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Dear Readers of 'Families International',

The central part of this 122st issue of 'Families International' focuses on the topic of gender equality, which was also the main topic of the last International Forum that took place in May 2022. The paper of presenter Nadine Zwiener-Collins and her colleagues Zoe Lefkofridi and Anja Ratzenböck from the Chair of Politics & Gender, Diversity & Equality of the Paris Lodron University Salzburg reports the importance of gender equality and what we can do to achieve it.

Also, the programme of the Online Webinar in Observance of the 2022 International Day of Families on Friday, 13 May, is included. A text from the United Nations deals with migration trends and families.

Furthermore, three texts of member organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family are included: The International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) as well as Make Mothers Matter (MMM) both focus on unpaid carework of women, which continued to increase during the corona pandemic. Another text of the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) looks at the topic of family support and parenting in the course of the Global Day of Parents.

Finally, Families International No.122 is completed by a list of recent and upcoming events.

Sincerely,

Christin Kohler, M.A.
Executive Editor

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From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

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From Member Organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

The International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)

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Impressum 3

From the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family

Gender equality : Why is it important , and what can we do to achieve it?

Nadine Zwiener -Collins , Zoe Lefkofridi, Anja Ratzenböck
Chair of Politics & Gender, Diversity & Equality - Paris Lodron University Salzburg

Gender equality ±an important goal

When the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, all 193 countries committed to ³achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls ´(Goal Nº 5) by 2030 (UN 2015). Gender equality also features prominently in the goals of the European Union: A roadmap to reduce existing inequalities in areas including health, leadership, and the economy has been published as the current Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025, while gender equality is also one of the core values of the union. Similarly, the equality of men and women is a target for many national governments and companies and organisations. But why is gender equality so important?

The short answer is that we know that gender equality leads to happier, healthier, and more democratic societies. Many studies on different outcomes ² individual, societal, and economic ² have documented the benefits of gender equality. For example, we know that there is a gender gap in public health that results from a lack of research on conditions that predominantly or exclusively affect women and restricted sexual and reproductive rights for women. Tackling that gap can increase health and social outcomes for women and society as a whole. In the economic sphere, gender equality can boost performance. Women ¶ equal participation in the labour market, for example, is associated with an increase in GDP and reduction of poverty (Sinha et al. 2007). But it also benefits companies and organisations: Having a more diverse workforce and more women in decision-making positions has been found to increase profits and improve outcomes for companies (Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018). Gender equality in the political sphere is a requirement for good governance. Not only is an equal opportunity to participate in politics the core principle of democracy, but equal participation and representation of women also decrease corruption (Dollar et al. 2001), and it increases citizens ¶satisfaction with democracy and the legitimacy of the political system (Schwindt-Bayer/Mishler 2005). Finally, gender equality matters for individual citizens: For example, it improves family life and educational and health outcomes in children (Abu-Ghaida/Klasen 2004; Croft et al. 2014), and gender-equal societies consist of happier and healthier individuals.

This short article reflects on the importance of gender equality for different areas of society, including public education, the economy, and politics. We put a particular emphasis on the role of gender equality within families and discuss how gender equality within society influences the well-being of families around the globe. However, before exploring the consequences of gender equality in more detail, the following section explains what we mean when we talk about ¶gender ¶and ¶equality ¶ and how the increased focus on gender equality has also led to a backlash from different societal groups, highlighting why the continued engagement for more gender equality is as important as ever.

What is gender equality?

Although gender equality is increasingly in the focus of policymakers, the media, and the public discourse, it can have a different meaning to different people and within different contexts. It is all the more important to clarify what we mean when discussing gender equality. In contrast to ¶sex,¶ ¶gender¶ is a relatively new concept: The core idea of gender has its origin in Simone de Beauvoir¶s The Second Sex (1949), but the term itself entered the mainstream feminist debate in the 1970s (Tarrant 2006). Although gender is often used interchangeably with ¶sex,¶ the two terms describe distinct concepts. Biological sex refers to the biological and physiological differences between men and women (and intersex persons), referring to chromosomes, hormones and sexual organs. It is typically regarded as binary (men and women), although this notion has been challenged more recently (e.g., Fausto-Sterling 2018). Gender is related to sex but refers to the social norms, behaviours, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as the relationships with each other. Thus, gender is socially constructed, as the norms and roles vary from society to society and can change over time: Indeed, what it means to be a man or a woman largely depends on the spatial and temporal context. Related to these roles and norms are gender stereotypes ² assumptions we make about individuals or groups of people based on their gender. Such stereotypes concern not only beliefs about what men and women typically do (descriptive) but also about what they should do (prescriptive) (Koenig, 2018). More recently, another concept has gained prominence in the public discourse about men and women, namely ¶gender identity.¶ While gender is defined by society rather than the individual man or woman, gender identity refers to a person¶s individual experience of gender (which may or may not correspond to the person¶s physiology or designated sex at birth).

