

# ***Global Mega Trends and Families: Fostering Intergenerational Solidarity***

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**International Advocacy**  
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# DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES: FERTILITY

- Global fertility rate has fallen from 3.2 births per woman in 1990 to 2.5 in 2019 and it is expected to decrease even more to 2.2 in 2050 (UN Population, 2019)
- Half of all people around the world live in a place where fertility is below 2.1 births per woman over a lifetime
  - Number of births have halved in 34 OECD countries
  - 1961: 18.5million
  - 2011: 15 million
- Extreme regional variation:
  - Sub-Saharan Africa where the population is expected to double by 2050 (UN Population, 2019)
  - Oceania excluding Australia/New Zealand: 56% growth expected
  - North Africa & Western Asia: 46%



# DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES: AGING



**1990**

Life expectancy at birth has increased from 64.2 years in 1990 to 72.6 years in 2020 and is expected to increase further to 77.1 years in 2050.



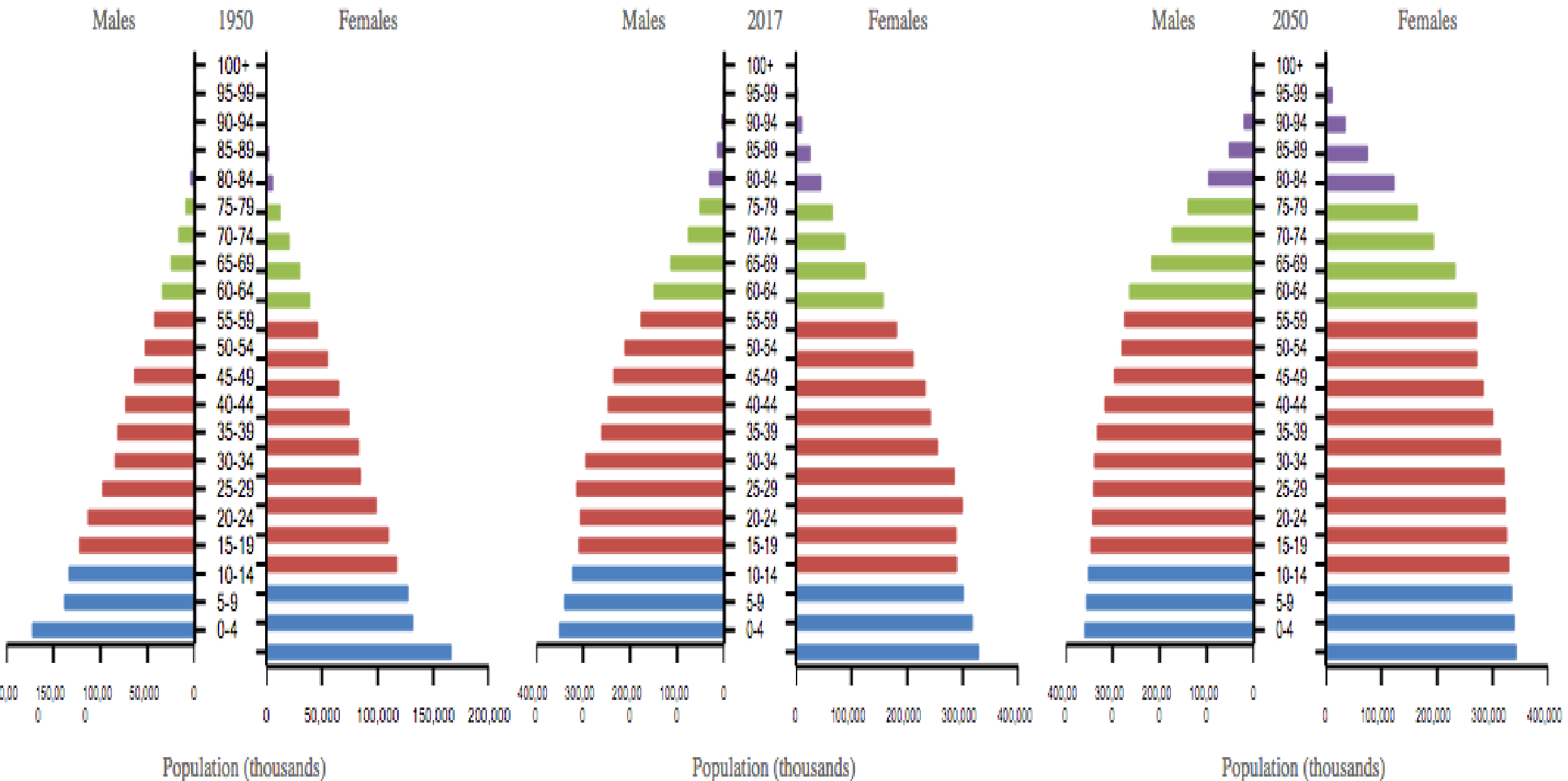
**2019**

143 million individuals 80 years or over is expected to triple, from 143 million in 2019 to 426 million in 2050 (UN Population, 2019).



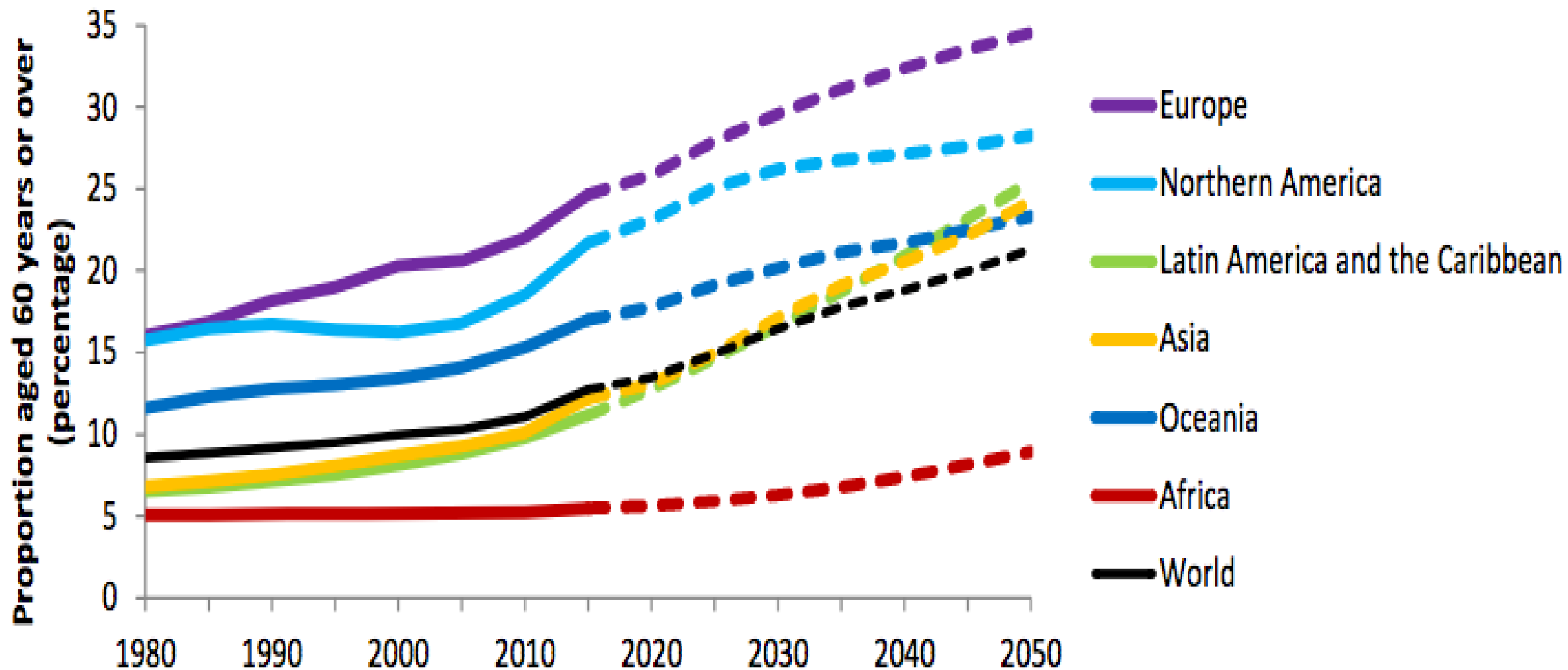
**2019**

United Nations predictions by 2050, one in six people in the world will be above the age 65 (16%), up from one in 11 in 2019 (9%) (UN Population, 2019)



