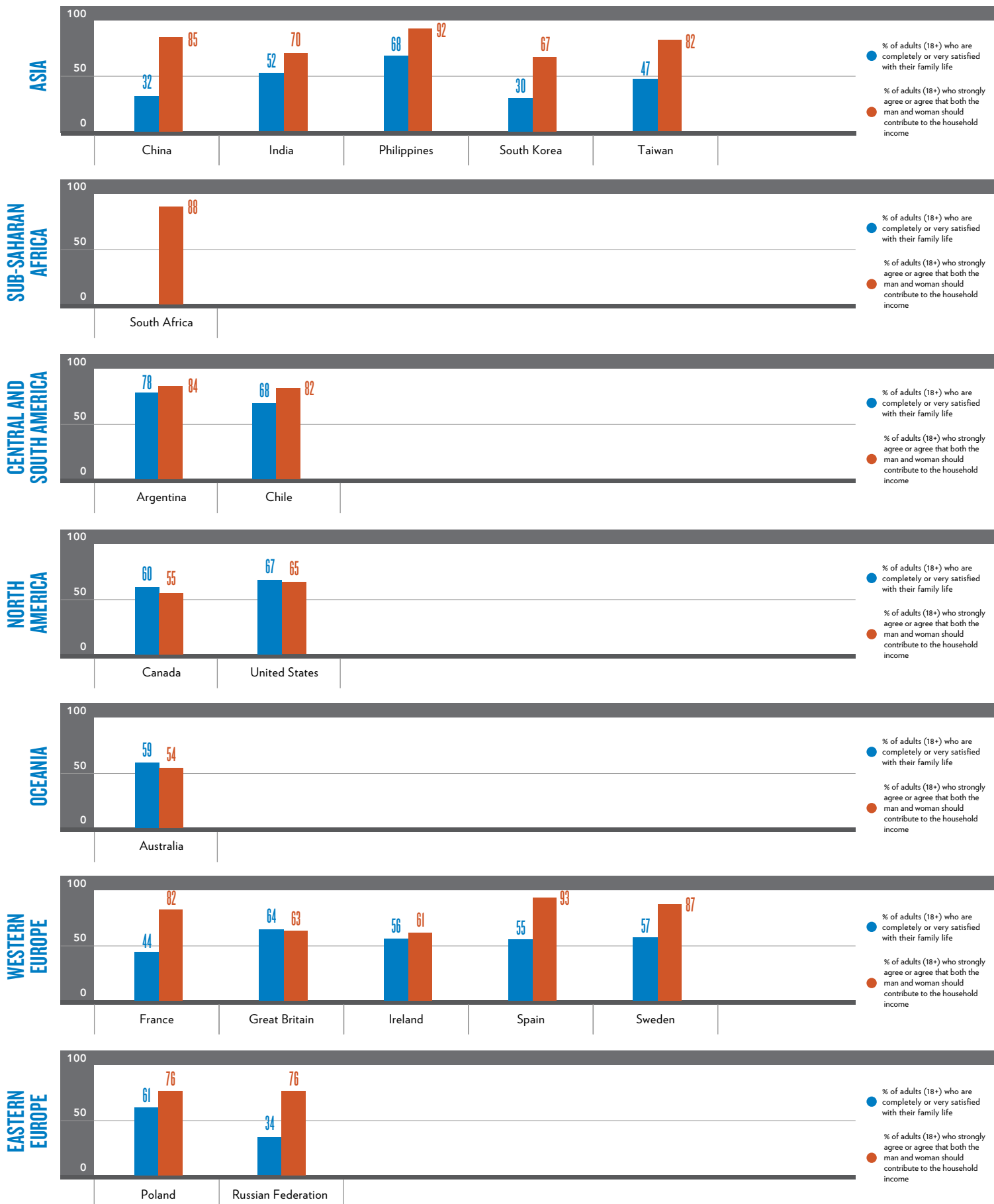
<sup>60</sup> World Bank, "World Development Indicators: Labor Force Structure Table 2.2."

<sup>61</sup> B. Ebbinghaus, "Comparing Welfare State Regimes: Are Typologies an Ideal or Realistic Strategy?", in *European Social Policy Analysis Network, ESPAnet Conference* (Edinburgh, UK, 2012); G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

<sup>62</sup> B. A. Hopkins, "Gender and Provisioning under Different Capitalisms," in *Handbook of Research on Gender and Economic Life*, ed. D. M. Figart and T. L. Varnecke (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013).

<sup>63</sup> D. H. Caro, "Parent-Child Communication and Academic Performance: Associations at the within- and between-Country Level," *Journal for Educational Research Online* 3, no. 2 (2011); G. Hampden-Thompson, L. Guzman, and L. Lippman, "A Cross-National Analysis of Parental Involvement and Student Literacy," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 54, no. 3 (2013).

**FIGURE 10** Family satisfaction and views on contribution to household income, 2012



In Asia, 15-year-olds from South Korea and from two Special Administrative Regions in China, Hong Kong and Macao, are less likely to discuss how well they are doing in school with their parents every day or almost every day than those in other parts of the world. In Macao, just 19 percent do so, while in South Korea 28 percent and in Hong Kong 31 percent do so. By contrast, students in these Asian regions talked to their parents frequently about more general topics at similar rates to students in other regions, from 39 percent in Macao to 66 percent in Hong Kong.

In the Americas, represented by Chile and Mexico, students are more likely to discuss school with their parents than to spend time just talking—a pattern unique to these regions. About 60 percent of students discuss school with their parents daily or almost daily, while about 45 percent of students spend time just talking to their parents with the same frequency.

In Europe, teens have comparatively more discussions with their parents. In Italy and Hungary, approximately three-quarters of 15-year-olds talk with their parents daily or almost daily both about their school performance and about other topics. German teens are less likely to discuss school with their parents (just 36 percent do so almost every day or daily) but are the most likely to spend time just talking to their parents on a daily or near-daily basis, with 92 percent doing so.

## Family Meals

When families eat meals together regularly, children can talk with their parents and share what is going on in their lives.<sup>64</sup> It is a direct measure of a positive family process.

In the United States, eating together as a family has been linked to myriad positive outcomes, ranging from reduced levels of substance and alcohol use to lower levels of depression, even after accounting for other family factors. Eating meals together is also associated with favorable educational outcomes, such as showing a commitment to learning, seeking and earning higher grades, spending more time on homework, and reading for pleasure.<sup>65</sup> After including controls for background characteristics, one study found that eating meals as a family was the most important predictor of adolescent flourishing.<sup>66</sup> Recent longitudinal research has found that the value of eating meals together as a family may dissipate as adolescents enter young adulthood, leaving only indirect effects on well-being.<sup>67</sup> The influence of sharing meals on young people's outcomes also depends on the quality of family relationships. While sharing meals in families with stronger relationships has been found to have positive associations with child well-being, sharing meals has been found to have less influence on children's development in families that are marked by poorer or conflict-filled relationships.<sup>68</sup>

Internationally, research has demonstrated that students who eat meals with their families more frequently are more likely to achieve high scores in reading literacy in 16 out of 21 examined countries. This relationship is more consistent than that between discussing general topics with parents and reading literacy.<sup>69</sup>

Families all around the world eat meals together, though the particular meal of importance may vary from country to country, and adolescents and their parents agree that eating together is important, although parents place more value on mealtime.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, "The Importance of Family Dinners VI" (New York: Columbia University, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> M. Eisenberg et al., "Correlations between Family Meals and Psychosocial Well-Being among Adolescents," *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine* 158, no. 8 (2004); J. A. Fulkerson et al., "Family Dinner Meal Frequency and Adolescent Development: Relationships with Developmental Assets and High-Risk Behaviors," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 39, no. 3 (2006).

<sup>66</sup> N. Zarrett and R. Lerner, "Ways to Promote the Positive Development of Children and Youth," in *Research-to-Results Brief* (Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2008).

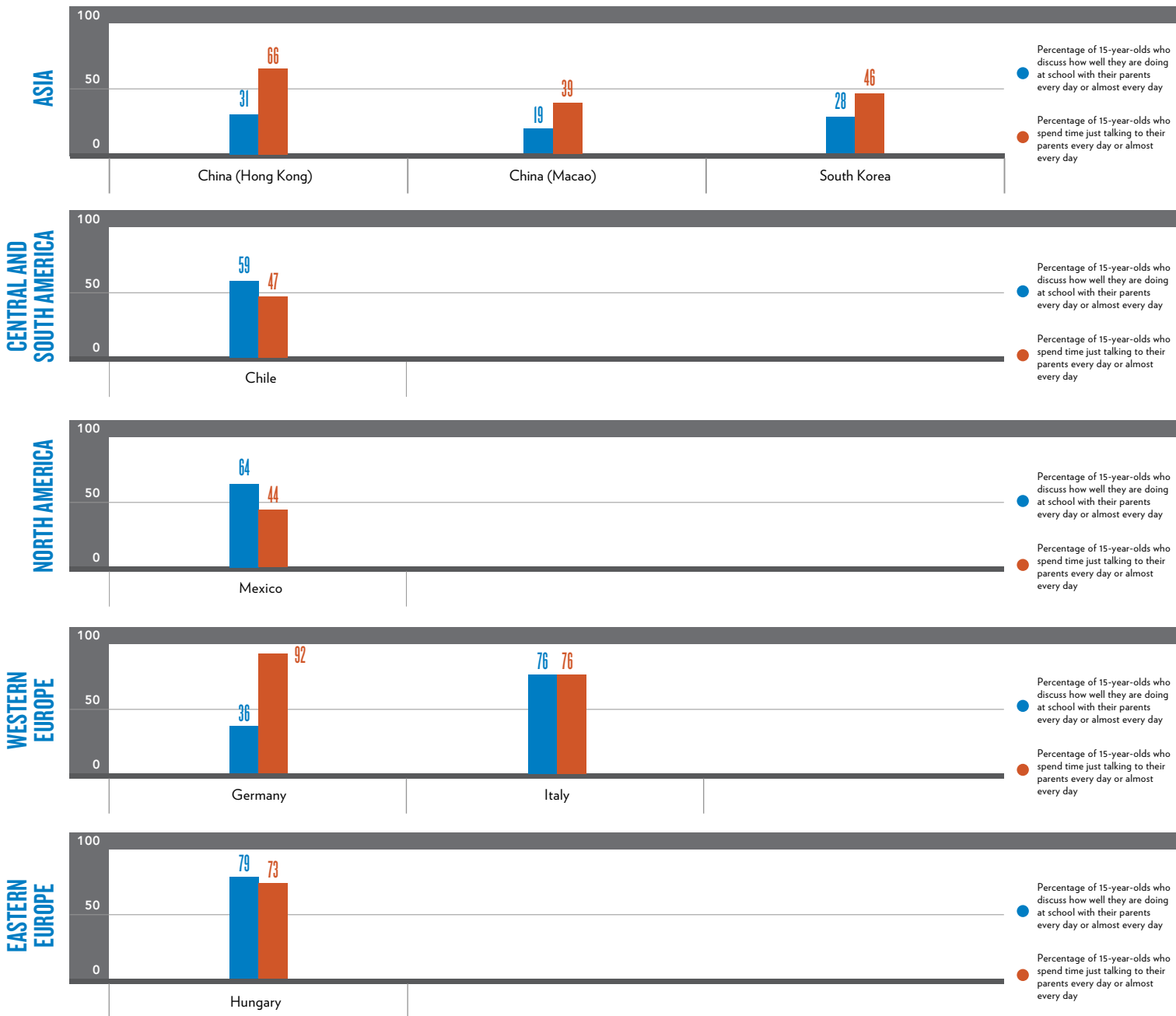
<sup>67</sup> K. Musick and A. Meier, "Assessing Causality and Persistence in Associations between Family Dinners and Adolescent Well-Being," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74, no. 3 (2012).

<sup>68</sup> Musick and Meier, "Assessing Causality and Persistence in Associations."

<sup>69</sup> Hampden-Thompson et al., "A Cross-National Analysis of Parental Involvement and Student Literacy."

<sup>70</sup> J. A. Fulkerson, D. Neumark-Sztainer, and M. Story, "Adolescent and Parent Views of Family Meals," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 106, no. 4 (2006).