All of these terms have in common that they are not only used to describe differences between groups of people but, importantly, they are also markers of inequality. Equality describes a state in which all humans are treated equally and have the same chances and opportunities, irrespectively of individual characteristics, such as their biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation; their race, ethnicity and religion, and their dis/ability. Although equality has become increasingly important for international organisations, NGOs, governments, and other organisations, progress towards it remains slow. Women (or non-male persons more generally) still face disadvantages and discrimination across various areas of life. The nature and extent of gender inequality vary geographically and from society to society: Women in Europe face a different set of issues than, for example, women in sub-Saharan Africa or South East Asia. At the same time, different groups of women experience discrimination in different ways: Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, age, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. The third and fourth waves of feminism have, therefore, approached gender equality from a perspective of intersectionality. That means feminist scholars and activists aim to acknowledge the diversity within the larger categories (boys, men vs girls, women) in terms of ability, race and ethnicity and so on. Indeed, to achieve gender equality for all, it is important to consider differences between different groups of women ² across and within societies. In other words, encompassing gender equality has to be intersectional.

The path towards intersectional gender equality is, however, not straightforward. Despite the progress made over the last decades, gender equality ² and gender as a concept ² have also become an issue of contestation. When the UN started shifting its focus from ¶women¶ to ¶gender¶ during the Third World Conference on Human Rights (in Vienna in 1993), the shift was not well received by all; for instance, many religious groups were opposed to the idea of

gender as a social construct opposed to the ¡natural ¶difference of sex. Although the anti-gender discourse was initially confined to international human rights fora, other actors have taken it up in the 2010s, for example, radical right populist parties (RRPP). Recently, the backlash against gender equality has gained new popularity as evidenced not only by prominent cases, such as the anti-abortion laws in Poland ² and most recently the US ² or the ban of ¡Gender Studies ¶in Hungary, but also shown in everyday interactions, such as online violence against women. Indeed, in parallel to the increased efforts to achieve gender equality, a backlash that aims to undo the hard-earned successes is also gaining momentum. In the face of this backlash, we should understand and bring into the public discourse the benefits gender equality has ² for all areas of society.

The impact of gender-equal societies

Gender equality matters for healthy happy and productive societies ² as a large body of studies from all different academic disciplines has documented. It matters, for example, in and for education, the workplace and economy, as well as in areas of politics and power. Here, we highlight only a few of the ways in which gender equality on the societal level affects societies, before zooming in on families in the section after.

Gender equality in education

Education is essential for the opportunities and challenges people encounter in their lives. It is thus perhaps not surprising that equal access to and opportunities in education positively affect the economic development of societies. Indeed, there is a direct link between gender equality in education and the economic growth of a country: countries tend to do better when everyone has equal eductational opportunities (Cabeza-García et al., 2018; Mishra et al., 2020). If inequality in education is, however, allowed to persist, the access to education and later to the labour market is restricted for highly talented girls, while less talented boys or men have easier access to education and, later, the labour market. Consequently, a gender gap in education also contributes to the gender gap in employment and the economy (Morais Maceira 2017). On the other hand, as long as barriers in spheres of employment and economy, such discrimination in and exclusion from in the labour market, persist, the demand for education for women remains lower because the investment into education does not benefit young girls and/or their families (Mishra et al. 2020). Finally, equality in education also matters for gender equality in other areas: The better women are educated, the more likely they are to claim access rights in the socio-economic and political sphere, while gender equality in education affects women ¶ position in their private lives and within families, as better educated women are, for instance, better equipped to deal with family responsibilities (Mishra et al. 2020).

Gender equality in the economy

The costs of inequality in the economy are not only linked to women ¶ educational opportunities but also shape the fundamental economic and developmental trajectories of a country. It is a well established observation that women ¶ empowerment is related to economic development (Duflo 2012) and a reduction in poverty (Sinha et al. 2007), in other words, that more gender equal countries tend to do better. Gender inequality deprives a country of the use of female labour and, consequently, leads to a competitive disadvantage (Mishra et al. 2020). This is because the productive capacity of an economy increases, the more people are included in the labour market, which, in turn, makes an economy more competitive. Indeed, improving gender equality also helps tackle employment and productivity issues arising from the ageing

of the population, and on the whole, society profits from the full economic potential of women concerning a country¶ GDP.

Similarly, gender equality is increasingly considered an investment for companies. Concerning the presence of women on top of the corporate hierarchy, for example, in the boardroom and the top management, business performance increases when teams are more diverse (Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018). It is not a novel argument that diversity broadens the range of expertise and experience in management teams, and in comparison with homogenous teams or boards, more diverse teams lead to more innovation (Moreno-Gómez et al. 2018).

