



# Interview With Shahra Razavi: Global Trends, Challenges and Controversies in the Areas of Care, Work and Family Relations

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## 1. Introduction

This interview opens the chapter on transitioning to gender equality in the areas of care, work and the family. In the interview, Kristina Lanz discusses some of the global challenges and controversies related to women's access to work and the distribution of paid and unpaid work inside and outside the household with Shahra Razavi. Shahra Razavi is Director of the Social Protection Department at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and former Chief of Data and Research at UN Women. She is a well-known gender expert and long-term advocate for gender equality.

The interview takes a closer look at the data that are and, more importantly, also at the data that are not, available, when it comes to monitoring progress on SDG 5, in particular in the areas of paid and unpaid work. It highlights that, despite a huge lack of globally comparable data, there are strong indications that gender inequality remains most persistent in the area of unpaid work, with women globally spending about three times more time than men on unpaid care and domestic work. Not surprisingly, this has vast knock-on effects on other areas as well and, notably, negatively affects the quality and quantity of paid employment available to women.

Thus, despite the fact that "women's economic empowerment" is high on the policy agenda of diverse public and corporate actors, women are still less likely to be gainfully employed than men, the gender wage gap is still huge, and the majority of women's employment remains informal, with little or no social protection. In the interview, Shahra Razavi repeatedly highlights the importance of adopting a human rights perspective, not least when assessing claims of "economic empowerment". She also makes clear that, in order to achieve greater gender equality in the distribution of paid and unpaid work and for men and women to be able to realize their rights, social protection systems are crucial.

The interview also picks up important discussions on the role of men and masculinity in these debates, on the intersectional and globalized dimensions of work and care (i.e., care chains), and on the challenges of adopting a non-binary lens, when

analyzing and assessing progress in gender equality, in the areas of care, work and the family.

## **2. Interview with Shahra Razavi**

KL: How do you evaluate global progress towards SDG 5—to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls? Which targets are on track of being achieved and which are lagging? Why?

SR: This is a good starting point for reminding ourselves how unequipped we are when it comes to assessing trends in the achievement of gender equality. Although gender equality is a prominent and cross-cutting feature of the 2030 Agenda, and in the SDG indicator framework a total of 53 indicators are gender-specific, a lack of gender data, and the absence of gender-specific indicators across all goals, especially the environmental ones, makes it difficult to establish gender equality baselines. Trend data, which are essential for assessing the direction and pace of progress—which is what you are asking—are also lacking. As the 2018 UN Women report, *Turning Promises into Action*, showed, only 24% of the data needed to monitor the gender-specific indicators is recent, that is, from 2010 or later. Additionally, even more worrying is that only 17% of it is available for two or more points in time—allowing for a trend analysis. Without timely and reliable information about gender equality and the status of women, it is impossible to know whether measures taken to address gender inequality have the desired effect, and whether women and girls are benefiting from the broader measures taken to address the economic, social and environmental targets set out in the 2030 Agenda.

However, with the limited data that is available, we can see a number of positive trends. There are increasing numbers of women in parliament, more girls have completed secondary education, and more women have access to contraception. However, overall, efforts to advance gender equality and women’s human rights have stalled, and gender inequality remains stubbornly in place in many domains.

For example, women and girls around the world are 4% more likely on average to live in extreme poverty than men and boys, and the risk rises to 25% for women in their peak reproductive years (i.e., 25–34 years) (UN Women 2018). Intimate partner violence remains pervasive around the world, with nearly one in every five women and girls in the 15–49 age group reporting physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner over the past 12 months. Globally, the

labor force participation rate (LFPR) for women aged 25–54 actually decreased from 64% in 1998 to 63% in 2018. At the same time, women spend nearly three times the amount of time that men spend on unpaid care and domestic work. Based on data for 61 developing countries, in 80% of households without access to water on the premises, women and girls are responsible for water collection. While nearly 39% of employed women globally are working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, only 14% of all landholders are women.

These are global averages, and we need to dig deeper to see where the gender gaps are at their widest. For example, when it comes to the prevalence of intimate partner violence, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) has the highest prevalence rate (34.7%), while rates in Central and Southern Asia (23.0%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (21.5%) are also above the global average (of 18%). In terms of LFPR among women, the highest rate in 2018 was in Europe and Northern America (80%), while the lowest was in Northern Africa and Western Asia (33%). Not surprisingly, the gender gap in unpaid care and domestic work is also at its widest in the Northern Africa and Western Asia region, where the median female-to-male ratio is almost six.