**FIGURE 11** Parental involvement, 2012

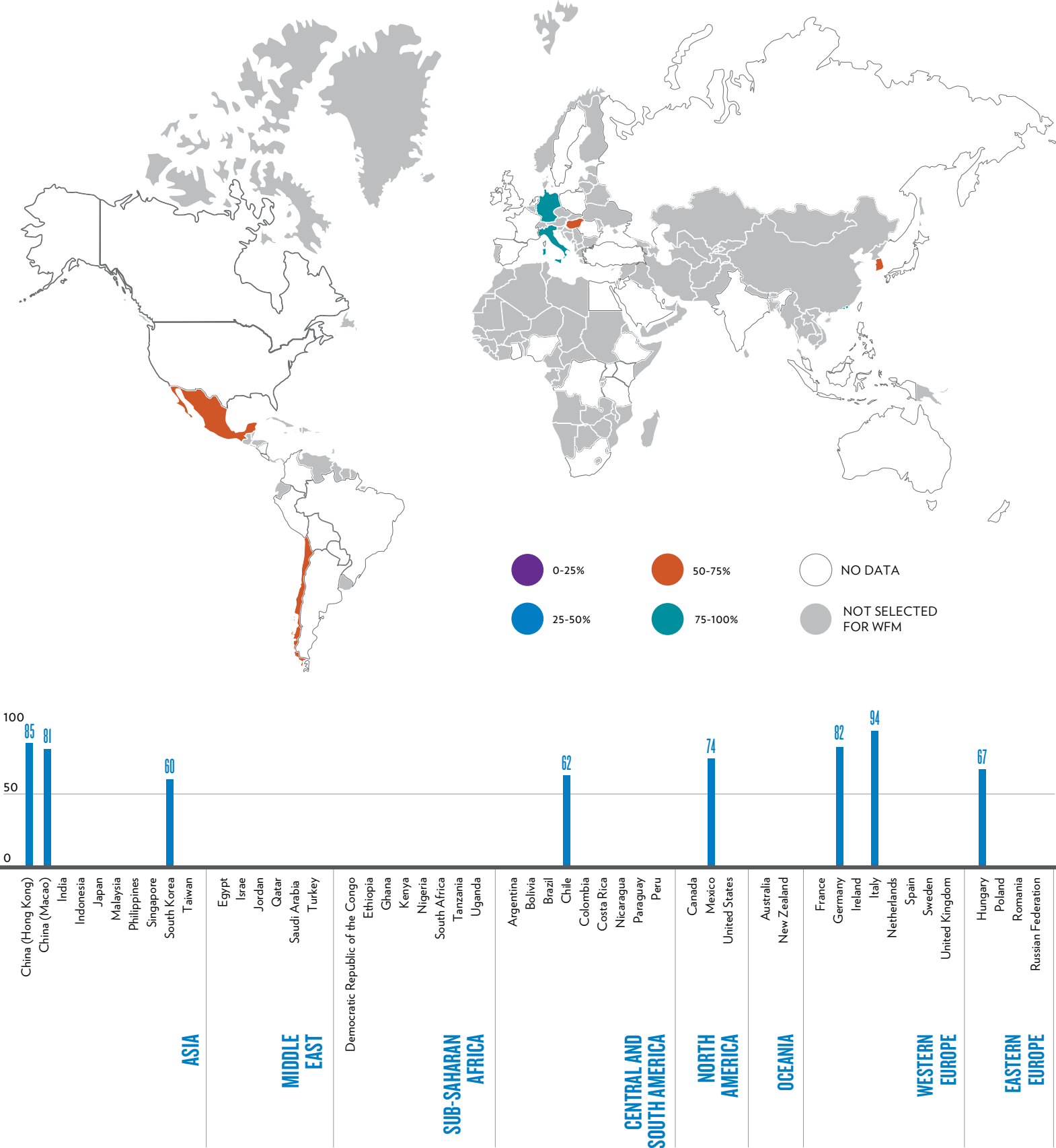


Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure11](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure11)



**FIGURE 12 Family meals, 2012**

*Percentage of 15-year-olds who eat the main meal with their parents around a table every day or almost every day*



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure12](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure12)

The *World Family Map* presents the proportion of children who eat the main meal of the day with their families every day or almost every day as an indicator of family processes. The information for this indicator is drawn from the direct answers given by parents of 15-year-olds from a variety of countries participating in the 2012 PISA survey.

These data indicate that the percentage of 15-year-olds who frequently eat meals with their families varies widely throughout the world, ranging from 60 percent in South Korea to 94 percent in Italy, as seen in [Figure 12](#).

In Asia, represented by South Korea and two regions in China, there is diversity in the number of teens who eat with their parents on a daily or almost daily basis. Sixty percent of teens in South Korea eat the main meal with their parents almost every day or daily, while more than 80 percent do in both Macao and Hong Kong. Around six in 10 teens (62 percent) eat the main meal of the day with their parents in South America, as represented by Chile. Rates are higher in North America and Europe, where between 67 percent (Hungary) and 94 percent (Italy) of teens eat the main meal with their parents every day or almost every day. Mexican and German teens fall in between, with 74 percent and 82 percent of teens, respectively, eating with their parents at least almost every day.

The differences in the frequency of families' eating meals together may reflect differences in family structure, time use, proximity of work and school to home, rates of female labor-force participation, and cultural patterns.



In Asia, represented by South Korea and two regions in China, there is diversity in the number of teens who eat with their parents on a daily or almost daily basis. Sixty percent of teens in South Korea eat the main meal with their parents almost every day or daily, while more than 80 percent do in both Macao and Hong Kong



# Family Culture

## Key Findings

Family culture refers to the family-related attitudes and norms a country's citizens express. Data suggest that adults take a range of progressive and conservative positions on family issues.

- Attitudes toward voluntary single motherhood differ from one region to another, with adults in the Americas, Europe, and Oceania leaning more toward acceptance (with a high acceptance rate of 80 percent in Spain), and those in Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa leaning more toward rejection (as evidenced by an acceptance rate of only 2 percent in Egypt and Jordan).
- About half of adults agree that one parent can raise a child as well as two parents, with support ranging from 24 percent in China to 69 percent in South Africa.
- In all of the countries featured in this study with available data, most adults—from 52 percent in Chile to 84 percent in Taiwan—believe that working mothers can establish relationships with their children that are just as good as those of stay-at-home mothers.
- Most adults worldwide report that they completely trust their families; however, levels of trust vary by region and country, with 63 percent of adults reporting they completely trust their families in the Netherlands, and 99 percent reporting this to be the case in Egypt. It should be noted that the willingness of adults to affirm the term “completely” (regardless of the topic) varies across countries.

To shed light on adults' attitudes toward family life around the world, we relied on data from the World Values Survey (WVS), collected between 2000 and 2013, and the 2012 edition of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) surveys on four cultural indicators in 32 countries: 1) approval of single motherhood, 2) agreement that one parent can bring up a child as well as two parents, 3) approval of working mothers, and 4) presence of family trust.<sup>71</sup> Given that respondents in different countries may interpret the questions and response categories somewhat differently, and that population representation of the surveys varies from country to country, the WVS and ISSP do not allow us to draw a perfect comparison between countries.

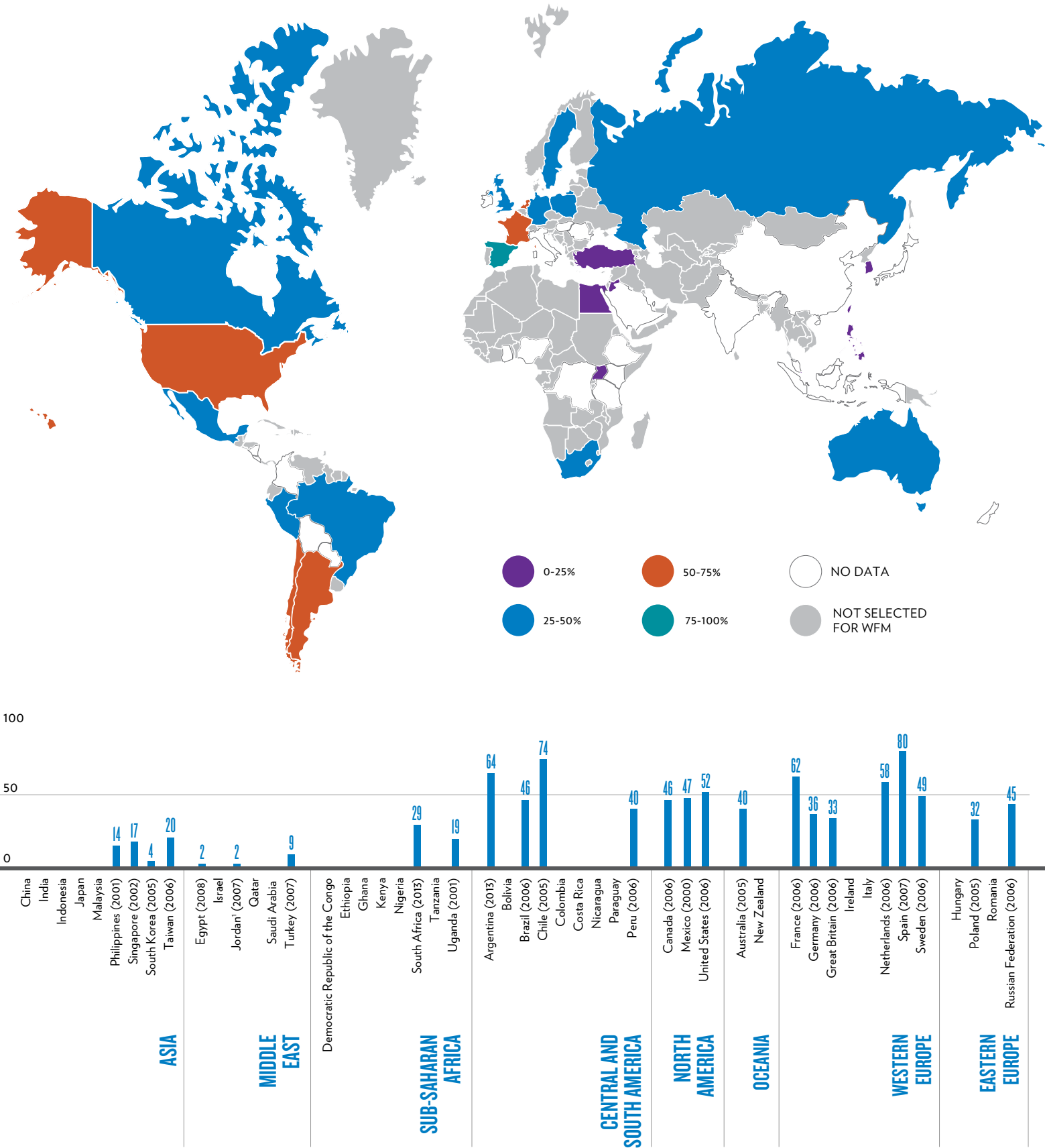
## Attitudes Toward Voluntary Single Motherhood

Adult attitudes toward voluntary single motherhood vary greatly by region, as seen in [Figure 13](#). The WVS asked adults if they approved of a woman seeking to “have a child as a single parent” without a “stable relationship with a man.” In Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa, little public support exists for this type of single motherhood. Specifically, in Asia and the Middle East, support for this view ranges from a high of 20 percent (Taiwan) to a low of 2 percent (Egypt and Jordan). Support is also comparatively low in sub-Saharan Africa, where only 19 percent of adults in Uganda and 29 percent of adults in South Africa express approval of voluntary single motherhood.

<sup>71</sup> World Values Survey Association, “World Values Survey 1981-2008 Official Aggregate V.20090901,” [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org) (Aggregate File Producer: ASEP/JDS, Madrid, 2009); World Values Survey Association, “World Values Survey Wave 6 2010-2014 Official Aggregate V.20150418” (Aggregate File Producer: Asep/JDS, Madrid, 2015); ISSP Research Group, “International Social Survey Programme: Family and Changing Gender Roles-Issp 2012” (Cologne: GESIS Data Archive, 2014); Hampden-Thompson et al., “A Cross-National Analysis of Parental Involvement and Student Literacy.”

# FIGURE 13 Attitudes toward voluntary single motherhood, 2000-2013

Percentage of adults (18+) who approve of a woman who wants to have a child as a single parent but doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man



Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure13](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/figure13)

Support for voluntary single motherhood is markedly higher in the Americas, Europe, and Oceania. Forty percent or more of adults living in Oceanic or American countries surveyed in the WVS accept it. For example, 52 percent of adults in the United States, 46 percent in Canada, 40 percent in Australia, and 74 percent in Chile indicate that they approve of unmarried women having children on their own. Views are more heterogeneous in Europe. Just 32 percent of adults in Poland express support for voluntary single motherhood, compared with 80 percent of adults in Spain. Overall, slightly less than half of the adults in most other European countries register their approval of voluntary single motherhood. In general, adults in countries with more affluence, lower levels of religiosity, and/or high levels of single parenthood prove to be more supportive of women having children without a husband or male partner. By contrast, countries with strong religious or collectivist orientations are less supportive of women who choose to be single mothers.<sup>72</sup>

## Attitudes About Whether Children Need Two Parents

Despite the considerable regional variation in attitudes toward voluntary single motherhood, there is relatively little variation among countries in attitudes about the value of a two-parent home. In most of the world, about one-half of adults believe that “one parent can bring up a child as well as two parents together,” as [Figure 14](#) illustrates.<sup>73</sup>

Adults in Asia show the widest range of beliefs on this indicator. In China, less than one-quarter of adults believe that one parent can raise a child as well as two parents, whereas in India, the Philippines, and Taiwan, over one-half of adults think that one parent can. Data are very limited for sub-Saharan Africa, and South America, but where they are available, adults tend to believe that one parent can raise a child as well as two: in South Africa, 69 percent of adults affirm that, and in South America, as represented by Argentina and Chile, about 60 percent do.

Adults in North America and Oceania are more skeptical of single-parent families, with just under half of adults believing that one parent can raise a child as well as two parents in Canada, Australia, and United States. In both Western and Eastern Europe, about half of adults believe that one parent can raise a child as well as two parents, with agreement ranging from 39 percent to 60 percent.