Despite these positive effects of gender equality in the labour market, social obstacles, such as the traditional views of women¶ roles in society, stereotypes about their competencies, the persisting double burden of managing childcare and work, missing gender quotas and a lack of female role models remain in the way to gender equality in the labour market and the economy. Organisational obstacles are rooted in the reluctance of companies to hire women but also stem from a persisting reluctance to promote women and adapt, for example, work-life balance practices to fit women¶ needs. As a consequence, women might withdraw from the labour market or opt for more ³family-friendly´ career paths 3 R O R ã N L 9 R N L ü H W D O

Gender equality in education and employment can contribute to economic growth by increasing the talent pool available to an economy. However, the positive impact of gender equality on the economy depends on the opportunities available to women: If gender-related barriers in the labour market persist, educational efforts, development, and economic growth fail to translate into gender equality (Kabeer/Natali 2013).

Gender equality in politics and power

In order to tackle both gender inequality in education and the economy, gender equality in the political sphere is necessary. In the twenty-first century, more women were elected into political office than ever before: In May 2022, the percentage of women in parliament ranged from 0% in countries such as Yemen, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea, to 53% in Cuba and 63% in Rwanda, with a global average of 26.4% (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2022). However, in particular, in political decision-making positions, women continue to be underrepresented, while in areas with less power, their representation is better 3 R O R ã N L 9 R N L ü At the same time, female politicians are essential for representing women¶ interests. If women are excluded from the political decision-making, their interests also tend to be insufficiently represented 3 R O R ã N L 9 R N L ü That is because the context, process and institutions in which policies are made are deeply embedded in a culture of masculinity. Political institutions are gendered and male-dominated Z K L F K F R Q V L G H U W K H P D O H produce P D V ³ Q H it. Consequently, they reinforce disadvantages for women and advantages for men (Lombardo et al. 2017; Lowndes 2020).

A prominent example of gendered policy implications is the area of welfare policies. Welfare policies often differentiate between the employed and unemployed, penalising career interruptions and absences from the labour market. This means that they² implicitly or explicitly² U H L Q I R U F H W K H male breadwinner/female caregiver ¶ I D P L O model and increase the dependency of women on their male partners (Lombardo et al. 2017). One reason I R U µ J H Q G H U H G ¶ S R O L F L H V is the way in which problems are framed according to which specific problems are interpreted. When there are hegemonic assumptions, the interests of marginalised groups, such as women, often fail to be targeted by policies (Lombardo et al. 2017). At the same time, we know that women in power make different policy choices than men. Especially in countries in which women¶ needs are neglected, their priorities differ from those of men: Women pursue

policy preferences that reflect their own needs, including issues such as child health and improved access to the labour market, but also women tend to be focused on issues such as infrastructure (Duflo 2012). Putting women in charge therefore helps to address imbalances between men and women in other areas of life (Coleman 2004).

In addition to the negative consequences of inequality in policy-making for policy outcomes, inequality also affects the political system itself: For example, higher levels of female participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption, as they are more likely than men to prefer the common good over individual material gain (Dollar et al. 2001). Similarly, studies have found that the presence of women increases transparency in municipalities (Araujo/Tejedo-Romero 2018).

Gender equality and the family

Families in g ender -equal societies

Gender equality is fundamental not only to the functioning of society as a whole, but it also matters families. Families are situated within the context of the society which means they function within a complex context of policies and cultural norms that shape the well-being of families and individuals within it. It is perhaps not surprising that women not only prefer more gender-egalitarian societies but are also, on average, happier in them. In most countries, women have lower levels of well-being than men, often attributed to the disadvantages and discrimination they experience. Indeed, gender (in)equality seems to explain quite well, why women are happy in some countries and not-so-happy in others (Mencarini and Sironi 2012). Both cultural values of gender equality and the unequal distribution of resources, such as money, free time, and education, play a role in w R P H Q ¶ V F R P S D U L Y H O \ Ge Z H U O H Y H (Tesch-Römer et al. 2008).

0 D Q \ R I W K H L Q H T X D O L W L H V O L Q N H G e W Z H H Q Z R P H Q ¶ V F D Z H U O H Y H g endered division of labour ¶ which describes the observation that in hetero-sexual relationships, women remain disproportionally responsible for unpaid work within the home ² care work and housework ² while men do more paid work in the labour market. In countries where such a µ P D O H E U H D G Z L Q Q H U I H P D O H d o u b l e s , i t i s Y e r y l i k e l y t h a t P O \ P R G primarily women who struggle to reconcile work and family demands. In more egalitarian societies the challenges to balance work and family are more evenly distributed between men and women (Kurowska 2020). As a consequence, in these countries, having children leads to happier men and women, while in less progressive cultures, where childrearing is the responsibility of women, only fathers, but not mothers, are happier than their childless counterparts (Aassve et al. 2015).