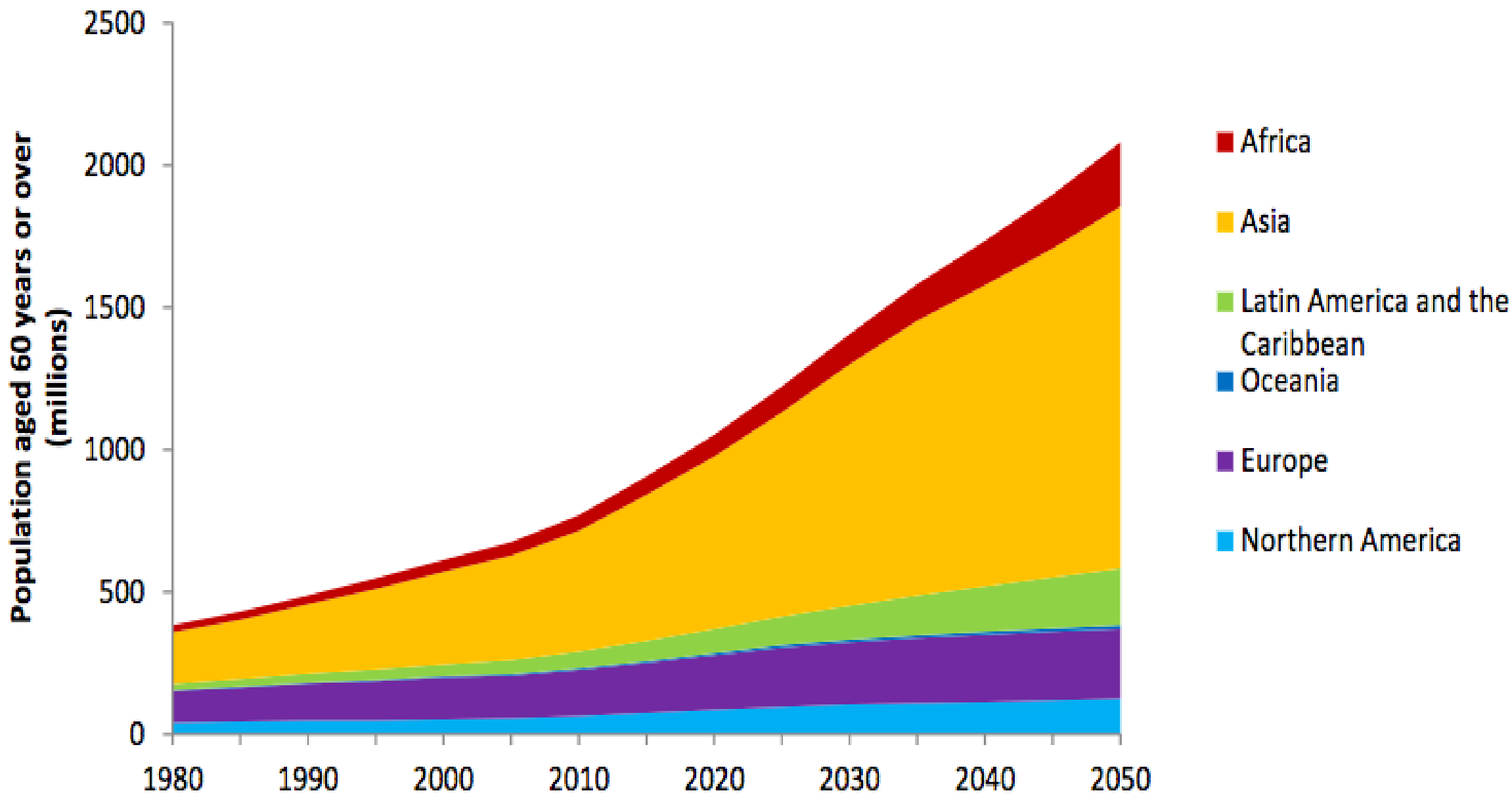
Population by age group (percentages)

Figure 1. Percentage of the population aged 60 years or over, estimated for 1980-2017 and projected to 2050



Data source: *World Population Prospects: the 2017 Revision*.