For the countries with available data, attitudes about whether children need two parents generally align with behaviors. In South Africa, adults have the world’s highest level of endorsement for one-parent families, and more than half of children grow up living with a single parent. Single parenthood is less widespread in areas with lower levels of endorsement for single parents’ abilities to raise children alone. For example, in North America and Oceania, where less than one-half of adults believe that one parent can raise a child as well as two, over three-quarters of children live with two parents (with the exception of the United States).

## Support for Working Mothers

The 2014 edition of the *World Family Map* cautioned against drawing conclusions about support for working mothers because the most recent data available were from the turn of the millennium. Fortunately, the ISSP included this question in their most recent round of survey data collection around 2012. The countries for which data are available are not identical to those covered in the 2014 edition, and again it is important to be cautious in comparing this year’s reported data to those in last year’s report due to the different data sources.

Across the world, one-half of women aged 15 and older participate in the labor force.<sup>74</sup> In line with this trend, as [Table 4](#) indicates, a majority of adults in all countries surveyed around the globe believe that a “working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.”

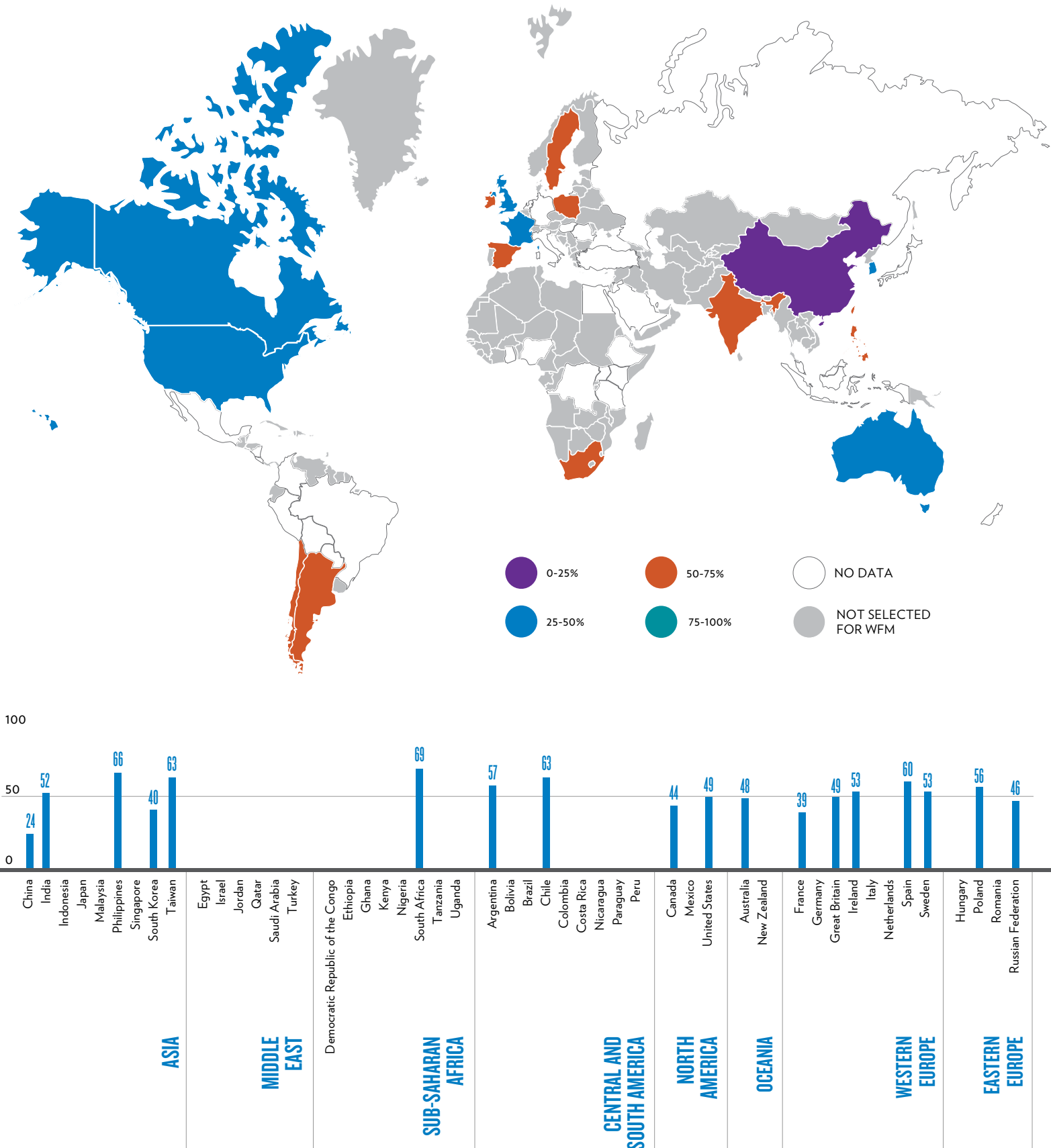
<sup>72</sup> R. Inglehart and P. Norris, *The Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World* (New York: Cambridge, 2003).

<sup>73</sup> In previous editions of the *World Family Map*, this indicator was whether a child “needs a home with both a mother and a father to grow up happily.” This year, this indicator has been replaced with a non-gendered version, for which more recent data are available.

<sup>74</sup> World Bank, “World Development Indicators: Labor Force Structure Table 2.2.”

**FIGURE 14** Attitudes about the need for two parents, 2012

*Percentage of adults (18+) who agree or strongly agree that one parent can bring up a child as well as two parents together*



This view seems to be particularly prevalent in Western Europe and North America, where more than two-thirds of adults in the surveyed countries agree that working mothers perform just as well as mothers who do not work outside the home. For instance, 72 percent of adults in the United States, 78 percent of adults in Sweden, and 81 percent of adults in France express the belief that working mothers can establish as good a relationship with their children as can stay-at-home mothers.

The available evidence in sub-Saharan Africa comes from South Africa, where 75 percent of adults agree that working mothers do as well as mothers who do not work outside the home.

Support for working mothers is more moderate in other regions of the world. In parts of Asia (including China, India, and South Korea) and Eastern Europe, about 65 percent of adults agree that working mothers can establish strong relationships with their children. Support is higher in the Philippines and Taiwan, though, at 72 percent and 84 percent, respectively. In Australia, 68 percent of adults hold similar views. Adults in South America express less support for working mothers than those in other regions. In Chile, 52 percent of adults believe that working mothers develop relationships with their children that are as secure as those of non-working mothers. In Argentina, 61 percent of adults feel the same way. Unfortunately, no Middle Eastern countries were included in this data source, but older findings for this region were reported in the 2014 *World Family Map* report.

In general, then, this somewhat limited global survey of attitudes towards working mothers suggests that in most regions, public support for working mothers is high. Despite the conventional wisdom that children do best when their mothers are caring for them full-time in the home, at least 50 percent of adults believe that working mothers can establish relationships with their children which are as strong and secure as those of non-working mothers in every surveyed country. In fact, recent research has found little relationship between the quantity of time that children or adolescents spend with their mothers and their educational and behavioral outcomes.<sup>75</sup>

## TABLE 4 Support for working mothers, 2012

*Percentage of adults (18+) who agree or strongly agree that a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work*

ASIA	MIDDLE EAST	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA
China 64	Egypt -	Democratic Republic of the Congo -	Argentina 61
India 64	Israel -	Ethiopia -	Bolivia -
Indonesia -	Jordan -	Ghana -	Brazil -
Japan -	Qatar -	Kenya -	Chile 52
Malaysia -	Saudi Arabia -	Nigeria -	Colombia -
Philippines 72	Turkey -	South Africa 75	Costa Rica -
Singapore -		Tanzania -	Nicaragua -
South Korea 67		Uganda -	Paraguay -
Taiwan 84			Peru -
NORTH AMERICA	OCEANIA	WESTERN EUROPE	EASTERN EUROPE
Canada 71	Australia 68	France 81	Hungary -
Mexico -	New Zealand -	Germany -	Poland 64
United States 72		Great Britain 77	Romania -
		Ireland 71	Russian Federation 66
		Italy -	
		Netherlands -	
		Spain 68	
		Sweden 78	

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table4](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table4)

<sup>75</sup> M. A. Milkie, K. M. Nomaguchi, and K. E. Denny, "Does the Amount of Time Mothers Spend with Children or Adolescents Matter?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77, no. 2 (2015).



**TABLE 5** Family trust, 2005-2014*Percentage of adults (18+) who completely trust their families*

ASIA	MIDDLE EAST	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA
China (2012) 90	Egypt (2013) 99	Democratic Republic of the Congo -	Argentina (2013) 92
India (2014) 65	Israel -	Ethiopia -	Bolivia -
Indonesia -	Jordan <sup>1</sup> (2007) 97	Ghana (2012) 67	Brazil (2014) 70
Japan -	Qatar (2012) 91	Kenya -	Chile (2005) 83
Malaysia -	Saudi Arabia -	Nigeria (2011) 88	Colombia -
Philippines (2012) 86	Turkey (2011) 94	South Africa (2013) 76	Costa Rica -
Singapore (2012) 82		Tanzania -	Nicaragua -
South Korea (2010) 83		Uganda -	Paraguay -
Taiwan (2012) 83			Peru (2012) 79
NORTH AMERICA	OCEANIA	WESTERN EUROPE	EASTERN EUROPE
Canada (2006) 83	Australia (2012) 82	France (2006) 80	Hungary -
Mexico -	New Zealand -	Germany (2013) 76	Poland (2012) 70
United States (2011) 70		Great Britain (2006) 86	Romania (2012) 81
		Ireland -	Russian Federation (2011) 88
		Italy -	
		Netherlands (2006) 63	
		Spain (2011) 94	
		Sweden (2013) 89	

Sources: [www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table5](http://www.worldfamilymap.org/2015/e-ppendix/table5)

## Family Trust

The family is an important social institution around the world. Most societies see the family as a fundamental source of socialization, the place that meets some of humankind's deepest needs for belonging, and the wellspring of the emotional and social support needed to flourish. What, then, does the global public believe about the presence of trust in their own families? The World Values Survey asked respondents if they trust their families, and the results suggest that trust remains high in most families around the world (see Table 5). Here the *World Family Map* records the percentage of respondents affirming that they “completely” trust their families,<sup>76</sup> the highest answer they could select, because there is a tendency for respondents to pick the top category in reporting on such a socially desirable indicator. However, differences across cultures exist in the degree to which survey respondents will affirm the category “completely.” Evidence suggests that in the Netherlands and in Latin America, specifically, and perhaps in other countries, respondents often avoid choosing the highest categories on survey questions because these response options are not culturally acceptable.<sup>77</sup>

With these caveats, we find that family trust is almost universal among adults in the Asian, Oceanic, and especially Middle Eastern countries studied. In the Middle East, 91 percent of Qatari adults indicate that they completely trust their families, as do 94 percent of Turkish adults and a remarkable 97 percent of adults in Jordan and 99 percent of adults in Egypt. Likewise, 90 percent of adults in China express complete trust in their families, as do 82 to 86 percent of adults in other Asian countries, and 82 percent of Australians. India appears as an exception to the high rates of family trust in Asia, with just 65 percent of adults saying they completely trust their families.

Levels of family trust are more mixed in Europe and the Americas. In Europe, the proportion of adults who report completely trusting their families ranges from 63 percent in the Netherlands to 94 percent in Spain. Notably, the percentage of adults who completely trust their families decreased by five percentage points in Germany between 2006 and 2013, to 76 percent.

In the Americas, the proportion of adults who affirm that they completely trust their families ranges from 71 percent in Brazil to 92 percent in Argentina, with North American percentages falling between 70 and 83 percent. In sub-Saharan Africa, 67 percent of adults completely trust their families in Ghana, while 76 percent express this trust in South Africa and 88 percent do in Nigeria.

<sup>76</sup> Respondents could indicate that they trust their family “completely” or “somewhat,” or that they “do not trust [their family] very much” or “do not trust [them] at all.”<sup>77</sup> *World Family Map* partner research institutions in the Netherlands and South America, email message to authors, October 2012.

Given the heterogeneous character of countries that register high levels of family trust—with at least nine in 10 adults completely trusting their families in Argentina, China, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Spain, and Turkey—we cannot be sure of the role factors like affluence, public policy, religion, and familism (the elevation of the family over individual issues) play in fostering high levels of family solidarity. Nevertheless, the varied character of nations scoring highly on the attitudinal measure of family trust suggests that different factors foster strong family solidarity in different regional contexts.

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While research consistently demonstrates that families exert a strong influence on child outcomes, our ability to monitor families and understand how to strengthen them, and thus improve child outcomes in many regions of the world, is hampered by a lack of data. For example, in many countries, even basic data—such as the relationship between a child’s parents, information on extended family members and non-residential parents, and the education level and employment status of both parents—are unavailable. Though improved, the need for data on additional countries for the indicators in the family process and culture sections is obvious, and the areas of family structure and socioeconomics would be strengthened if there existed more data allowing for comparisons across regions and countries of the world. To further understand the family dynamics underlying child well-being, we need comparable data for additional indicators of family well-being.

Specific surveys sometimes allow for analyses of these dynamics. The following section presents an essay that uses survey data to look at the distribution of household labor and whether it is related to happiness among parents.