With progress slowing down, or even reversing in some areas, the picture of gender equality across the globe is far from where it needs to be, and at the current pace, most SDG targets will not be met by 2030. Too many women remain without access to decent work. Long and arduous unpaid care and domestic workloads continue to limit women’s enjoyment of human rights in several areas. Violence against women and girls in diverse forms persists. Levels of maternal mortality remain unacceptably high, particularly in situations of conflict and crisis. Women continue to be excluded from decision-making at many levels.

- KL: One of the most resistant areas to change seems to be in the area of care work, which is still disproportionately in the hands of women. Which are the main factors contributing to the persistence of the unequal distribution of care?
- SR: Yes, the limited data that we have from time use surveys confirm your point about the persistent inequalities in the area of unpaid care and domestic work—an important target under Goal 5. This work, as we know, is what sustains individuals and families from day to day, and from one generation to the next. It “produces” people and sets the foundation for all other economic activities. Yet, as you correctly point out, women shoulder the bulk of this work around the world. The performance of unpaid domestic tasks is particularly

arduous in contexts where even basic infrastructure, such as water on tap or clean energy, is not available, accessible and affordable to help reduce the drudgery of having to fetch water and fuel, grind food ingredients and prepare meals. Additionally, caring for a sick child or elderly parent can be extremely time-consuming and difficult where quality and affordable health services are not within reach, and time and money has to be spent accompanying those who are sick to medical facilities that are far away. This means that less time is available for other activities, such as earning an income, pursuing education or training, political and community affairs, as well as rest and leisure.

Gender inequalities in the division of unpaid care and domestic work are driven by multiple factors. For a start, dominant social and cultural norms that define care work as women's work constitute a significant barrier to the re-negotiation and redistribution of this work between women and men within families. At the same time, the gendered structure of the paid economy, evident in the gender-based segregation of labor markets with persistent gender pay gaps, as well as property regimes that favor men, also reward men as breadwinners and reinforce women's "specialization" in care work. In contexts where the work culture and/or low wages/earnings demand long hours of paid work, and where childcare services are inaccessible and/or unaffordable, couples are effectively incentivized to replicate a traditional division of labor for the care and reproduction of their families, especially if they have young children. For single-parent families, the majority single mothers, it means having to juggle some form of paid work with unpaid care work, sometimes with support from other family members.

Based on data from 40 high and upper middle-income countries with harmonized data, lone mother households with young children have higher rates of poverty when compared to dual parent households with young children across every country (UN Women 2019). The rates and magnitude of this difference in poverty rates varies substantially: Luxemburg stands out with the largest percentage point difference (50.4), followed by Czechia (42.4), Canada (40.0) and the United States (37.2).

KL: How can these differences be explained?

SR: Single parents lack the additional resources of a partner who lives in the same household. At the same time, they also do not have the additional in-kind support of a partner in the form of unpaid care time. This puts them and their children in a difficult bind. The generosity of social protection systems,

and in particular parental leave policies when they are paid, and the availability of affordable childcare services, are two important factors that contribute to the cross-national variation in single-parent poverty. As Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado (2018) show, by facilitating single parents' employment, parental leave—if it is paid—can help reduce the poverty risks of single parents. Generous child benefits and other forms of support, for example with housing costs and childcare expenses, can also make a significant difference in the incidence of poverty, by increasing single parents' disposable income.

KL: What is the role of men in the care debate? What is hindering men from taking on a larger share of care giving and how can this be changed?

SR: Moving towards gender equality in the care domain demands major changes in men's working lives: women have increasingly taken on paid work in addition to unpaid care and domestic work, but there has been little movement in the opposite direction, i.e. men taking on more of the care work. I think, again, there are two sides to men's resistance to change: cultural/normative, as well as material/economic. The strong association of masculinity with being a breadwinner and provider discourages men from taking on what is perceived as feminine roles, bathing children or cleaning the home. These cultural constructions are often reinforced through discriminatory economic patterns, where, for example, men's earnings are higher than women's, making it easier for a heterosexual couple to adopt a traditional gender division of labor, especially if one person has to cut back on paid work in order to care for a young child or elderly parent. Paradoxically, in contexts where men's identity as the breadwinner is under threat, due to high rates of structural unemployment and difficulties in finding paid work, they may be even more resistant to taking on what are perceived as feminine roles.