One way politics can encourage or discourage different family models is through policies aimed at the reconciliation of paid work and family responsibilities, so-called work-family policies. 7 K H V H S R O L F L H V L Q I O X H Q F H I R U H [D P S O H n a n d t h e i r e f f e c t s o n w o m e n ¶ V O D E R X U market attachment (Hegewisch/Gornick 2014), but they are also important for the well-being of mothers and families. Sufficiently long and well-paid maternity leave, for example, is vital in V X S S R U W L Q J P R W K H U V ¶ S K \ V L F D O D Q G P H Q W D O K H D O W K (Ruhm 2000, Chatterji/Markowitz 2004). Countries where work-family policy regimes promote a dual-worker/dual-carer family model also tend to have higher levels of child well-being, lower levels of child mortality and child poverty, and higher levels of children ¶ educational attainment, showing that potential concerns about a trade- R I I E H W Z H H Q S U R P R W L Q J Z R P H Q ¶ V H P S O R \ P H Q W D Q G F K L O (Engster/Stensöta 2011). These policies are especially important in developing countries, as

maternity leave helps to decrease infant and child mortality (Fallon et al. 2017). More generally, in developing countries, gender equality on the societal level is directly tied to health outcomes in children, as studies have suggested that the status of women is DVVRFLDWHG ZLWK FKL undernutrition (Osmani/Sen 2003). For example, a study with Bangladeshi women has found D OLQN EHWZHHQ ZRPHQ¶V HPSRZHUPHQW DQG GHFUHDVHV LQ their children (Kabir et al. 2020).

Gender equality within the family

In addition to gender equality within society at large, gender-equal norms and practices within the family also matter for happiness, relationship satisfaction, and child welfare. For example, the division of labour within each household affects the well-being of the family, especially that RI ZRPHQ :KLOH UHVHDUFK VKRZV Varely unaffected by hours of paid work and housework, women become happier if they spend more time in paid work and unhappier with each additional hour spent on housework (Boye 2009). However, particularly detrimental to women¶ well-being is the so-ca O Osecond VKLIW¶, after their (full-time) job, women also perform most of the housework (Alvarez and Miles-Touya 2016). Interestingly, the strength of this effect depends also on the gender-egalitarian culture: Doing a large share of the housework has an even worse effect on life satisfaction in more egalitarian contexts, which suggests that inequality within the family weighs particularly strong on women when it is less normalised through cultural norms and expectations (Mencarini and Sironi 2012).

Unsurprisingly, the division of household tasks affects not only ZRPHQ¶V KDSSLQHVV EXW how they experience the quality of their partnership. Gender roles are an essential factor in marriage (dis)satisfaction: Women are happier in their relationships when the husband contributes fairly to the housework (Nourani et al. 2019). The same is also true for the involvement in childcare. When the father is more involved, both partners are happier around birth and after (Agache et al. 2014). But importantly, f DWKHUV¶ FKLOGFDUH LQYROYHP PRWKHUV¶ DOVR LQFUHDVHV WKH PRWKHUV¶ VDWLVIDFWLRQ overall more stable relationships (Schober 2012).

Of course gender equality within the family does not just concern the division of housework (and paid work) but also about the gender attitudes and behaviours towards each other. Sexist attitudes in men, for instance, are linked to sexist and violent behaviour. We know, for example, that men who more strongly endorse hostile sexism are more likely to also show violent behaviour towards their female partners, in everyday interactions, and conflict situations (Cross et al. 2017). A study from the Zimbabwean context links gender inequality within the family to intimate partner violence: Men are less likely to perpetrate violence against their partners when the woman is as educated as her husband and has an equal say in decision-making; h RZHYHU WKH VWURQJHVW SUHGLFWRU RI YLROHQFH UHP behaviours (Fidan/Bui 2016). The effects of the violence continue to have an effect long after, as they affect how children think about gender roles and relationships. Although children witnessing marital violence are not necessarily more likely to be violent themselves, they tend to become more accepting of violence in relationships (Lichter/McCloskey 2004).

This observation is in line with what we know about the transmission of gender attitudes, roles norms, and behaviours more generally. In early ages, we learn what boys and girls should and should not do (e.g., in terms of appearance and playing behaviours) (Koenig 2018). Childhood is an important phase in life when humans learn how their society and/or culture understand the role of a man and that of a woman; toddlers and elementary aged youth internalise this knowledge as a gender schema, which they use to process and organise their experiences

later on in life (Bem, 1981; 1993). It is hence not surprising, that gender role beliefs and gendered behaviour in the family shape, for instance, the occupational aspirations of children. For example, parents' explicit beliefs about the abilities of their children, and fathers who behave against traditional gender roles, for example by doing a larger share of the housework, raise daughters who themselves are more interested in working outside the home and in less gender-typical occupations (Croft et al. 2014). This is a form of parental role modelling. Children's beliefs about gender roles are also shaped by their peers' beliefs and behaviours (Endendijk and Portengen 2022). Gender equality in the family is, therefore, especially important, as it can help challenge extings norms and expecations and hopefully contribute to a more gender-equal society for future generations.