**In the Middle East, 91 percent of Qatari adults indicate that they completely trust their families, as do 94 percent of Turkish adults and a remarkable 97 percent of adults in Jordan and 99 percent of adults in Egypt.**

NO ONE BEST WAY: WORK, FAMILY, AND HAPPINESS THE WORLD OVER



Laurie DeRose  
Frances Goldscheider  
Andrés Salazar  
Paúl Corcuera  
Montserrat Gas  
Reynaldo Rivera  
Claudia Tarud

## Executive Summary

In this section of the *World Family Map* report, we investigate how variations in union status and work-family arrangements are associated with men's and women's self-reported level of happiness. We document how couples with children divide market and domestic work in 32 countries; explore how the presence of children is related to how much work couples perform and how they divide it; and test the association of work-family arrangements with happiness among parents. Although happiness is more difficult to define and measure than objective, numerical indicators such as income levels, a large body of cross-national research suggests that happiness can be successfully compared across nations and used as an indicator of human thriving.<sup>1</sup>

The experiences of the thousands of individuals and couples we studied yielded three key findings:

1. **No single model of dividing paid and domestic work between partners predominates in any region around the globe.**
2. **Couples with children spend more hours working (across paid and domestic work) each week than couples without children, and having children is more strongly associated with dividing work along traditional gender lines in higher-income countries than in lower-income ones.**
3. **Among parents, couples dividing labor in very different ways express mostly similar levels of happiness, although parents who have a partner with whom to divide the labor report more happiness than parents who do not have a partner.**

## Background

The last half-century has witnessed two dramatic changes in social life: a gender revolution bringing about more egalitarian beliefs and behaviors and an evolution of the family characterized by major changes in family structure, processes, beliefs, and behaviors.<sup>2</sup> The consequences of these changes are still playing out today in different ways around the globe.

Gender egalitarianism arose partly from changing economies. As two incomes are increasingly necessary to support families in many countries, the traditional division of labor with men's earnings supporting stay-at-home wives becomes less practical. It may also become less desirable where women as well as men are educated and socialized for market work. Greater gender equity in the public sphere—both in the law books and in public institutions like the government, the marketplace, and educational institutions—can result in a renegotiation of gender roles in the private sphere.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Veenhoven, "Cross-National Differences in Happiness: Cultural Measurement Bias or Effect of Culture?," *International Journal of Wellbeing* 2, no. 4 (2012).

<sup>2</sup> F. Goldscheider, E. Bernhardt, and T. Lappegård, "The Gender Revolution: A Framework for Understanding Family and Demographic Behavior," *Population and Development Review* 41, no. 2 (2015).

<sup>3</sup> A. Thornton and L. Young-DeMarco (2001), "Four Decades of Trends in Attitudes Toward Family Issues in the United States: The 1960s Through the 1990s," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, no. 4 (2001).

At the same time, a retreat from marriage has been underway in most regions of the world. Today, only the Middle East and Asia have high rates of marriage and low rates of cohabitation. In contrast, in the Americas, Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa, marriage is a less normative part of adulthood: both singleness and cohabitation are common.<sup>4</sup>

Together, these changes mean that men and women are navigating their work and home lives on new terrain. Gender roles are shifting, and they are not worked out in the context of marriage as frequently as in the past. Nevertheless, it is important not to assume that gender roles will change among all couples in the same way. We may be heading toward a world where strong families depend upon the widespread institutionalization of egalitarian roles, as Frances Goldscheider and Linda Waite predicted, based on trends in the United States, in *New Families, No Families?: The Transformation of the American Home*.<sup>5</sup>

Or we may be heading toward a world where no one work-family model dominates the life of most ordinary families. Catherine Hakim has argued that work-family preferences are likely to vary, now that men and women have more freedom to organize their work and family lives as they see fit.<sup>6</sup> As for marriage, despite the rise in cohabitation, in most countries marriage remains the primary context for the rearing of children.<sup>7</sup> What all this means is that contemporary family life in much of Africa, the Americas, and Europe is characterized by profound pluralism, where no single model of family life is dominant.

### *Men and women's changing roles in the labor force and the family*

Women's rate of participation in the paid labor force varies tremendously around the world. Depending on the country, anywhere between 15 and 88 percent of women over the age of 15 are economically active.<sup>8</sup> But paid work tells at best half the story of how couples divide their labor, for housework and childcare are also necessary the world over. We follow Goldscheider and her colleagues (2015) in positing that there are two phases to men and women's changing roles in the labor force and the family.<sup>9</sup> During the first phase, women have increasingly joined men in the public sphere by participating in market work. The second phase involves men joining women in contributing to the private sphere of the family.<sup>10</sup> Though these trends are intertwined, it is unclear how closely they relate to each other in different countries and regions, and whether they will lead to a new egalitarian norm remains uncertain.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, existing cross-national studies of how couples divide domestic work and child care have focused almost exclusively on Western industrialized countries.<sup>12</sup> We build on this body of work using the Family and Changing Gender Roles module of the 2012 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) to provide a geographic perspective on the progress of women and men's changing roles in which all regions of the world are at least minimally represented.

<sup>4</sup> L. Lippmann and W. B. Wilcox, "World Family Map 2014: Mapping Family Change and Child Well-Being Outcomes," Child Trends, [http://worldfamilymap.org/2014/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WFM-2014-Final\\_ForWeb.pdf](http://worldfamilymap.org/2014/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WFM-2014-Final_ForWeb.pdf) (2014).

<sup>5</sup> F. K. Goldscheider and L. Waite, *New Families, No Families?: The Transformation of the American Home* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> C. Hakim, "Women, Careers, and Work-life Preferences," *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* 34, no. 3 (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Lippmann and Wilcox, "World Family Map 2014."

<sup>8</sup> "Labor Force Participation Rate, Female (% of Female Population Ages 15+) (modeled ILO Estimate)," World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLFC.ACT.FE.ZS> (accessed January 26, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Goldscheider et al., "The Gender Revolution."

<sup>10</sup> Goldscheider et al., "The Gender Revolution."

<sup>11</sup> Hakim, "Women, Careers, and Work-life Preferences"; M. Y. Kan, O. Sullivan, and J. Gershuny, "Gender Convergence in Domestic Work: Discerning the Effects of Interactional and Institutional Barriers from Large-Scale Data," *Sociology* 45, no. 2 (2011); W. Wang, "Mothers and Work: What's Ideal?," Pew Research Center (2013), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/08/19/mothers-and-work-whats-ideal/>.

<sup>12</sup> S. Dex, J. L. Scott, and A. Plagnol, *Gendered Lives: Gender Inequalities in Production and Reproduction* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2012); A. H. Gauthier, T. M. Smeeding, and F. F. Furstenberg, "Are Parents Investing Less Time in Children? Trends in Selected Industrialized Countries," *Population and Development Review* 30, no. 4 (2004); Kan et al., "Gender Convergence in Domestic Work"; J. Neilson and M. Stanfors, "It's About Time! Gender, Parenthood, and Household Divisions of Labor Under Different Welfare Regimes," *Journal of Family Issues* 35, no. 8 (2014). For an exception, see R. Forste and K. Fox, "Household Labor, Gender Roles, and Family Satisfaction: A Cross-National Comparison," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 43, no. 5 (2012).

## *Private and public constraints to men's integration in domestic work*

Increasing men's involvement in work within the household often challenges prevailing notions of what is "men's work" and what is "women's work."<sup>13</sup> Cultural scripts for how gender is "done" tend to persist even when women enter the paid labor force in large numbers. Core housework (including cooking and laundry) generally remains female-dominated even when men perform less frequent household tasks like major cleaning, repairs, and tax returns.<sup>14</sup> However, as we undertook this study we expected that there would be great diversity in how couples divide labor from one region to another, due to the complex interactions of biology,<sup>15</sup> culture,<sup>16</sup> and laws and institutions, as described below.

Men and women's changing roles in the family can be shaped by laws and institutions,<sup>17</sup> and institutional change has the potential to alter cultural scripts or expectations regarding appropriate gender roles and responsibilities. There are a number of factors that point to this. For example, in areas where part-time work lacks many of the benefits associated with full-time work, such as health insurance, couples may have a greater incentive to divide their labor traditionally than in areas where part-time work carries similar benefits to full-time work (proportional to the hours worked). In countries that provide universal preschool, meanwhile, the opportunity costs to having both partners in the paid labor force are lower because child care costs are reduced, so couples are freer to negotiate the division of labor as they wish, rather than based on financial needs.

## *Our contributions and expectations*

We provide the first description of how couples with children divide paid and domestic labor that spans world regions. Literature on Western countries indicates that having children—particularly young children—tends to result in a more traditional division of labor.<sup>18</sup> However, it is not clear from existing research whether this pattern holds across various economic and cultural contexts. Prior research suggests that we may not see a similar pattern in countries where informal sector jobs are more common and where relatives (or domestic workers) care for children more often, since children may not limit mothers' paid work as much. Other research suggests that having children may have little impact on how couples divide labor in societies where there are strong state supports for children, such as the Scandinavian countries of Northern Europe.<sup>19</sup>

We also assess the correlation between couples' reported happiness and how they divide labor. We expected that when women have entered paid work to a greater extent than men have entered domestic work, people will be less happy, given that performing a "second shift"<sup>20</sup> of work at home in addition to their paid work responsibilities can be exhausting

<sup>13</sup> Kan et al., "Gender Convergence in Domestic Work."

<sup>14</sup> S. Coltrane, "Research on Household Labor: Modeling and Measuring the Social Embeddedness of Routine Family Work," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62, no. 4 (2000).

<sup>15</sup> S. E. Rhoads, *Taking Sex Differences Seriously* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005); J. R. Udry, "The Nature of Gender," *Demography* 31, no. 4 (1994).

<sup>16</sup> S. Hays, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Kan et al., "Gender Convergence in Domestic Work"; A. Rao and D. Kelleher, "Institutions, Organisations and Gender Equality in an Era of Globalisation," *Gender and Development* 11, no. 1 (2003).

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. B. Fox, *When Couples Become Parents: The Creation of Gender in the Transition to Parenthood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). But for an exception case, see G. Kaufman, E. Bernhardt, and F. Goldscheider, "Enduring Egalitarianism? Family Transitions and Attitudes Toward Gender Equality in Sweden," *Journal of Family Issues* (forthcoming).

<sup>19</sup> M. Driber and M. Stanfors, "Does Parenthood Strengthen a Traditional Household Division of Labor? Evidence from Sweden," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 71, no. 1 (2009).

<sup>20</sup> A. R. Hochschild and A. Machung, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Viking, 1989).

for women,<sup>21</sup> and men tend to report higher levels of exhaustion when their partners are exhausted, which in turn affects their satisfaction.<sup>22</sup> Women may be happier<sup>23</sup> and children may do better<sup>24</sup> in the opposite situation, when men remain the primary breadwinners but are more involved at home. But the situation in which men take on additional home responsibilities without shedding their primary provider role is a different kind of second shift that may make men feel overworked.

Sharing both paid and domestic work should be easier for families than burdening one partner with a second shift, but previous research has resulted in multiple perspectives, and it is not clear whether couples are happier with similar roles or complementary ones. It may be that couples enjoy each other more when their lives are more shared,<sup>25</sup> and they may derive satisfaction from achieving an equity-based norm.<sup>26</sup> However, other research suggests that couples might enjoy a measure of difference in their lives.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, if unconventional gender roles challenge feelings of masculinity/femininity<sup>28</sup> or meet with social ridicule,<sup>29</sup> egalitarian arrangements might not be associated with happiness.

The neo-traditional model, in which the woman works part-time and the man works full-time, while the woman takes the lead in domestic work, may represent a happy medium in terms of couples' non-work time, income, and similarity vs. complementarity. Furthermore, having an identity beyond "wife," "mother," or "housekeeper" can give meaning to women's lives; regardless of financial necessity, paid work may add to women's feelings of self-worth and promote their psychological well-being.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, professional women who take on more housework may be less happy,<sup>31</sup> and some part-time jobs offer poor pay and poor promotion prospects.<sup>32</sup> If part-time work is associated with jobs and full-time work with more meaningful careers, the satisfaction derived from part-time work may be limited.

<sup>21</sup> M. B. Sussman, S. K. Steinmetz, and G. W. Peterson, *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> E. Demerouti, A. B. Bakker, and W. B. Schaufeli, "Spillover and Crossover of Exhaustion and Life Satisfaction Among Dual-Earner Parents," *Journal of Vocational Behaviors* 67, no. 2 (2005).

<sup>23</sup> M. Khawaja and R. R. Habib, "Husbands' Involvement in Housework and Women's Psychosocial Health: Findings from a Population-Based Study in Lebanon," *American Journal of Public Health* 97, no. 5 (2007); W. B. Wilcox and J. Dew, "No One Best Way: Work-Family Strategies, the Gendered Division of Parenting, and the Contemporary Marriages of Mothers and Fathers," in *Gender and Parenthood: Biological and Social Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Wilcox and K. K. Kline (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> W. H. Jeynes, "A Meta-Analysis: The Relationship Between Father Involvement and Student Academic Achievement," *Urban Education* 50, no. 4 (2015); M. J. Carlson, "Family Structure, Father Involvement, and Adolescent Behavioral Outcomes," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68, no. 1 (2006).