However, policies do matter and can make a difference, even if the pace of change is slow. Much has been said about the "daddy quotas" that countries like Sweden have adopted, which mandate a portion of parental leave for fathers on a "use it or lose it" basis. Beyond encouraging men to bond with their young children, policies of this sort also send a powerful message that disrupts dominant masculinities and femininities. Unfortunately, these kinds of policies have little purchase in developing countries, where labor markets are extensively informal and few people have entitlement to any form of leave.

KL: Are there specific national or regional differences that are noticeable in the area of care work, for example regarding the amount of time spent on unpaid

domestic and care work done by women and men? How can these be explained? Moreover, is there enough data to compare different regions?

SR: Globally, as already mentioned, women do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men do, though gender inequalities vary across countries and are particularly stark in developing country contexts. The gender gap in unpaid care and domestic work is at its widest in the Northern Africa and Western Asia region, where the median female-to-male ratio is almost six. The gender inequalities do not disappear in high-income countries, but they are not as glaring. What explains the relatively smaller gender gaps in unpaid care and domestic work in high-income countries? Detailed research in countries like Australia and the United States shows that the narrowing of gender gaps is largely due to the reduction of routine domestic work that has been typically performed by women, by using domestic technology, out-sourcing the work, or simply leaving it undone, while it has been much more difficult to renegotiate the gender division of care work.

Data from Australia and the United States show that women have decreased their housework as their earnings have increased, along the lines predicted by household bargaining models. However, while women do use their income-based bargaining power to reduce their own unpaid work, they either cannot, or “don’t try to use it to increase their husband’s housework.” Instead, they either replace their own time with purchased services, outsourcing some of the work to other women, or leave housework undone. Even when women and men are both in full-time employment and contribute equally to household income, women still do more unpaid care and domestic work than men. The power of social norms is especially evident where women’s earning capacity exceeds that of their husbands: in this case, the evidence suggests that women still tend to do more housework than their husbands, as if to “neutralize” the “deviance” of their husband’s financial dependence (Bittman et al. 2003).

UN Women, like other international organizations, has, in its various reports, compared data from time use surveys from around the world—but with a big warning sign, since time use surveys are not harmonized. This is a major impediment to rigorous comparative analysis, and there is an urgent need for the better harmonization of time use data and the better alignment of survey methodologies. The other problem in this area is that there are not many countries, especially developing ones, with more than one time-use survey to allow trend analysis; and in some instances where countries have multiple

surveys, they are not comparable, due to changing methodologies. These lacunas point to the need for more harmonization across surveys.

KL: Care work is generally seen as “unproductive”, as it does not contribute to economic growth, which under our current neoliberal development paradigm, is the main measure of development and progress. How can this perception of care work as non-productive be challenged, and how can the real value of care be adequately measured and rewarded?

SR: You are right about unpaid care work being perceived by some dominant schools of thought, most notably neoclassical economics, as “unproductive”. In the international System of National Accounts (SNA), which is used to calculate Gross Domestic Product—or GDP—the “gold standard” for measuring economic performance, services for self-provisioning such as cooking, cleaning and caring for household members without any monetary exchange, were excluded from SNA, and hence, were not counted as part of a country’s GDP. The same oversight is reflected in social security systems that provide paid leave or old age pension to individuals based on their labor market contributions—but not unpaid contributions in the form of time spent caring for others. So, those who have spent a lifetime caring for others can end up with little or no income security in their old age, unless they are “lucky” enough to be counted as a “dependent” of a breadwinner.

However, I do think that this dominant paradigm is facing some serious questioning, most notably by feminist economics, which has been very effective in showing the importance of the “invisible” economy of care and social reproduction, through both analytical/theoretical as well as empirical work. The idea that unpaid care work reproduces labor—a key factor of production—and thereby creates the foundation of all other economic activities, has had significant resonance within both the economics discipline, as well as in the policy world. Using time use data and “valuation exercises”, including satellite accounts,<sup>1</sup> feminist economists have shown the significance and sheer volume of unpaid work compared to other parts of the economy. At the same time, under the auspices of the ILO, the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2013 adopted a resolution concerning statistics of work,

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<sup>1</sup> A satellite account measures unpaid activities including childcare, adult care, household services and volunteering services, each of which is an important aspect of people’s lives and well-being, but is largely missing from regular economic statistics such as the gross domestic product (GDP).

employment and labor underutilization, which redefined “work activities” to include all forms of work, including unpaid domestic and care work. That resolution, along with renewed efforts at the international and national level, to undertake time use surveys should give further impetus to time use data collection and availability, enabling a more complete picture of work, and of the economy necessary for better policy-making and greater accountability to women.