**Figure 2. Population aged 60 years or over, estimated for 1980-2017 and projected to 2050**



# FAMILY & SOCIAL IMPACTS

## Decrease in support ratios disastrous for many societies

- Places enormous strains on the labor market
- Increases care responsibilities for families and social protection plans

## Families investing more resources in children

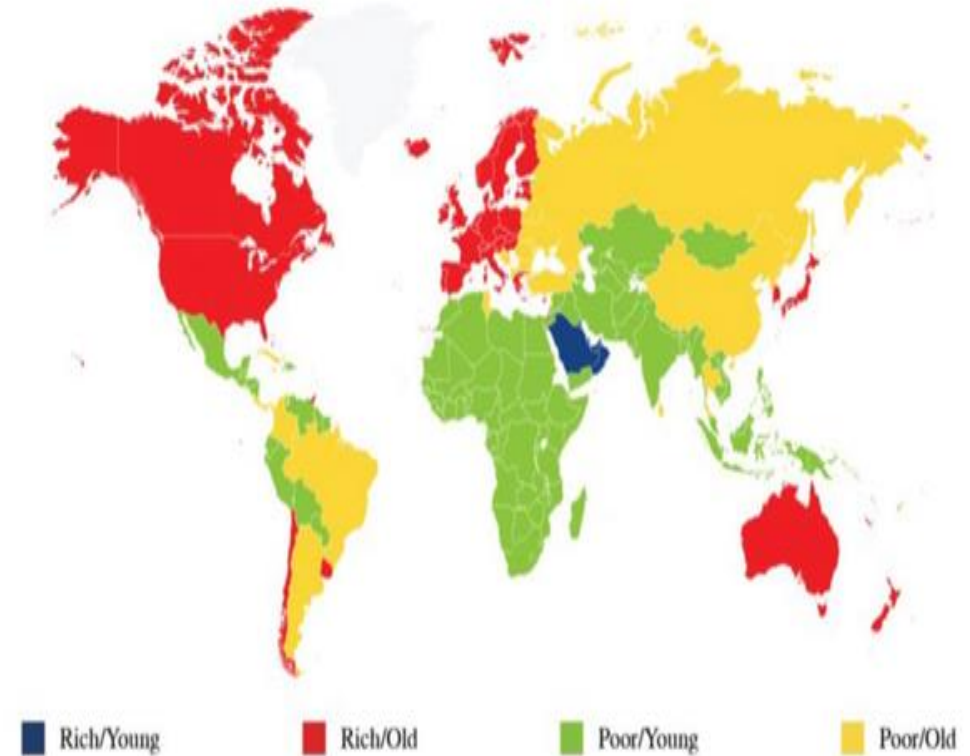
- Vertical kinship ties growing; horizontal lessening (except for Sub-Saharan Africa)
- Private intergenerational transfers of resources
- Formal educational and care systems growing in importance
- Intergenerational bonds & conflicts

## Care variations

- Increased number of women in the paid labor market strains care arrangements
- China: left-behind children & elderly
- Multi-generational housing
- Multi-cultural aging

# AGING ISSUES IN HIGH-INCOME AND LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

- High-income Western countries:
  - Emphasis on independent living for older individuals
  - Increased social security provisions
  - Aging is outpacing available services:
    - Health care
    - Caretaking
- Low-income countries:
  - Emphasis on family caretaking emphasizes intergenerational bonds
  - Out migration is a major issue
  - Rural aging as a specific concern
    - Lack of services
    - Break in relationships



The Economic Demography Matrix: countries can be split into four distinct demographic profiles

Image: Lauren Johnston/World Bank



# WHAT IS INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY?

- ✧ Social contract
- ✧ Social cohesion between generations
- ✧ Generational interdependence and interactions