<sup>25</sup> Goldscheider and Waite, *New Families, No Families*.

<sup>26</sup> W. B. Wilcox, E. Marquardt, D. Popenoe, and B. D. Whitehead, "When Baby Makes Three: How Parenthood Makes Life Meaningful and How Marriage Makes Parenthood Bearable," in "The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America," National Marriage Project and Institute for American Values (2011).

<sup>27</sup> Rhoads, *Taking Sex Differences Seriously*; P. Schwartz, "Sexual Satisfaction in Committed Relationships," The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (2007), <http://www.sexscience.org/dashboard/articleImages/SSSS-SexualSatisfactionInCommittedRelationships.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> M. L. DeVault, *Feeding the Family: The Social Organization of Caring As Gendered Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>29</sup> J. L. Berdahl and S. H. Moon, "Workplace Mistreatment of Middle Class Workers Based on Sex, Parenthood, and Caregiving," *Journal of Social Issues* 69, no. 2 (2013).

<sup>30</sup> B. Friedan, *The Second Stage* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> R. C. Barnett and K. C. Gareis, "Full-Time and Reduced-Hours Work Schedules and Marital Quality: A Study of Female Physicians with Young Children," *Work and Occupations* 29, no. 3 (2002).

<sup>32</sup> A. Booth and J. van Ours, "Hours of Work and Gender Identity: Does Part-time Work Make the Family Happier?" *Economica* 76, no. 301 (2009).



## Data and Methods

### Data

The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) conducts comparable annual surveys in a wide variety of countries, and is well-known for its care in developing and translating questions that are meaningful in all of the countries.<sup>33</sup>

We use data from the 2012 survey on Family and Changing Gender Roles. Respondents answered questions about their own work as well as their partner's. The survey was fielded in 37 countries as shown by region in [Table 1](#). The five countries excluded due to data limitations are marked by italics, and their reasons for exclusion are identified in footnotes.

The starting sample size was 45,572 respondents in the 32 countries with the requisite data, but in the analyses of division of labor within couples (whether married or unmarried), we exclude the 19,612 respondents not living with a partner. We compare the happiness of single parents to that of couples with children who divide labor in various ways in our final analysis.

Among couples, we wanted to focus on those with significant market work and therefore dropped couples in which the sum of his and her paid work hours was less than 30 hours per week.<sup>34</sup> In order to restrict the sample to couples who had a choice over how to divide labor, we dropped couples where at least one partner was disabled or retired (2,214), unemployed (1,623), or in compulsory service (46).

**Table 1 2012 ISSP countries**

**NORTHERN EUROPE** Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

**WESTERN EUROPE** Austria, France, Germany, *Great Britain*,<sup>1</sup> Ireland, Switzerland

**EASTERN EUROPE** *Bulgaria*,<sup>1</sup> Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovak Republic

**SOUTHERN EUROPE** Croatia, Slovenia, Spain

**NORTH AMERICA** United States, *Canada*<sup>2</sup>

**OCEANIA** Australia

**AFRICA** South Africa

**ASIA** *China*,<sup>3</sup> India, Israel, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, *Turkey*<sup>4</sup>

**CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA** Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela

<sup>1</sup> Excluded because partner's paid work hours were not asked.

<sup>2</sup> Excluded due to a miscoding on the marital status variable in ISSP data making it impossible to distinguish between singles and those whose partner had no work hours.

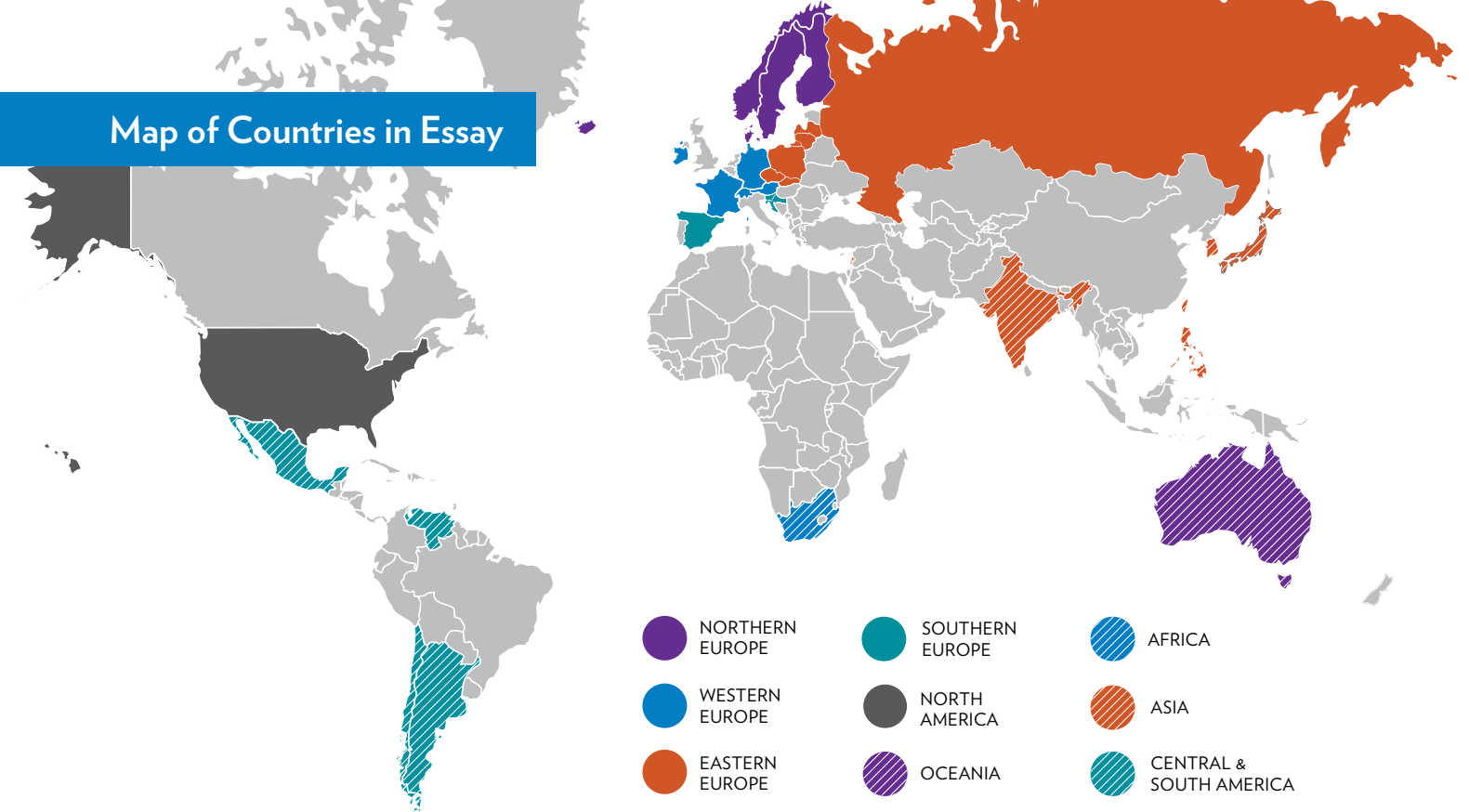
<sup>3</sup> Excluded because housework hours were top-coded at three per week (meaningful differences between partners cannot be discerned).

<sup>4</sup> Excluded because questions on the number of children in the household were mistakenly excluded from the ISSP questionnaire.

<sup>33</sup> J. A. Harkness and A. Schoua-Glusberg, "Questionnaires in Translation," *ZUMA-Nachrichten Spezial* 3, no. 1 (1998).

<sup>34</sup> The 30-hour threshold was set so that even in countries with the shortest official work weeks, couples whose total work was at least one full-time equivalent would be included. Out of 26,140 couples, there were 6,869 that did not work at least 30 hours between the two of them, but this number includes couples where both partners were retired. Only in India did more than 20 percent of respondents reporting zero or minimal paid hours a week identify themselves as being in the labor force. India is the lowest-income country in the ISSP data and therefore more likely to have respondents engaged in agricultural work and/or work paid in kind rather than cash. Excluding those with few paid hours probably makes the sample more comparable to other countries by over-representing respondents in formal jobs, but it also makes the sample less representative of the whole population in India. The other countries where relatively large proportions (10 to 20 percent) of couples are excluded because their work hours do not sum to at least 30 per week are Chile, South Africa, South Korea, and Venezuela, but these countries are more comparable to the rest of the sample than to India, where over 40 percent of couples are excluded.

## Map of Countries in Essay



Denmark Finland Iceland Norway Sweden	Austria France Germany Ireland Switzerland	Czech Republic Latvia Lithuania Poland Russia Slovak Republic	Croatia Slovenia Spain	United States	Australia	South Africa	India Israel Japan Philippines South Korea Taiwan	Argentina Chile Mexico Venezuela
<b>NORTHERN EUROPE</b>	<b>WESTERN EUROPE</b>	<b>EASTERN EUROPE</b>	<b>SOUTHERN EUROPE</b>	<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>	<b>OCEANIA</b>	<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>ASIA</b>	<b>CENTRAL &amp; SOUTH AMERICA</b>

We further reluctantly dropped those giving responses like “don’t know,” “varies,” or “can’t choose” for work hours (1,530) and housework/care work hours (1,189). We dropped 150 that did not answer whether or not children were living in the household (mostly in Austria, France, and Japan), and nine that did not report their gender.<sup>35</sup> This left 12,510 respondents in 32 countries, with a range from 221 observations in Argentina to 714 in Spain, and a total of 7,695 couples who fit our criteria and had at least one child in the household. We therefore present regional rather than individual country analyses.

## Methods

To measure how couples divide paid and domestic work, we use the number of hours per week<sup>36</sup> the survey respondent reported that they spend 1) doing paid work, 2) doing household work, and 3) caring for other household members.

<sup>35</sup> The respondent’s gender is known, but the respondent’s partner’s gender is not known. Our assumption here that all partners are opposite-sex partners might lead to a slight overestimation of the extent to which division of labor departs from men specializing in market work while women specialize in domestic work. The relationship of the children in the household to the respondent is also not known, meaning the sample includes not just biological parents but step-parents, grandparents whose grandkids live with them, etc. We use the term “parents” for the sake of brevity and on the assumption that most respondents with children in the household are those children’s parents.

<sup>36</sup> Reported hours per week were top-coded at fifty.

Respondents also reported the number of hours their partner spent in the same domains. For most analyses, we added housework hours to care work hours to obtain domestic work hours.

We first describe how having at least one child in the household is linked to men’s and women’s paid work and their domestic work across regions. Here we simply use a dummy variable indicating the presence of a child in the household and estimate its effect on reported hours of work using ordinary least squares regression. We estimated the effects separately for women and for men and separately for paid work and domestic work (four sets of regressions).

Then we focus on the first component of men and women’s changing gender roles by describing how couples with children divide paid work. We use four categories: traditional (he works for pay, she doesn’t), neo-traditional (both do paid work, but he works at least seven hours a week more than she does), egalitarian (the gap between their weekly paid work hours is less than seven), and reverse traditional (she works at least seven hours a week more than he does).<sup>37</sup>

We summarize the division of domestic work among couples with children using similar categories: traditional (she does all domestic work, he does none); neo-traditional (both do domestic work, but she does at least seven hours a week more than he does), egalitarian (the gap between their weekly domestic work hours is less than seven), and reverse traditional (he does at least seven hours per week more than she does).

Next, we consider the intersection of public and private spheres with the five categories depicted in [Table 2](#). Here couples are only considered traditional or neo-traditional if he does more paid work *and* she does more domestic work (their division of labor is traditional in both spheres, with traditional vs. neo-traditional couples distinguished by whether she works in the paid labor force at all). When the woman’s paid work hours equal or exceed the man’s but she still does more domestic work than he does, we call that “her second shift.”<sup>38</sup>

**Table 2** Categories for the joint division of paid and domestic work

		DOMESTIC WORK	
		SHE DOES MORE <i>(traditional and neo-traditional)</i>	HE DOES AS MUCH OR MORE <i>(egalitarian and reverse traditional)</i>
PAID WORK	HE DOES MORE <i>(traditional and neo-traditional)</i>	Traditional (if she doesn’t do any paid work) or neo-traditional	His second shift
	SHE DOES AS MUCH OR MORE <i>(egalitarian and reverse traditional)</i>	Her second shift	Modern

<sup>37</sup> The seven-hour threshold is somewhat arbitrary, but we chose it for both empirical and theoretical reasons. Empirically, the existing literature tends to divide paid work into similar categories, with both partners working full-time as the category closest to our “egalitarian” category and a residual category of all couples where the man does not work full-time (regardless of what his partner does). We do not focus on full-time work per se, but we keep our work as close to the existing literature as possible by selecting a cut-off that created a neo-traditional category of a comparable size to existing studies (we tested five-, seven-, and ten-hour thresholds). Theoretically, seven is a nice threshold because it means that the partner working fewer hours per week works at least one hour less per day.

<sup>38</sup> Our use of “second shift” differs slightly from the classic use of the term (in Hochschild and Machung, *The Second Shift*) in that we do not require that both partners be working full-time while the woman still does more domestic work: in our definition, the woman simply has to work as much as or more than the man while still doing more domestic work. We also do not confine our analysis to parents of preschoolers as Hochschild and Machung did.