I think both the arguments and the evidence have made a difference, however small: for example, many countries now include “care credits” in their pension systems for time taken out of paid work to care for a young child. In some countries, concerns about low fertility, due to the incompatibility of paid work with having children, has compelled governments to put in place social policies to support families, for example, through the provision of childcare services. However, I think that we still have a long way to go before policy-makers, whether in national governments or international financial institutions, fully understand that the social infrastructure is as important as the physical infrastructure like bridges and dams, and to re-orient their spending priorities along these lines. Today’s dominant austerity mindset, which is eroding the social infrastructure and working at cross-purposes with the 2030 Agenda, is blind to this understanding.

KL: Women’s economic empowerment is currently very high on the agenda of the World Bank, various companies (such as Coca Cola, Nike and Goldman Sachs), private foundations (such as the Clinton and Gates foundations), and private sector associations (such as the World Economic Forum), who have all made gender equality and women’s empowerment a priority. Some see this as a major success of bringing gender equality onto the agenda; others, however, criticize this trend as a highly problematic appropriation of feminist ideas in order to create “new markets and sources of profit for capital.”<sup>2</sup> How do you evaluate this trend, and where does it lead to?

SR: Yes, you are right, in recent years, a wide range of actors—bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, governments, civil society organizations and the private sector—have embraced the goal of women’s economic empowerment.

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<sup>2</sup> See Roberts (2012). “Financial Crisis, Financial Firms . . . And Financial Feminism? The Rise of ‘Transnational Business Feminism’ and the Necessity of Marxist-Feminist IPE.” *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes* 8: 85–108, p. 85).



The change in discourse is a significant achievement of the women's movement, which has been able to catapult a concept that was developed in feminist research and advocacy networks (empowerment) into the mainstream of policy debate. However, as in the case of other concepts that have gained widespread traction (e.g. participation, good governance and so on), up-take by powerful actors and institutions often means that the concepts are reinterpreted and used in ways that fit the predispositions of those who use them. In the process, they lose their original clarity and edge, and often become fuzzy and ambiguous.

This is quite clear in the way that "empowerment" is being used these days. Some see in women a largely untapped market of consumers (good for boosting profits), while others talk about unleashing women's economic power and potential as a means to solve the lingering problems caused by the global financial crisis and stalled growth (good for growth). No one would deny the importance of nurturing synergies between women's economic empowerment and wider prosperity. Women's participation in the workforce, for example, contributes to economic dynamism, by bringing more income into the household, boosting aggregate demand, and expanding the tax base (and hence the revenues available for public expenditure). A fundamental question, however, that we need to ask is whether these presumed win-win scenarios stand up to scrutiny, and what is in it for women? Does it expand women's practical enjoyment of their rights? Or does it simply harness their time, knowledge and resourcefulness to serve development ends, with little or no benefit to women themselves?

This is where a strong anchoring within a human rights framework becomes essential. Without a monitoring framework that squarely focuses on women's rights, it is difficult to know what lies behind the lofty claims of "empowering women". Going beyond the headline figures on women's labor force participation or the number of jobs created, we need to ask if women's participation in the workforce translates into concrete outcomes, in terms of their right to a safe and healthy working environment, fair and adequate earnings and access to a pension for their elderly years, and whether they are able to reduce and redistribute their unpaid care work. These are exactly the kinds of questions that we asked in *Progress of the World's Women 2015–2016, Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights*. The report showed that the world's women are a long way away from enjoying their economic and social rights. Not only is women's labor force participation lagging behind men's, there is a significant global gender wage gap (on average, 24%) that has changed very little over the past decade; the bulk of women's employment (75% or more in some

developing regions) remains informal, and with little or no social protection, and women around the world spend considerably more time on unpaid care and domestic work compared to men.

However, now that we have women's economic empowerment on the agenda of such diverse, and powerful, actors as the development agencies and banks and the United Nations, we need to be more probing, to make sure that the right laws, policies, resources and social norms are in place, to make meaningful changes in women's concrete enjoyment of their rights. As Gita Sen (2004) has argued, the struggle of getting women's rights on the policy agenda "is not a once-and-for-all event . . . winning the struggle over discourse is only the first step".