# MULTIPLE LEVELS OF SOCIAL COHESION



- Macro level generational cohesion:
  - Age cohorts identify with specific events and state specific or global situations
  - COVID-19
- Micro level generational cohesion
  - Grandparents, parents and grandchildren as well as with extended families

Social cohesion, how it is perceived and emphasized is very

- Culturally specific
- Dynamic and constantly changing

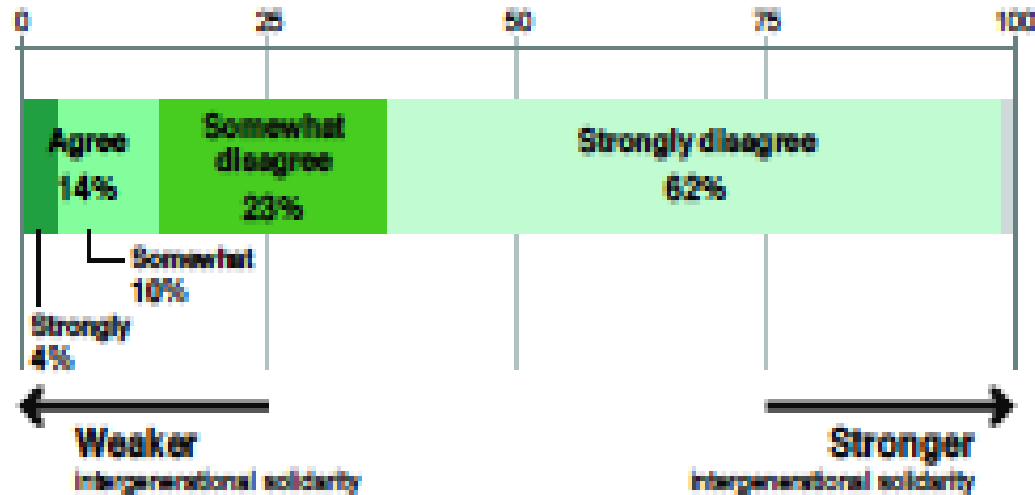
# WHERE DO WE STAND FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE?