What can we do to achieve equality?

The most fundamental step for individuals, families, communities, organisations, firms and state agencies and institutions is to take scientific evidence seriously: on the one hand, scientific research shows that gender equality is beneficial not only for societies, political communities and economies, but also for families and for individuals (incl. health and well-being) across the life course. On the other hand, studies reveal not only that gender inequality still exists, but also that it takes many forms. Inequality is caused by structural bias, which concerns institutional patterns and practices that advantage men and disadvantage women; in turn, structural gender inequalities (e.g., education, health) (re-) produce gender bias at the individual level, which can be explicit or implicit. Gender bias is the opposite of being neutral towards human of all genders ±and in particular the aversion to women or the preference for men.

We would like to highlight here that implicit (unconscious) gender bias is an existing yet invisible source of gender inequality. This is a form of bias of which we are ourselves are unaware. Even if we are not aware of this bias, it does affect our evaluations of performance and qualities (Avitzour et al. 2020; Régner et al. 2019). Studies have shown gender bias ± preference for boys/men and aversion to girls/women- to exist not only among boys/men, but also among girls/women. For instance, both male and female workers tend to devalue the performance of women in management (Eagley and Karau, 2002; Warning and Buchanan 2009). Scientific evidence can help design policy interventions to increase awareness of such biases (and of their detrimental effects) ±a fundamental prerequisite for reducing stereotypes and creating a more encouraging environment for girls and women. Given that implicit biases, are produced and reinforced by structural inequalities (e.g., education, health), the effective promotion of gender equality necessitates policies that address bias at both macro and micro levels (state/society/market and individual). Changing the narrative about women and reducing gender stereotypes must go hand in hand with undoing practices and policies that sustain gender inequalities (ibid.). At the macro level, policies that forbid unequal pay for equal work as well as policies that promote fairness, justice and transparency not only in recruitment and advancement processes, but also in care responsibilities are necessary conditions for gender equality.

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From the United Nations

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES
15 MAY 2022

Families and Urbanization

Online Webinar in Observance of the 2022 International Day of Families

Friday, 13 May, 10:00-11:15 AM (New York time)

Programme

Introductory remarks

H.E. Alya Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani
Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations
"The Importance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024"

Moderator

Angela Mwawi
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Launch of Background Paper & Keynote Address

"Migration, Urbanization and the Family Dimension"

Bahira Sherif Trask, PhD.
Professor & Chair
Human Development & Family Sciences
University of Delaware

Panelists:

Brenna Hassinger-Das, PhD.
Assistant Professor
Psychology Department
Pace University
"Designing Cities for Children and Families"

Piotr Ca!becki
President
Kujawsko -Pomorskie Region, Poland
"Venice Declaration on Inclusive Cities for Sustainable Families: Good Practices at the Local Level"

JoséAlejandro Vázquez Alarcón, PhD.
Representative to the United Nations (NY)
Strategic Partnership Coordinator
International Federation for Family Development (IFFD)
"Civil Society Declaration for IYF+30"

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- Current urbanization trends & family-related issues
- Family-oriented policies facilitating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals linked to urbanization (SDGs 1, 3, 10 & 11)
- Good practices in sustainable and family-friendly urbanization
- Current preparations for IYF+30
- Civil society initiatives including Venice Declaration* & Civil Society Declaration for IYF +30**

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http://www.familyperspective.org/icsf/VeniceChart.pdf
* *
Civil Society Declaration for IYF+30

NGO FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL

United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

FUTURE OF THE WORLD

POLICY BRIEF NO 133

Migration Trends and Families

INTRODUCTION

In preparation for the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2024, UNDESA supports research and awareness-raising activities on the impact of current megatrends including technological, demographic, urbanization, migration and climate change trends on families. In 2022, migration (along with urbanization) and its impact on families is the topic under consideration. As migration-related issues are visible throughout the 2030 Agenda and elsewhere at the United Nations forum focusing on migrants and their families through effective policies grows in importance and deserves more attention.

Key messages

- The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep-rooted inequal around the world, at the same time demonstrating that migrants constitute the big part of essential frontline wo and their remittances contribute to global development
- It is indispensable to incorporate a family perspective into migration policy analysis. Since families socialize and provide economically and emotionally for the ne generation, they should be seen as essential for migrants' integration into new societies. Thus, policies facilitati family reunification, social protection and intergenera support are key in successful integration.
- Migrants need various types of support in addition to economic assistance. They need access to quality education, health, including mental health, housing a other social assistance helping not just individuals bu families supporting their cohesion. As transnational motherhood becomes a global phenomenon, policie supporting migrant women and facilitating reunificati with their children are key.
- As global data on migration is fragmented and incom it is difficult to design policies supporting well migrant families and their members, especially children, youth persons and persons with disabilities. Increased avail quality, and comparability of data disaggregated by migratory status, as well as of the use of different typ of data sources, such as statistical descriptors and qualitative evidence, supplemented by case studies level, are indispensable for evidence-based policyma