In moving forward, those advocating for women's economic empowerment would do well to keep their eyes on the ground, to scrutinize the extent to which women are able to enjoy not only their equal right to work, but also their rights at work—to decent work with social protection, equal and adequate earnings, safe and healthy working conditions, and access to quality child care services. Women's economic empowerment cannot mean factories that collapse on their workers, casual work in global value chains that comes with low wages, no right to social protection, and work that leads to "burn out" in a short time. Nor can it mean an extended "double shift" made up of paid work added to an unchanged load of unpaid care work.

KL: Yet, proponents of this neoliberal agenda of "women's empowerment" will point out how women's access to paid work is increasing, and highlight how even women working under terrible conditions, for example in the Bangladeshi clothing industry, feel empowered, as their job helped them to escape patriarchal structures in their home villages. How can one counter these claims?

SR: I think it is important to reiterate that having the right to work and an income of one's own is important for gender equality: it gives women greater power and a voice within their families and intimate relationships, a leg to stand on, and an exit option when those relationships break down, for example, in cases of domestic violence. It is an important source of socioeconomic security for women themselves, apart from any contribution it makes to the well-being of their families. However, we often use blunt indicators to measure progress in this area—for example comparing male and female employment rates, which says nothing about the quality of work (rights at work), the extent

of gender-based segregation, the gender pay gap, or the social rights that come with work.

However, even when we look at such a blunt indicator, there are reasons to be concerned. Not only are gender gaps in employment still significant in many parts of the world, progress in closing gender gaps has stalled over the past couple of decades, except in Latin America and Western Europe. Additionally, this is despite significant improvements in female education. In some regions, such as South Asia, the gender gap in labor force participation has actually grown.

Moreover, despite the gains in female education, there is little evidence of women moving out of traditional, female-dominated activities and diversifying the paid work that they do. Nor have we seen a movement in the opposite direction, i.e. men diversifying their paid work and moving into female-dominated occupations. A number of studies in developing countries, in fact, show that from 1980 to 2011, labor market segregation by gender has grown in more countries than where it has fallen. Gender-based labor market segregation underpins the persistence of the gender pay gap.

KL: The increased entry of women into the labor force also leads to a shifting of care responsibilities –while richer households often import care and domestic workers from poorer countries, such as the Philippines or Indonesia, these in turn often have to leave their own children in the care of relatives in order to work abroad. How do you evaluate this phenomenon?

SR: The concept of a global care chain, which was first coined by Arlie Hochschild (2000), is very powerful, because it makes power inequalities very visible in the way care is organized, not only nationally, but transnationally. Both historically and to this day, women and girls from the poor rural hinterland, and from marginalized racial and ethnic communities, have been the quintessential care-providers for the better-off social groups, even when women from the dominant groups were not seeking paid work. In fact, having a nanny or a domestic worker who would take care of all housekeeping responsibilities and childcare was a sign of the affluence of the “leisure class”. In the context of globalization, those relationships have been globalized—it is no longer only migrant women from the rural hinterland who provide domestic and care work for affluent families in London, New York or Buenos Aires, but also migrant women from across borders, for example, the Philippines, El Salvador or Peru. Additionally, in many instances, the care work is delegated to them, as

women from more affluent households seek paid work outside the home. To say that 21st century realities point to “care going global” is not to suggest that care labor migration and its social and familial consequences are historically unprecedented. It is well known, for example, that the great bulk of immigrants from Ireland to the United States, before, during and after the Irish famine of the 1850s were young, unmarried and impoverished women and men seeking wage work; large numbers of the women worked in domestic service, much like their counterparts in Europe (Donato and Gabaccia 2015). Perhaps what is new, is that those who migrate to work as domestic and care workers are married women who leave their own children behind to be cared for by a female relative or migrant woman from the rural hinterland.

Equally important, as you say, and as reports such as those by McKinsey do not say, is that in the case of women in low-income households who cannot afford to out-source their unpaid care and domestic work to others lower down the class/racial/global hierarchy, an increase in paid work often means a “double shift” that leaves them depleted and/or compels them to reduce the time they allocate to care (for themselves and others). As informal women workers interviewed in a WIEGO study by Laura Alfors put it, “our children do not get the attention they deserve” (Alfors 2016). In the absence of affordable care services, and men’s reluctance to take on more of the unpaid work, women in poor households have to make harsh choices between earning an income and caring for their dependents and themselves. Likewise, commenting on the challenges of parenting in the Caribbean region, Rhoda Reddock (2009) describes how poor women in Trinidad and Tobago, some of whom work as janitors and security guards to support their families, complain of their inability to monitor their children’s behavior, or pay others to do so.