# HOW IS INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY PERCEIVED?

**Figure 1. Positive attitudes to older generations prevail**

“Are older people a burden on society?”,  
percent of respondents

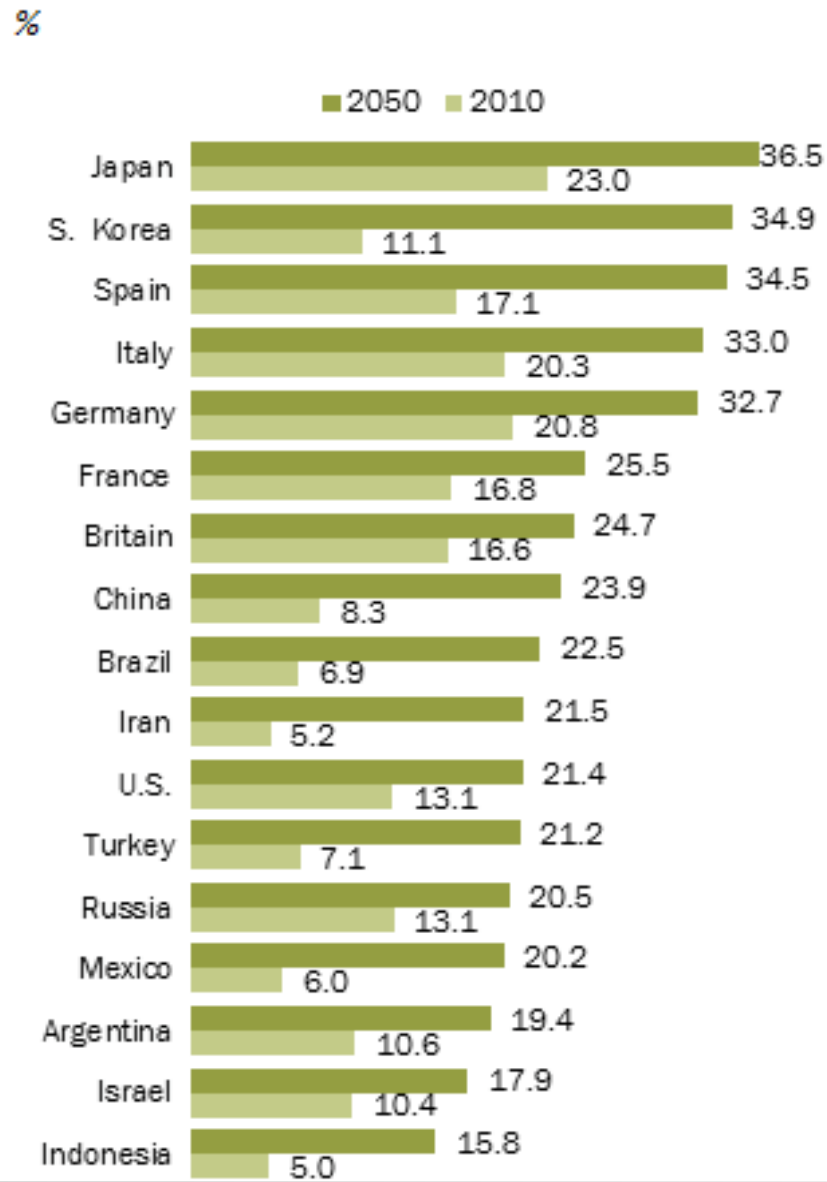


- European Survey of 27,000 individuals over the age of 15 from 27 EU States:

- 62% of people disagreed that the elderly are a burden
- Interestingly it was people who were middle aged who were most likely to think that the elderly are a burden

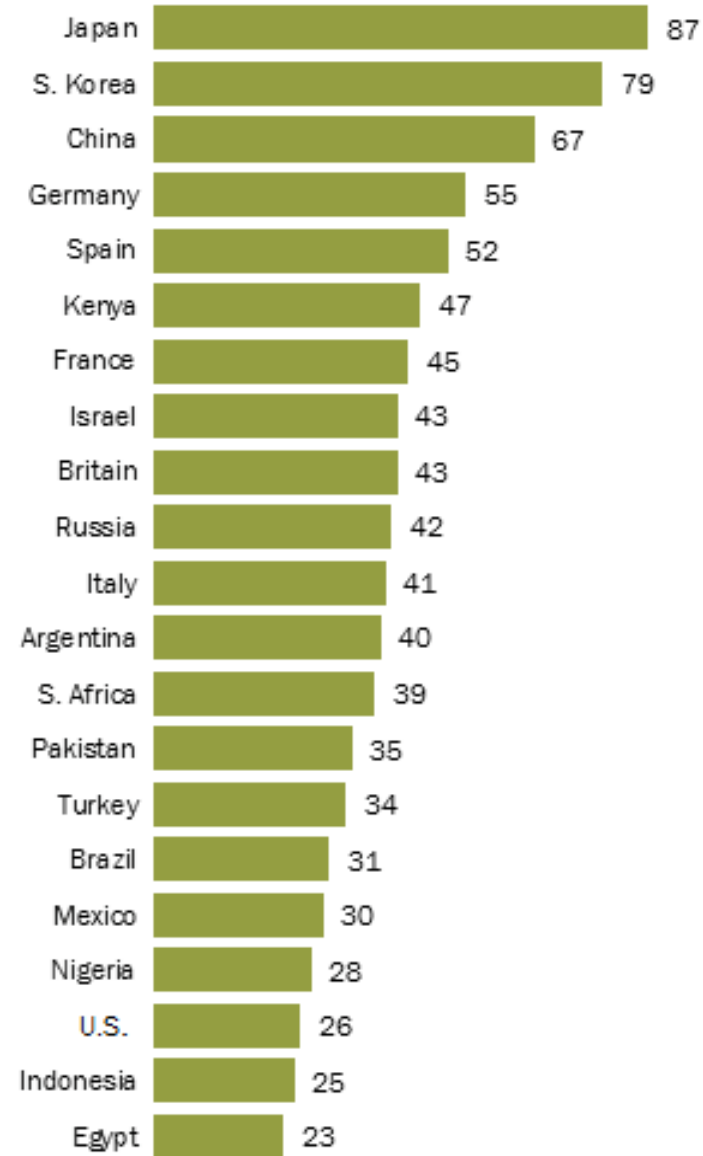
(European Commission, 2009)