MIGRANTS AND REMITTANCES

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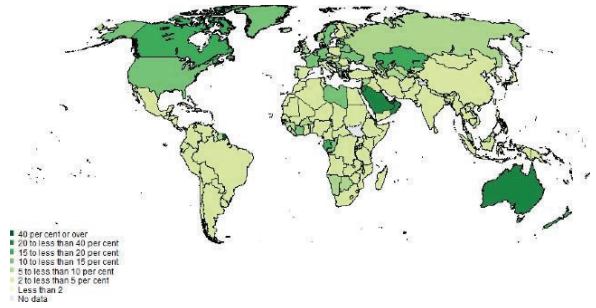

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The number of international migrants has been steadily rising from 173 million in 2000 to 281 million in 2020, constituting 2.8 per cent and 3.6 per cent of the global population respectively. In 2020, women accounted for 135 million of migrants (3.5 per cent of the world's female population) while men accounted for 146 million (3.7 per cent of the global male population). Remittances are a primary form of income for many families in countries of origin and a financial safety net for their members but they are also critical for economies, accounting for over 10 per cent of GDP in many low-and middle-income countries. Remittances have been associated with improving human development outcomes across areas such as poverty, health, education, and gender equality. As of the mid-1990s, international remittances have significantly surpassed official development assistance (ODA) levels defined as government aid aiming at promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Remittances to low-and middle-income countries reached an all-time high of $589 billion in 2021 and exceeded the sum of foreign direct investments (FDI) and overseas development

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assistance. Defying initial forecasts of the COVID-19 impacts, remittances registered just a 1.7 per cent drop in 2020 and are projected to increase by 7.3 per cent in 2021.

MIGRATION, INEQUALITY AND THE 2030 AGENDA

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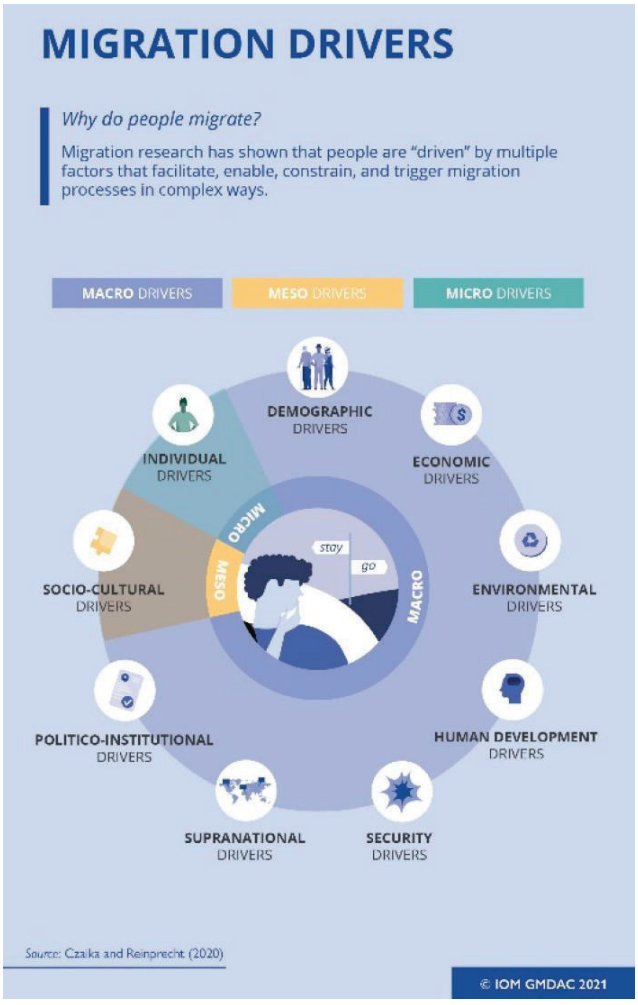

Migration, linked to globalization, illustrates economic disparities between different regions as well as rising inequalities between societies, with migrants relocating in search of better economic opportunities. Thus, in the 2030 Agenda, migration features under SDG10 (reduced inequalities), target 10.7, stipulating facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Other targets within different SDGs note labour migration, remittances and migration data issues. Such visibility of migration in the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for support of migrants through adequate policies and investment in data gathering. As global data on migration is fragmented, incomplete and rarely disaggregated by age, sex, and disability, it is difficult to design policies supporting well migrant families and their members, especially children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities. Increased availability, quality, and comparability of data on migrants and migration, obtained from different data sources, including at local levels, would facilitate the design and implementation of effective migration policies. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration has recognized some of such policies noting the need to facilitate "access to procedures for family reunification for migrants at all skills levels through appropriate measures that promote the realization of the right to family life and the best interests of the child, including by reviewing and revising applicable requirements, such as on income, language proficiency, length of stay, work authorization, and access to social security and services."