We also introduce the term “his second shift,” which is not quite the opposite of her second shift. *Her* second shift occurs when a woman has entered market work on at least an equal basis to her male partner, but domestic work falls disproportionately on her. *His* second shift occurs when a man does at least as much domestic work as his female partner, but paid work falls disproportionately on him.

Less traditionalism among men and women is evident when she does not have less paid work *and* she does not do more domestic work. Although the bulk of couples in this category are truly egalitarian (their hours in both spheres are roughly equal), we hesitate to use the egalitarian label because this category also includes couples who may divide paid and domestic work unequally along non-traditional lines. What all of these couples have in common is that they break from tradition in the division of both paid work and domestic work, and we therefore label them “modern.”

We present descriptive statistics across regions for how couples divide paid work and domestic work as well as their joint division of paid and domestic work. We also test whether the effects of the respondent’s age,<sup>39</sup> education,<sup>40</sup> gender,<sup>41</sup> religiosity,<sup>42</sup> and ages/number of children<sup>43</sup> on their labor division varied between regions.<sup>44</sup> In addition to the region-based analysis, we also explicitly tested whether children are more closely associated with the division of labor in richer countries.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, we used our joint division of labor variable to predict happiness.<sup>46</sup> Here we add a sixth category for parents without partners so that we can compare the happiness of single parents to couples dividing labor in various ways. Respondents were asked “if you were to consider your life in general, how happy or unhappy would you say you are, on the whole?” and were given a seven-point scale ranging from completely happy to completely unhappy. We used completely or very happy as the dependent variable in a logistic regression. We then predicted the percentage very/completely happy from the model: the predicted percentage very/completely happy controls for the same variables described above (respondent’s age, education, and so on). We also present the percentage of respondents agreeing that it is men’s job to earn money and women’s to take care of the home.

<sup>39</sup> Grouped 18 to 24, 25 to 44 (reference category), 45 to 65, and over 65.

<sup>40</sup> The ISSP standardizes completed categories of education across countries. We use this ordinal variable as a continuous variable: no formal education, primary school, lower secondary, upper secondary, post secondary, lower level tertiary, and upper level tertiary.

<sup>41</sup> Although it can be expected that partner’s domestic work hours would be generally under-reported relative to own hours (S. Kornrich, J. Brines, and K. Leupp, “Egalitarianism, Housework, and Sexual Frequency in Marriage,” *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 1. [2013]), this should not bias overall results because own responses and proxy responses are approximately equally represented between men and women. We nonetheless include a control for respondent’s gender to capture gender-related reporting differences.

<sup>42</sup> Frequency of service attendance is included as a continuous variable. The ordinal categories are never, less frequently than once a year, once a year, several times a year, two or three times a month, once a week, more often. Service attendance was not collected in Australia, and all observations for Australia were assigned to the mean for the entire sample. This does not affect regional analyses because Australia is the only country in Oceania; it does allow us to control for religiosity when testing the effects of other variables on the division of labor without omitting Australia.

<sup>43</sup> We included a vector of dummy variables (zero, one, two, three or more) for both the number of preschool children and the number of school-aged children.

<sup>44</sup> We used pooled logistic regression models with a complete set of interaction terms between region and the other independent variables. The dependent variable for paid work was the woman doing as much or more than the man (egalitarian and reverse traditional), and the dependent variable for domestic work was the man doing as much or more than the woman (egalitarian and reverse traditional). We included both the man’s education and the woman’s education to test whether each is related to the division of labor in the same way across regions. This necessitated omitting the nine countries where the survey did not collect partner’s education: Austria and Ireland in Western Europe, Chile in Central and South America, Norway in Northern Europe, Israel and the Philippines in Asia, Latvia and Russia in Eastern Europe, and South Africa.

<sup>45</sup> We used a multilevel logistic regression model controlling for national income and included a cross-level interaction term between national income and whether or not a child was in the household. National income was measured using the purchasing power parity approach with data from IndexMundi.com for Taiwan ([http://www.indexmundi.com/taiwan/gdp\\_per\\_capita\\_\(ppp\).html](http://www.indexmundi.com/taiwan/gdp_per_capita_(ppp).html)) and from the World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD>) for all other countries (data not available for Argentina). The effects were nearly identical using gross national product converted using official exchange rates (including Argentina).

<sup>46</sup> This outcome variable was not available for South Africa. Despite cross-national variation in levels of reported happiness, research has shown that happiness can be usefully compared across nations. See R. Veenhoven, “Cross-National Differences in Happiness.”

## Results

### *Men with children work slightly more paid hours, but women with children work fewer*

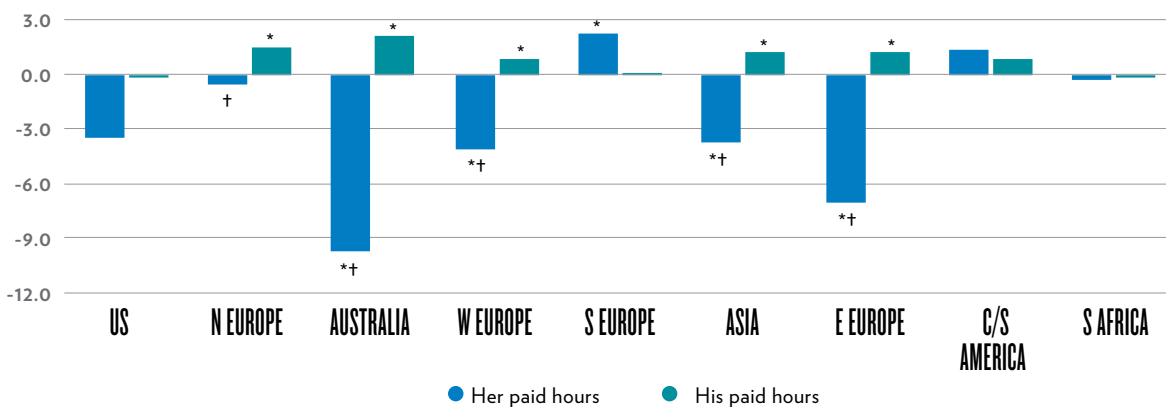
Across the entire sample, partnered women work an average of 3.5 fewer paid hours per week in households with children than in those without children. However, as **Figure 1** depicts with blue bars, the change in women's paid hours associated with having a child varies quite a bit by region, from a slight increase to a reduction of 9.8 hours per week in Australia. In Western Europe, Asia, and Eastern Europe, women with children work significantly fewer hours than those without, but in the United States, Northern Europe, Central and South America, and South Africa, children do not have a significant effect on partnered women's paid work hours. In Southern Europe, women with children actually work significantly more paid hours (2.2 more per week).

The association between children and men's work hours is smaller and generally positive: men in households with children perform 1.2 additional hours of paid work per week across the entire sample. None of the regions are significantly different from this average, though the green bars in **Figure 1** show some variation between regions.

Overall, the gap between his and her paid work hours is 4.7 hours greater in households with children, and a significantly larger gap emerges with the presence of children in Northern Europe,<sup>47</sup> Australia, Western Europe, Asia, and Eastern Europe. The regions in **Figure 1** are arrayed in order of decreasing gross national income per capita,<sup>48</sup> and having a child in the household is associated with a larger gender gap in paid work hours in wealthier regions, with the exception of Southern Europe. In the United States, children increase the gap an estimated 3.3 hours, but this is not significant because the sample size is smaller than in regions containing more than one country.

We also found that the age of the child matters for women's paid work hours but not for men's (results not shown). Women in households with a child under school age did 5.6 fewer paid work hours per week than partnered women without kids, but having a school-aged child meant only 0.9 fewer paid work hours. Women in Eastern Europe with school-aged children work 2.2 more paid hours per week, but 15.0 hours fewer if they have younger children. The differences are smaller in other regions. Having school-aged children seems to curtail the paid work of women in Australia more than it does elsewhere, by 7.0 hours to be exact (and 10.0 hours for those with younger children).

**Figure 1** Difference in paid work hours associated with having a child in the household

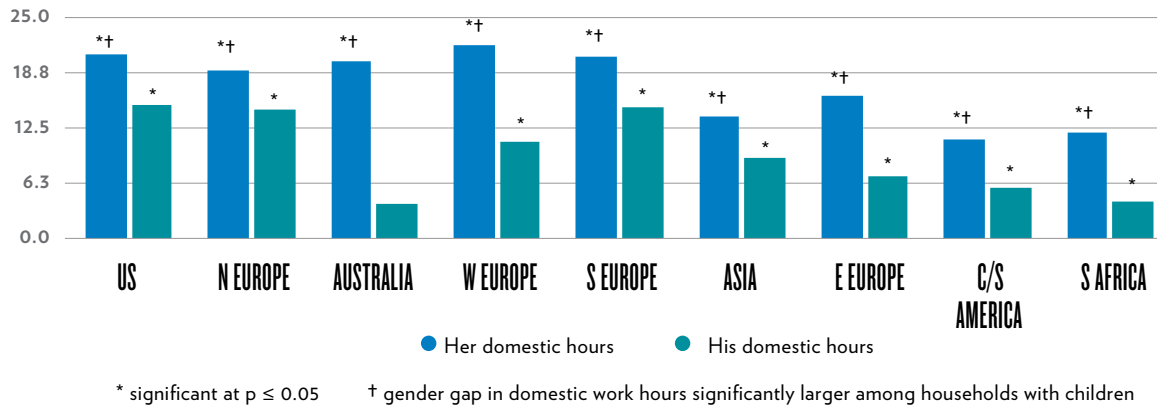


\* significant at  $p \leq 0.05$  † gender gap in paid work hours significantly larger among households with children

<sup>47</sup> In Northern Europe, women in households with children do not have significantly fewer paid hours, but men do have significantly more (1.4 hours).

<sup>48</sup> Argentina was omitted from the average for Central/South America because GNP data adjusted for purchasing power parity were not available.

**Figure 2** Difference in domestic work hours associated with having a child in the household



### *Men and especially women with children do more domestic work*

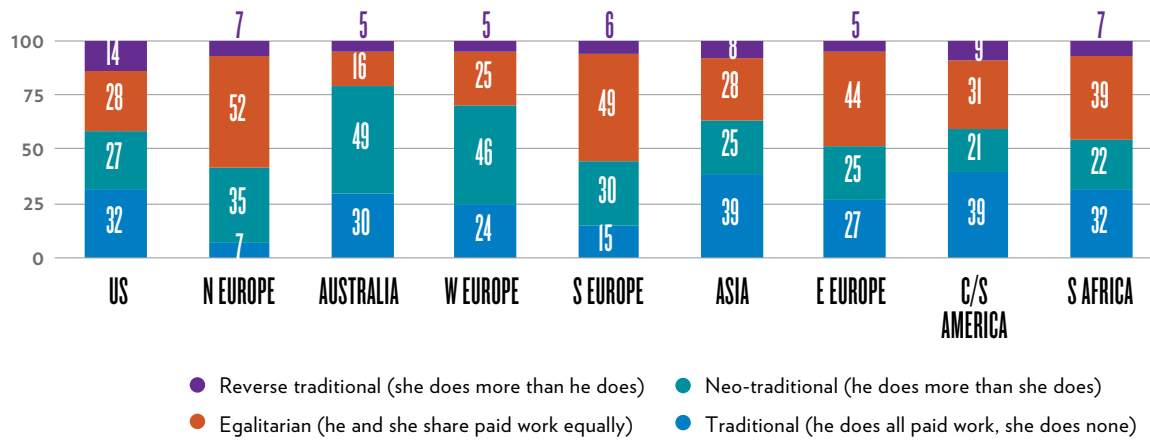
Although there are important regional and gender differences in the relationship between having children and the amount of domestic work, both men and women in households with children devote more hours to domestic work than couples without children in every region of the world (Figure 2). The sole exception to this generalization is among men in Australia (only there is the difference in domestic work hours between men who have children and those who don't statistically insignificant). Nonetheless, because women's domestic work load goes up more when children are present than men's does, the gender gap in domestic work hours is 7.7 hours greater among households with children than those without. Having a child in the household is associated with a significantly larger gender gap in domestic work hours in every region.

The bulk of the difference in total domestic work (the sum of housework and care work) between households with and without children is in care work hours. Also, as one would expect, households with preschool children devote more time to care work than households with school-aged children. However, school-aged children add more to their parents' housework burden than preschool children in many places. Some of this may simply reflect differences in how parents classify the time they spent multitasking: someone cleaning the bathroom while caring for a preschooler may think of that time as primarily child care while a parent cleaning the bathroom while their child does their homework may think of that time primarily as housework. Whatever the case, school-aged children add 0.9 to 3.8 hours to women's weekly housework time in the six wealthiest regions (United States, Northern Europe, Australia, Western Europe, Southern Europe, and Asia). They add 1.1 to 1.7 hours to men's housework time in Southern Europe, the United States, and Asia.