## Proportion of People 65 and Older in a Country's Population, Estimates for 2010 and 2050



## Is Aging a Problem in Your Country?

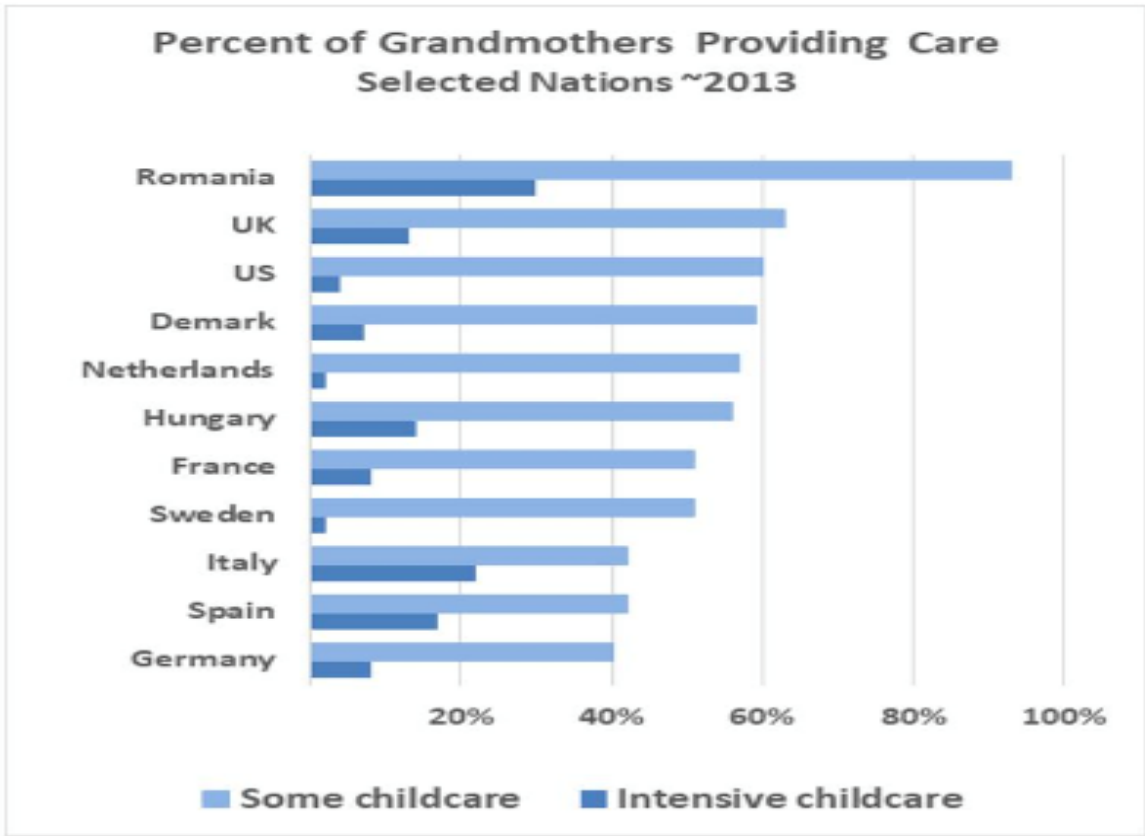
% saying the growing number of older people is a "major problem"



“CONFIDENCE IS LOWEST IN JAPAN, ITALY AND RUSSIA, COUNTRIES THAT ARE AGING AND WHERE ECONOMIC GROWTH HAS BEEN ANEMIC IN RECENT YEARS.”