- KL: What role should the state play in encouraging a fairer distribution of care work, not only between women and men and the younger and the older generation, but also between richer and poorer households and nations?
- SR: One of the lessons that has been learnt from Europe, and particularly so from the Nordic countries as “late developers”, is that social policy is not a drag on economic development (fiscal cost), but if democratically designed and managed, it can be an enabler of both human rights and economic dynamism—what the Malawian-Swedish political economist, Thandika Mkandawire (2001), calls developmental social policy.

To enhance women's economic autonomy, in addition to much-needed investments in basic infrastructure like water on tap—to reduce the drudgery of unpaid domestic work—the key priority must be to invest in care systems, as in the case of Uruguay, which has become “best practice” in the region. Starting in 2007, the Government of Uruguay engaged in extensive civil society consultations in order to redesign its social protection framework. Women's rights advocates actively participated in this process, placing care squarely onto the government agenda. The ensuing National Care System is explicitly framed around gender equality and the human rights of caregivers, both paid and unpaid, as well as care receivers, including children, older people and people with disabilities. In developing countries, investments in early childhood education and care services (ECEC) are particularly urgent. This is because of the very large gap between the supply of childcare services and the need for such services, owing to the relatively small childcare workforce and the high proportion of young children in the population.

Yet, social policy, like economic policy, can look over (or over-look) gender equality, as Mary Daly (2011) puts it, when it is oriented to other objectives, for example, investing in children's human capital or school readiness. Gender equality and the rights of adult women—whether as unpaid family caregivers or childcare workers staffing ECEC programs—are all too often an afterthought. While the availability, affordability and quality of childcare services, including their location and opening hours, are pivotal for women's ability to access paid work, ECEC services are not often designed with women's needs and aspirations in mind. However, there are examples to show that both objectives can be achieved.

Apart from Nordic countries where children's rights and development have been center stage along with strong public support to promote gender equality, there are also a handful of developing countries where efforts are being made to gradually transform ECEC provision in ways that respond to women's rights. In both Chile and Ecuador, for example, service quality has been up-graded and adjustments have been made to the schedules of childcare centers to better respond to the needs of working parents, and to improve the employment conditions and wages of their predominantly female staff.

Furthermore, when the conditions of employment are good, investments in care services can also generate “decent work”. Using a simulation exercise, we looked at what it would cost to extend *free* childcare services for children under

the age of five in two countries: Uruguay and South Africa (UN Women 2018). In South Africa, for example, making these services universally available for all children under five would take a gross annual investment of 3.2% of GDP. This represents a significant fiscal outlay, but the potential returns are also high. The expansion could create 2–3 million new jobs, for example, and raise female employment rates by 10 percentage points. Additionally, the new tax and social security revenue from these jobs would help recover more than a third of the initial fiscal outlay.

KL: There has been increasing acknowledgement of intersectional forms of discrimination in the work place, in the family and beyond, i.e. The fact that the way women experience particular forms of injustice and discrimination is determined by various factors, such as their age, ethnicity, economic position etc. Less attention has been paid to the fact that men's relative advantages are also determined by these factors, and that, under certain circumstances, some men may be more vulnerable than (certain) women. Do you think more needs to be done to highlight the different status positions of men?

SR: I think it is a truism that men do not form a homogeneous category, in the same way that women do not, even if men share certain common privileges by virtue of their masculine identity. Whether we look at educational outcomes, wealth ownership, or political representation, in most societies, we can identify groups of men who are worse-off on all these dimensions compared to certain groups of women. Feminist analysis would recognize how intersecting hierarchies of gender, race, class and migration status can produce such outcomes. The "Davos man", in the words of Lourdes Beneria (1999), stands in a very different space in the globalized economy compared to the superfluous man of the industrial rustbelt, whether in the US, China or Nigeria, whose labor is no longer needed. So, in response to your question, yes, under certain circumstances some men may be more vulnerable than some women. When unable to provide economically, it is not easy for men, or women, to see fathering in any other way.