### *Parents divide paid work in diverse ways*

How couples with children divide paid work (in terms of hours) varies between regions, as Figure 3 shows. The traditional division of paid work—a working father supporting a stay-at-home mother—is more common in the U.S., Australia, Asia, Central/South America, and South Africa (30 to 39 percent of partnered parents) than in any region of Europe (7 to 27 percent). The neo-traditional pattern with mothers working, but substantially less than fathers, is the most common arrangement in Australia and Western Europe, while an equal division of paid work is the most common arrangement in the rest of Europe and in South Africa. Despite its relatively high proportion of traditional couples, the U.S. is also home to the world's greatest proportion of couples where the woman works substantially more hours than the man (14 percent of couples).

**Figure 3** Division of paid work among couples with children



*Most fathers do some domestic work, but mothers usually do more*

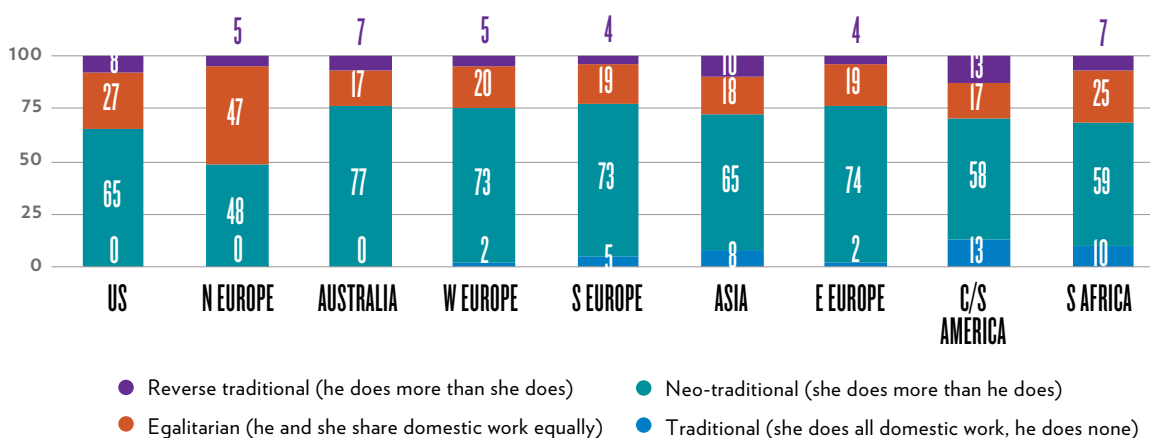
The most common division of domestic work in every region is neo-traditional, meaning men pitch in, but women do significantly more. As Figure 4 illustrates, egalitarian arrangements are only common in Northern Europe, where almost half of couples with children share domestic work equally. Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and Australia, on the other hand, show the least integration of men into domestic work, with women doing substantially more than men in more than three-quarters of couples.

Partnered fathers participate in domestic work more than partnered mothers participate in paid work, but by and large, the regions where fewer mothers are in the paid labor force are the regions where men are the most likely to do no domestic work at all: South Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. The United States is the exception to this rule; 32 percent of partnered mothers do no paid work, but all fathers did at least some domestic work.

*How parents divide work shows where gender roles are least traditional*

Examining how couples with kids split up paid and domestic work together reveals where changes in men and women’s roles have been most fully institutionalized: Northern Europe, where couples with children are the most apt to report a modern division of labor (36 percent) and least apt to report a traditional one (5 percent). The United

**Figure 4** Division of domestic work (housework plus care work) among couples with children



States and South Africa have the next largest proportion of couples with a modern division of labor (24 and 19 percent, respectively), and closely resemble each other across the other categories as well, as seen in [Figure 5](#).

In certain regions, one phase in the evolution of gender roles has progressed more than the other. In Australia and Western Europe, both components are evident to a limited extent: these regions have large shares (41 and 38 percent, respectively) of neo-traditional couples where the woman does more domestic work and less paid work than her male partner. In Southern and Eastern Europe, on the other hand, women’s movement into paid work has progressed more quickly than men’s integration into domestic work. Almost half of women in these regions do as much paid work as their partners, but most of them still do more domestic work: they carry a second shift, as the large orange segments in [Figure 5](#) indicate.

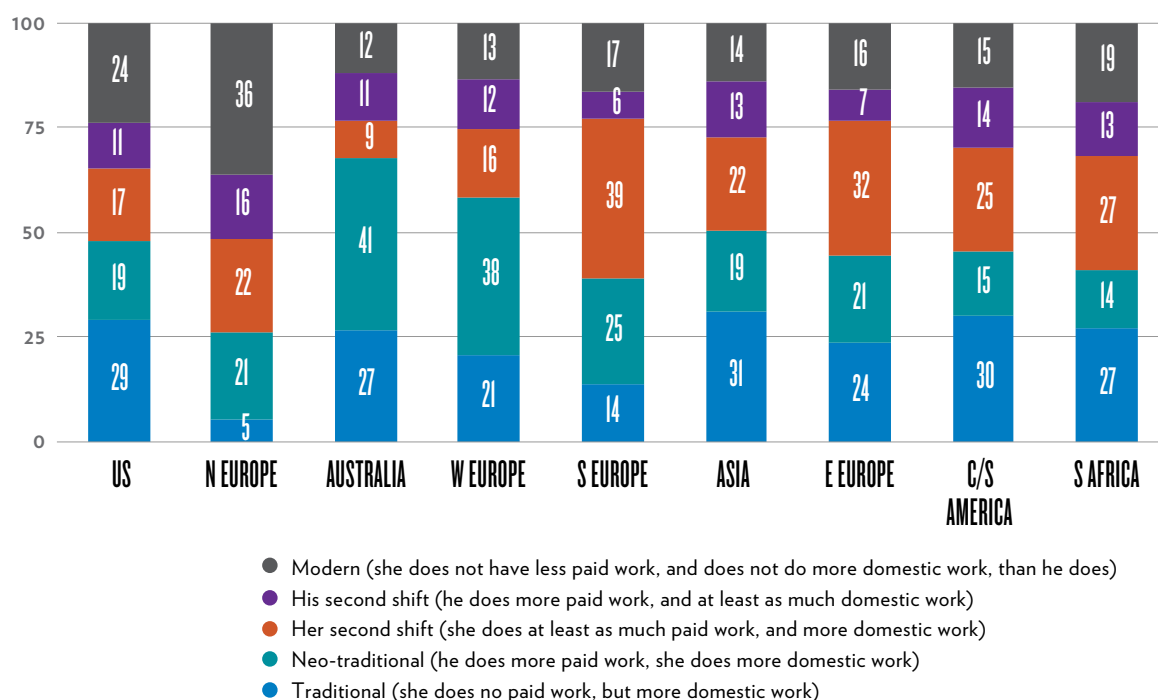
The later-developing regions of Asia, Central/South America, and South Africa have the largest percentages of women who do no paid work, 27 to 31 percent, but modern couples are approximately as prevalent in those areas as in other regions, with the exception of Northern Europe and the United States.

### *There is regional variation in the determinants of how couples with children divide labor*

#### Education

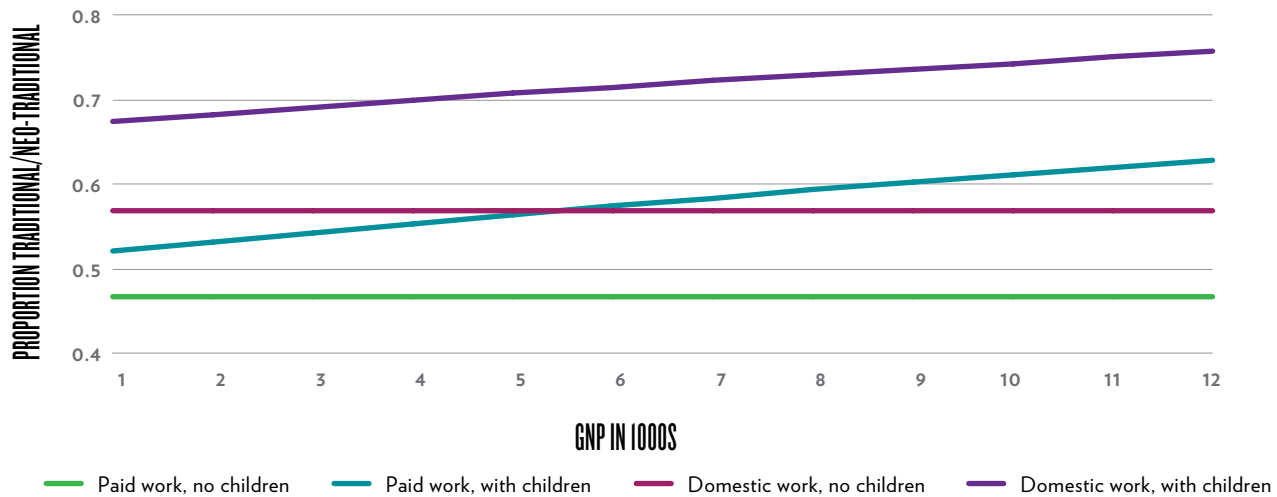
In every region besides Eastern Europe, mothers with more education are more likely to work as many paid hours as their partners. The link between fathers’ education and the distribution of paid work in relationships is less consistent across regions. In the United States, Northern Europe, Western Europe, and Asia, men who are more educated are less likely to have partners who work an equal or greater number of hours than themselves. Thus increases

**Figure 5** Joint division of paid and domestic work among couples with children





**Figure 6** Couples with children more traditional, especially in richer countries



in educational attainment work both for and against women’s integration into the labor force, but the positive effect of women’s education outweighs the negative effect of men’s education on women’s paid work.<sup>49</sup>

As for men’s integration into domestic work, educated women are more likely to have partners at least equally engaged in domestic work everywhere besides Australia and Asia. Only in Asia are educated men less likely to do at least as much domestic work as their partners. In Southern Europe, educated men are *more* likely to do at least as much domestic work as their partners. Thus higher education levels are also associated with men’s involvement in the household, and, again, her education matters more than his.

### Religiosity

People who attend religious services more frequently exhibit a more traditional division of paid work in Western Europe and Asia, and more religious people also have a more traditional division of domestic work in Northern, Western, and Southern Europe. However, in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Central/South America, religious attendance is positively associated with men’s participation in domestic work.

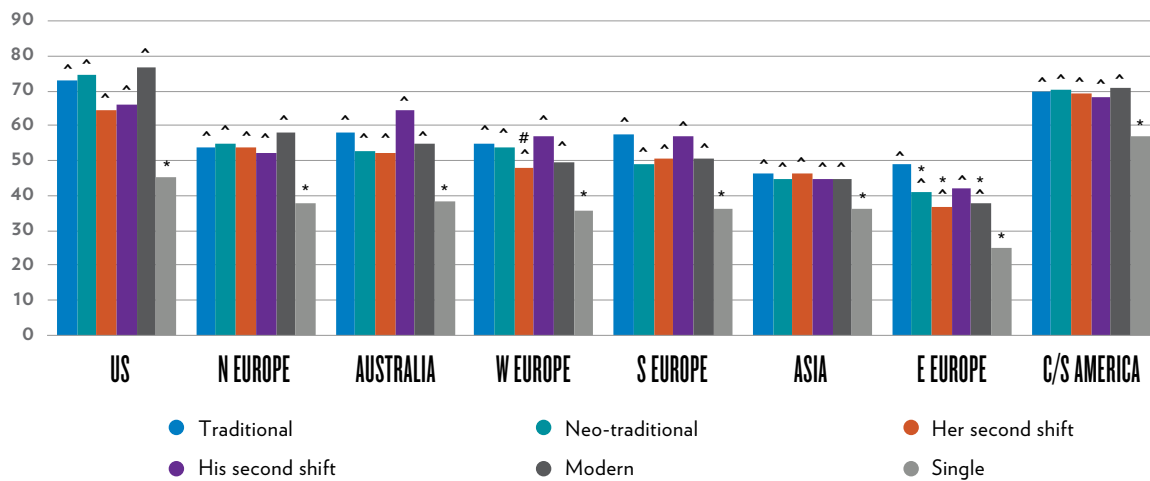
### Parenthood

Couples with children tend to divide labor more traditionally than other couples, as our findings regarding their paid and domestic work hours implied, with the effect being especially pronounced in higher-income countries. The green lines in **Figure 6** show that couples’ division of paid work is fairly similar whether or not they have children in lower-income countries. In higher-income countries, however, children reduce the probability that women will be engaged in paid work on at least an equal basis to their partners.

A similar story holds for domestic work. Having children is more associated with how couples allocate domestic work than with how they allocate paid work—the purple lines in **Figure 6** are further apart than the green lines—and again, couples with children differ more from their childless counterparts in richer countries. Still, fathers generally log more domestic hours in richer countries than in lower-income ones. In more developed countries, the expectation may be for both parents to devote more time to children’s educational and social formation. National income, meanwhile, is not significantly associated with women’s integration into paid work or men’s into domestic work among couples without children.

<sup>49</sup> In Western Europe, the effects of women’s and men’s education essentially cancel each other out, and in Eastern Europe, education is not a significant determinant of paid labor force participation.