As the COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep-rooted inequalities around the world, at the same time demonstrating that in some countries, migrants constitute the bulk of essential frontline workers and their remittances contribute to global development, urgent action is needed to promote fair migration policies.

MIGRATION AND FAMILY LIFE

Migration is often driven by multiple factors, including socio-cultural drivers such as family. Importantly, migration itself is mostly a family decision and even when the migration decision is taken unilaterally, most migrants have a sense of family obligation and contribute to their families left behind, mainly through remittances as noted above. Both internal (mostly rural to urban) and international migration impacts family life. Individual family members leave behind their families embedded in social networks and face challenges rebuilding or creating new social networks in host countries. Labour migration often puts strain on families and contributes to family breakdown. Intergenerational relations between parents, grandparents and children as well as spouses and siblings are often negatively impacted as well. For instance, a growing phenomenon of 'left behind children' when young adults migrate to urban areas and leave their children in care of grandparents is likely to lead to intergenerational disagreements over parenting styles and expectations.

Irregular migration poses great risks and dangers to unaccompanied minors, who are often abused and exploited during irregular migration journeys to work in another country or to reunify with parents who migrated. Most countries are set up to only deal with a very small number of cases and large inflows of unaccompanied minors need special facilities, guardians, and create enormous challenges for the education system.

Contemporary migration is also been impacted by technological changes as well as geopolitical and environmental transformations. For instance, thanks to advances in transportation and communication technologies, families can stay connected and multi-local families can maintain family relations. Countries, however, increasingly tend to restrict family reunification and prevent migrants from having family members visit or reside with them. Many countries tightened their borders and established restrictive laws to deter migrants from entering and obtaining legal status, with COVID-19 travel restrictions making family reunification even more difficult. Such policies have led to household fragmentation and put into sharper focus the inequalities associated with international migration.

FAMILY MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL FAMILIES

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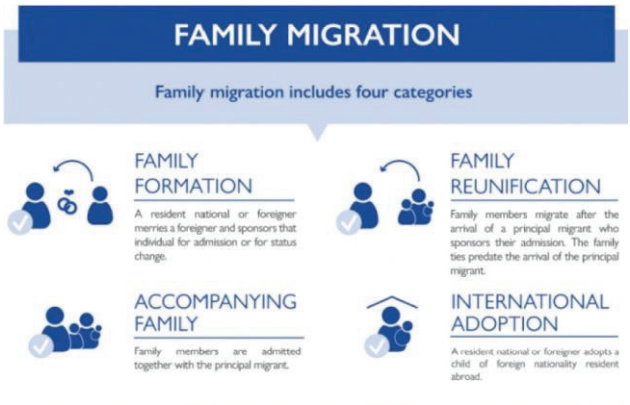

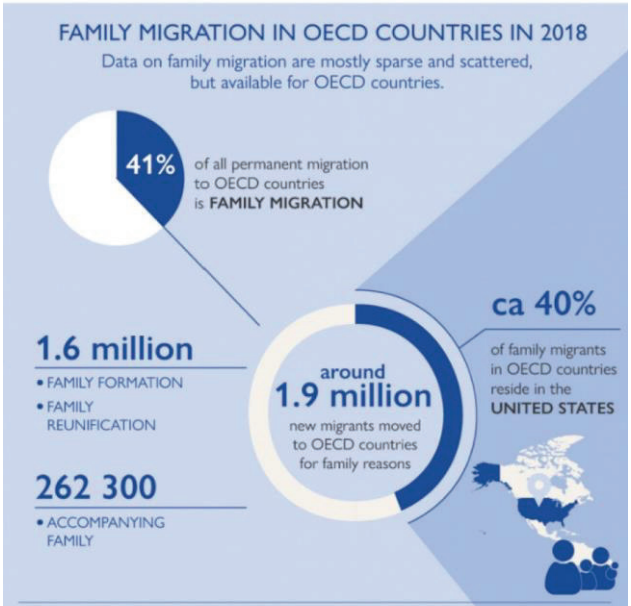

Notably, notwithstanding regional variations, family is the major driver of migration today. Family migration refers to family reunification, family formation, accompanying family members of workers as well as family adoption. Data on family migration is limited but available for OECD countries indicating that in 2018 around 1.9 million migrants moved to OECD countries for family reasons and family migration constitutes 41 per cent of total migration into OECD countries. Although family migration increased in most OECD countries from 2014 to 2018, in some countries, family migration diminished due to the shrinking of family reunification programmes with several countries imposing restrictions[4].

Transnational families, whose members are physically separated between two or more nation-states but maintain close ties and relationships, are a growing phenomenon with the bulk of research focusing on transnational families in host countries (as opposed to those left behind) and transnational motherhood.