I think on the whole, feminists have been attentive to "difference", i.e., recognizing that women are not a homogeneous social group, and that their experiences of injustice and discrimination are shaped by other dimensions of their identities, especially those of race and class. This perspective in fact grew as a result of feminist contestations and praxis, even before the term intersectionality was coined. Socialist feminists, for example, understood that subordination was differently experienced by women who occupied different places in class and racial hierarchies. There were lively, and sometimes bitter, debates in the

context of international women's conferences about North/South and East/West hierarchies, when feminists from the South and East (the "Communist bloc") argued that white Western feminists could not speak for all women. Differences in sexual identity were another source of debate, with lesbian women claiming their own place in women's movements and exposing the heteronormative presumptions of some feminists.

KL: Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to the position of individuals identifying as non-binary in debates around work, care and family. Do you think it is important to open up the notion of gender to not only include men and women in all their complexity, but to also include non-binary notions of gender? If not, why not? If yes, how can we measure and portray progress towards gender equality in an inclusive way that does not reinforce binary notions of gender and includes intersecting categories of discrimination? Moreover, what does this mean from a policy perspective?

SR: In the debates on work, care and family, there is a small but growing literature exploring the division of unpaid care and domestic work among same-sex couples, showing that it can be more egalitarian than among opposite-sex couples, given that they do not follow a set "gender script" in the way that heterosexual couples do. Systematic survey data are generally too scarce to allow proper exploration, but some countries such as Australia are beginning to produce it. Interestingly, as we show in the *Progress of the World's Women*, unpaid domestic work in Australia, such as cooking, laundry and gardening, was more equally shared between same-sex couples compared to opposite-sex couples (based on 2016 data). However, we should also bear in mind that not all same-sex couples may feel comfortable declaring their identity to survey enumerators, so there may be a bias in the sample towards more professional, urban, higher educated couples—characteristics that often correlate with a more egalitarian division of unpaid domestic work among heterosexual couples too.

The need to open up gender identities beyond the male/female binary is an important on-going debate, again, at times, highly contentious, which is putting many (perhaps especially older) feminists (like myself) outside of their comfort zones. From a human rights perspective, categories that put people in a straitjacket are stigmatizing and discriminatory, and hence need to be disrupted, though I am not sure where that will take us in terms of measurement/statistics. At the very least, as is happening in some countries, individuals can be given the option of choosing a gender identity that is neither

male nor female in national ID cards and vital registration systems. It should also be possible for household surveys to do the same.

In policy terms, the issues can be clearer. As we show in the 2019–2020 Progress of the World’s Women Report, older LGBTI people, for example, can experience specific hurdles in accessing care as they age, because they are more likely than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts to live alone, to be single, to not have children and to not be in touch with their biological families. For example, in the United Kingdom, just over a quarter of gay and bisexual men over the age of 55 and half of lesbian and bisexual women over 55 have children, compared to nearly 9 in 10 heterosexual people of the same age. This means that their care needs may be left unaddressed. With smaller family support networks, many older LGBTI people may rely on non-familial care services to meet their care needs as they age, as well as on friends and community members who may form a self-defined “family of choice”. Reliance on external care providers can come with particular anxieties for older LGBTI people. They may worry about experiencing stigma and discrimination by care providers, or feel concern that their same-sex partner or “family of choice” will not be recognized as next-of-kin for medical decision-making. They may also worry that their LGBTI identity may be “eroded” in care settings. For example, carers may overlook medical issues related to the sex that transgender older people were assigned at birth, such as osteoporosis or prostate cancer. Hence, countries that rely heavily on families to meet long-term care needs will inadequately cover the needs of LGBTI populations.

KL: Which issues in the area of care, work and family do you think deserve more scrutiny and research in the coming decades?

SR: I will highlight two issues where I think we need to pay more attention and do more work. The first, an obvious one, is on the measurement of unpaid care work. We need better standardization of the methodologies of time use to make time use surveys comparable across countries. In doing so, we also need to make better use of modern technologies, to make it easier and cheaper to measure time use. Hopefully, this will also make it feasible to have more regular surveys, so that we can have trend data and be able to see the impact of certain policies on people’s time use. The second area where we need to pay greater attention to is in making the case for care policies, by showing the many direct and indirect benefits of investing in care systems. The example I gave you of the costing exercise we did for Uruguay and South Africa is just one example. However, we need more studies that can capture not only the costs of,



but also the benefits of, investing in care systems, both in terms of employment generation (which was done very well in the 2018 report on Care Work by the ILO) (ILO 2018), as well as its benefits in many other ways; for example, by having more inclusive societies and dynamic economies.

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