**Figure 7** Having a partner more associated with parents' happiness than division of labor



\* significantly different from traditional at  $p \leq 0.05$   
 ^ significantly different from single at  $p \leq 0.05$   
 Note: adjusted for respondent's age, education, gender, religiosity, number of preschool children, and number of school-age children  
 # significantly different from his second shift

### *Having a partner is more associated with parents' happiness than division of labor*

Overall, how couples with children divide labor is less closely related to happiness than one might expect, as [Figure 7](#) depicts. The percentages shown in the figure, which include men and women together,<sup>50</sup> were predicted controlling for age, education, religiosity, the number of preschool children in the household, and the number of school-aged children in the household.

Among parents, couples are happier than single parents, regardless of how the couples divide labor. In Eastern Europe, traditional couples and those in which the man carries the second shift—categories in which his paid hours exceed hers—are equally happy and all others are less happy. In Western Europe, couples in which the man carries the second shift are happier than those in which the woman carries the second shift.

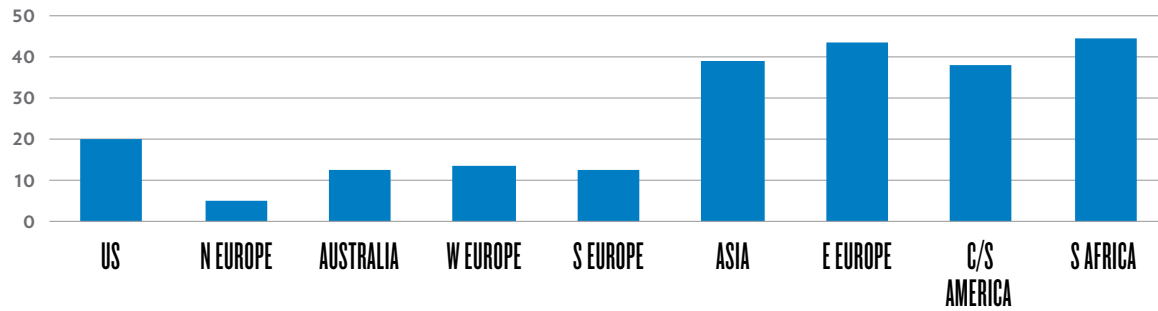
Couples' happiness with various ways of dividing labor does not seem to be strongly related to regional norms regarding how labor should be divided. [Figure 8](#) illustrates marked differences in gender-role attitudes between regions that in most cases are not reflected in the happiness outcomes. For instance, many more people in Asia endorse traditional gender role attitudes (39 percent) than in the United States (20 percent); however, the two places exhibit similar patterns in the joint division of paid and domestic work, and couples in these two regions are equally happy regardless of how they actually divide labor.

Parents' happiness is linked, however, to religious practice. People who attend religious services more frequently are more likely to be completely or very happy in Western, Eastern, and Southern Europe, plus Asia and Central/South America. The number and ages of couples' children also mattered in certain regions. Having at least three school-aged children was associated with greater happiness in Central and South America, but parents with two school-aged children were less happy in Northern Europe. Having a preschool child was associated with greater parental happiness in Southern Europe and in Asia.

The limitations of our data lead to one caveat here: the extent to which various divisions of labor among the couples in our sample “work” could be exaggerated by the fact that the least functional arrangements may lead to union dissolution,

<sup>50</sup> It may seem inappropriate to combine men and women here given that, for instance, men might be less likely to be completely/very happy than their female partners when they are carrying a second shift. We tested the effects of the division of labor on happiness separately for men and women, and contrary to our expectations, for every category and for every region, the estimates for men and women did not differ significantly. (In contrast, D. Stevens, G. Kiger, and P. Riley, “Working Hard and Hardly Working: Domestic Labor and Marital Satisfaction Among Dual-Earner Couples,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63, no. 2 [2001] found that women were more affected than men by the division of labor.)

**Figure 8** Percent agreeing that it is men’s job to earn money, women’s to take care of home



and our sample only includes couples who are still together. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that unions heading toward dissolution as well as those destined to last are both represented in data from a single point in time. In other words, even when studying only couples who are still together, a division-of-work category that contributes to unhappiness should contain a greater proportion of unhappy people.

## Discussion

In every region of the globe, couples with children find multiple ways to split up paid and domestic work. The strictly traditional arrangement, where the man is the sole breadwinner and the woman does the bulk of care work and housework, is a minority practice that characterizes less than a third of couples anywhere. Moreover, although women share in paid work to a greater extent than men share in domestic work, there is less of a gender gap in domestic work than many might have anticipated.

Education, particularly women’s education, drives changes both in women’s paid work and in men’s domestic work. But even though wealthier countries have higher education levels, there is no clear correspondence between national income levels and how couples divide labor. One reason is that having children is associated with dividing both types of work along more traditional gender lines to a greater extent in richer countries than in poorer ones. The difference might be a function of the cost of child care: where formal child care costs more, children reduce women’s work hours more.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, in poorer countries, informal care is both cheaper and more likely to be provided by extended family. The difference may also have to do with the intensive parenting norms of richer countries that demand that parents expend much time and money facilitating their children’s development.

How couples with children divide paid and domestic work is not closely related to their levels of happiness. Instead, having a partner to divide work with is more strongly linked to parents’ happiness than how that work is divided. Men and women are equally satisfied with arrangements that overtax themselves as with those that overtax their partners (except in Western Europe). Couples are also no happier with more egalitarian arrangements than with unequal ones. Modern couples typically share equal responsibilities in the public and private spheres, traditional couples specialize, and yet they are equally happy almost everywhere.<sup>52</sup>

There is no dominant pattern for dividing labor between partners anywhere, and seemingly, in the midst of this profound pluralism, most parents find an arrangement that suits them well enough. At least when it comes to parents’ happiness, our results suggest that how you divide paid and domestic work matters less than having a partner with whom to share the load. As public policies and institutions give families more choices, societies may see a continued plurality of arrangements as couples tailor their work-family arrangements to their own needs and aspirations for themselves and their children.

<sup>51</sup> P. S. Schober, “The Parenthood Effect on Gender Inequality: Explaining the Change in Paid and Domestic Work When British Couples Become Parents,” *European Sociological Review* 29, no. 1 (2013).

<sup>52</sup> Eastern Europe, where communism promoted women’s paid labor force participation long before any ideological changes affecting the domestic sphere, is the exception here (L. Ruppner, “Cross-National Reports of Housework: An Investigation of the Gender Empowerment Measure,” *Social Science Research* 39, no. 6 [2010]).

## Division of Paid and Domestic Work Among Peruvian Couples

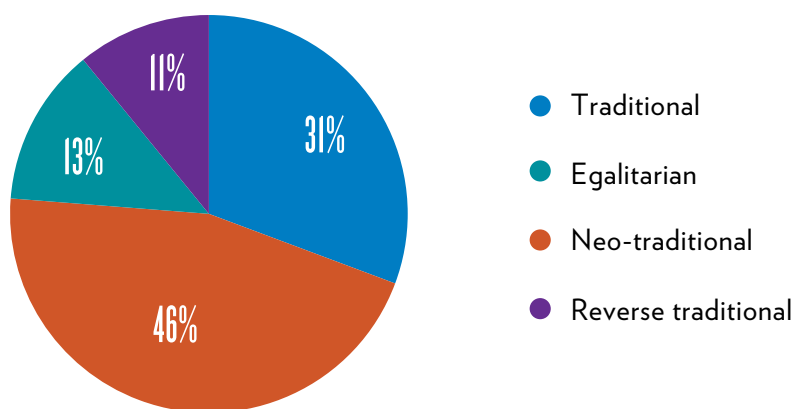


Data from the 2010 ENUT (National Survey about Usage of Time) allow us to compare the division of paid and domestic work among couples in Peru to the division of labor among couples in countries that participated in the 2012 International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). There were 2,075 couples surveyed in the ENUT that met the selection criteria explained in the Data and Methods section.

### Women's integration into the labor force

The first phase of women's and men's changing gender roles—women's entry into the paid workforce—is reflected in the fact that more than two-thirds of women with children in Peru participate in paid work. Nevertheless, most of these women work at least seven fewer hours per week than their partners. The overall share of neo-traditional<sup>1</sup> couples is quite large (46 percent), as Figure 1 shows. An egalitarian division of paid work occurs less frequently among couples with children in Peru (13 percent, see Figure 1) than in the Central and South American countries included in our main essay (31 percent). The traditional arrangement in which the man is the sole breadwinner is less prevalent in Peru (31 percent of couples) than in Mexico or Chile (49 percent in each country).

Figure 1 Division of paid work among couples with children

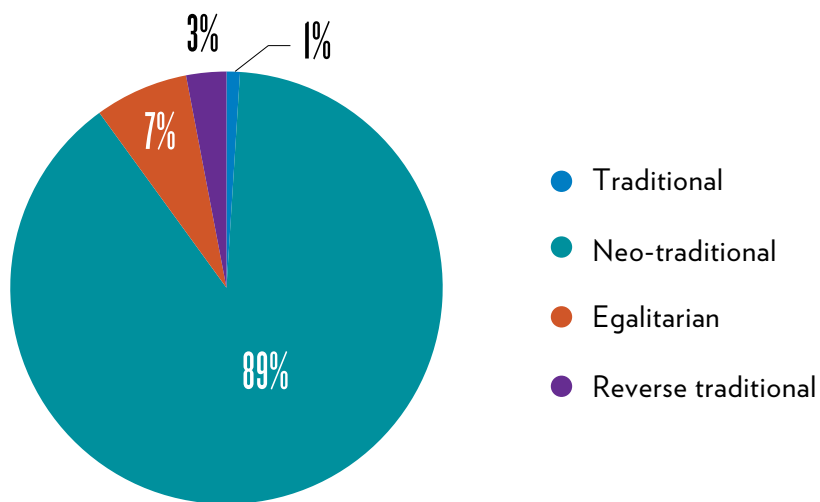


<sup>1</sup> The same four categories examined in the essay were included in these analyses: traditional (he works for pay, she doesn't), neo-traditional (both do paid work, but he works at least seven hours a week more than she does), egalitarian (the gap between their paid work hours is less than seven), and reverse traditional (she works at least seven hours a week more than he does).

## Men's integration into domestic work

For most Peruvian couples with children, male partners participate in domestic work, but women report doing at least seven hours a week more domestic work than men, as **Figure 2** illustrates: 89 percent of couples choose a neo-traditional division of domestic work.<sup>2</sup> It is very rare in Peru for men to do no domestic work (1 percent of couples), in contrast with other Central and South American countries where 13 percent of couples fit that description. Finally, in Peru, 7 percent of couples with children have an egalitarian division of domestic work, and 3 percent of couples include men who do more domestic work than their partners.

**Figure 2** Division of domestic work (housework plus care work) among couples with children



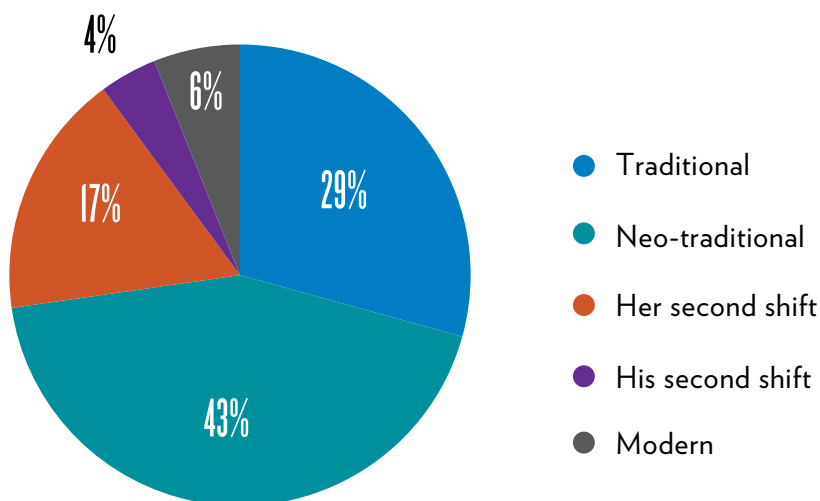
<sup>2</sup> As in the essay, the four categories for the division of domestic work are: traditional (he does none), neo-traditional (both do domestic work, but she does at least seven hours a week more than he does), egalitarian (the gap between domestic work hours is less than seven), and reverse traditional (he does at least seven hours a week more domestic work than she does).

## Joint division of labor

Considering the intersection of paid and domestic work in Peru, the neo-traditional structure—in which men specialize in paid work and women in domestic tasks, but both areas of labor are shared—predominates (43 percent, see **Figure 3**).<sup>3</sup> Peruvian women are less likely to carry a second shift than their counterparts in the Central and South American countries participating in the ISSP (17 percent for Peru compared with 25 percent for the region) mainly because they are more likely to work fewer paid hours than their partners. Modern arrangements (with paid and domestic work shared equally) and men carrying the second shift are also less common in Peru, but the prevalence of completely traditional arrangements resembles the rest of the region (about 30 percent).

Overall, there is limited evidence of both women's integration into the labor force and men's integration into domestic work in Peru.

**Figure 3** Joint division of paid and domestic work among couples with children



<sup>3</sup> There are five categories for the joint division of work: traditional (she does no paid work, but more domestic work), neo-traditional (he does more paid work and she does more domestic work), her second shift (she does at least as much paid work as he does, and more domestic work), his second shift (he does at least as much domestic work as she does, and more paid work), and modern (she does not have less paid work and does not do more domestic work than he does).

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