Historically, migration was seen as a male phenomenon resulting in the weakening of ties with family and community. Nowadays, however, with the expansion of jobs in manufacturing and service sectors, women account for 48 per cent of all international migrants. Transnational motherhood, characterized by mother-child separation is becoming more common with young mothers leaving their children with mostly female family members in search of economic opportunities lacking in their countries of origin. Whereas most migrant women obtain domestic service and care work legally, stricter immigration policies have led to more women taking on service sector jobs through illegal means which could lead to abuse and exploitation.

Transnational mothers take on the breadwinning role thus redefining gender roles and struggling to be perceived as good mothers and meet the social expectations ingrained in societies they leave behind. They tend to send remittances to other females in their families (rather than their husbands) to support their children's wellbeing and education. Such economic support replaces physical and emotional support with many left behind children struggling emotionally and psychologically. Such arrangements are referred to as global care chains linking migrants and families left behind through financial obligations and unpaid care work. Studies on transnational motherhood indicate that women find it difficult to justify and negotiate their parental roles at home and abroad. Little is known, however, about broader impacts of transnational motherhood on families left behind[5]. In this context, it should be emphasized that there is an urgent need for a more equal distribution of unpaid care work between men and women, so that fathers/male guardians take more equal share of the parental work.

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Focusing research on transnational family units and not only its members is essential in order to understand how family members organize their economic and social obligations and continue to care for each other. This can lead to more strategic policy and programme planning.

CURRENT MIGRATION POLICIES

The migrant integration policy index (MIPEX) identifies the following categories: labour market mobility, education, political participation, family reunification, access to nationality, health, permanent residence, anti-discrimination. Integration policies in 56 MIPEX countries are, on average, only halfway favourable with as many obstacles as opportunities for migrants to settle and integrate in host countries. Immigrants mostly enjoy basic human rights and long-term security but do not have equal access to opportunities to participate in all areas of life. On average, migrants in top destination countries for immigration, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States benefit more from equal rights and opportunities while immigrants in the Middle East and Asia face many obstacles in most dimensions of integration policy[6].

Moreover, current policies in place are only to some extent favourable for promoting family reunification and integration. Reunited families tend to benefit from a secure status and basic rights but disagreements persist about what defines a family and what the conditions of reunification should entail. For instance, many Western European countries restrict eligibility to nuclear families and require transnational family members to have high incomes and pass language or cultural tests. High-skilled family members are favoured while the most vulnerable such as those in need of social protection are ignored. Moreover, in the current political climate, transnational families face an uncertain future and family reunification is regarded as a controversial issue with increased restrictions on reunification put in place in several countries.

CONCLUSIONS

Migration policies and programmes should reflect the reality that migration is not an individual phenomenon. Family migration is a driver of overall migration and as such family needs should be recognized in overall policymaking. When migrating individually, migrants are still part of families, and their migration decisions are largely motivated by the desire to improve the wellbeing of other family members, especially children. Rather than being perceived as victims, however, they should be seen as capable and active agents of their own lives, eager to become productive and economically independent citizens.

Better policies and better data are needed to facilitate orderly migration and recognize the contributions of migrants. To create supportive policies and programmes, more research is needed. A

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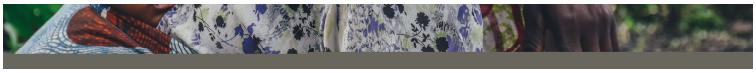
Caregiving in Crisis

Mothers taking on additional unpaid care work

1 March 2022



The recession shadowing the COVID-19 pandemic has been frequently characterized as a “shecession,” implying disproportionately negative effects for women. Yet the crisis might more accurately be called a “momcession,” as women’s work losses were driven in large part by the outcomes of mothers specifically. Across countries, one group stands out as faring especially poorly in labor force and unpaid work outcomes: working mothers with school-age or younger children.

International comparisons of the effects of the recession on mothers have been limited thus far due to lags in the cross-national availability of detailed labor force and time use data by parenthood status.

A survey conducted by OECD in 2020 helps to fill a gap in our understanding by combining self-reported employment and experienced labor market penalties and stress. Some of the main findings regarding mothers suggest:
- Mothers were nearly three times as likely as fathers to report that they took on the majority or all of additional unpaid care

The OECD’s 2020 Risks that Matter survey presents cross-national evidence that when schools and childcare facilities shut down, mothers took on the brunt of additional unpaid care work – and, correspondingly, they experienced labor market penalties and stress.

The findings serve as another reminder that governments must consider inequalities in unpaid work and take a gender-sensitive approach when building their policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

Extracts from the study “Caregiving in Crisis: Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work during COVID-19”. Available at https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/caregiving-in-crisis-gender-inequality-in-paid-and-unpaid-work-during-covid-19-3555d164/#endnotea0z4.

International Organizations Department of the International Federation for Family Development.