(PEW RESEARCH, 2014)

# INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUE TO THRIVE



Helping hands: Many grandparents provide childcare for their grandchildren, and growing numbers raise grandchildren on a full-time basis (Source: Rand Corporation and US Census Bureau)

- Reciprocity between generations continues:
  - Empirical data from China, Europe, US
  - Young adults dependent financially
  - Grandparents provide care
  - Family care for elders
- Transnational families provide evidence of intergenerational solidarity:
  - Remittances:
    - One billion people or one in seven send or receive remittances (UN 2019)
    - \$ 689 billion in 2018 (World Bank)
  - Emotional ties continue
  - Technology is key

# CHALLENGES TO INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY ON THE MACRO LEVEL

Cost of:

Health care

Pensions

Social Protections

Media images of aging

Politicized

Symbolic

Emphasis on finance and not on proximity or association

Research & Policy focus on individuals rather than families and communities

**Figure 3. The fiscal pressure from ageing populations is large now and is going to increase in the next decades**  
Projected pension, health and long-term care expenditures, 2010 and 2050, percent of GDP



Source: OECD (2011), *Pensions at a Glance*; OECD (2011), *Help Wanted? Providing and Paying for Long-term Care*; European Commission (2009), *The 2009 Ageing Report: Economic and Budgetary Projections for the EU27 Member States (2008-2060)*"; International Monetary Fund (2009), *Fiscal Implications of the Global Economic and Financial Crisis*"; Standard & Poor's (2010), *Global Aging 2010: An Irreversible Truth*.

(OECD, 2011)

# CHALLENGES TO INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY ON THE MICRO-LEVEL

Global family trends:

Cohabitation,  
Divorce  
Re-marriage

Family “decline” arguments

Increasingly popular policies globally favoring the extension of working life

Lower fertility: Fewer individuals to **share** care

Policies that emphasize one family form over all others:

Families with young children

High Ratio Example

In 2060, there will be 9 seniors for every 10 working-age persons in South Korea



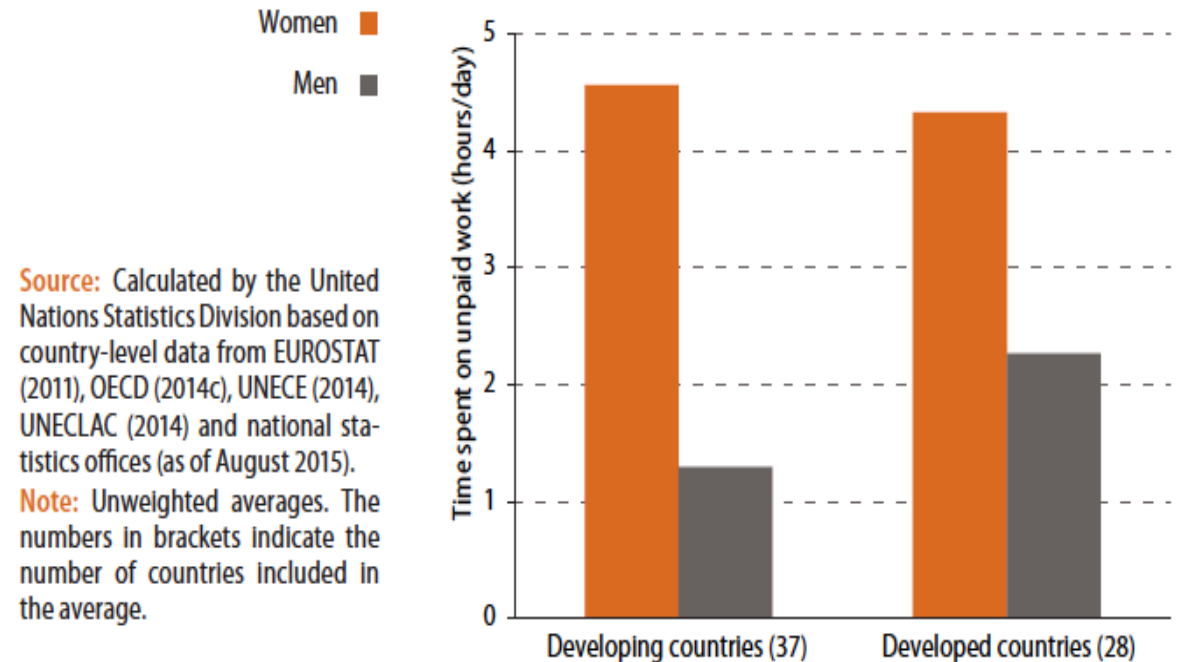


# CHALLENGES TO INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY: ISSUE OF UNPAID CARE WORK

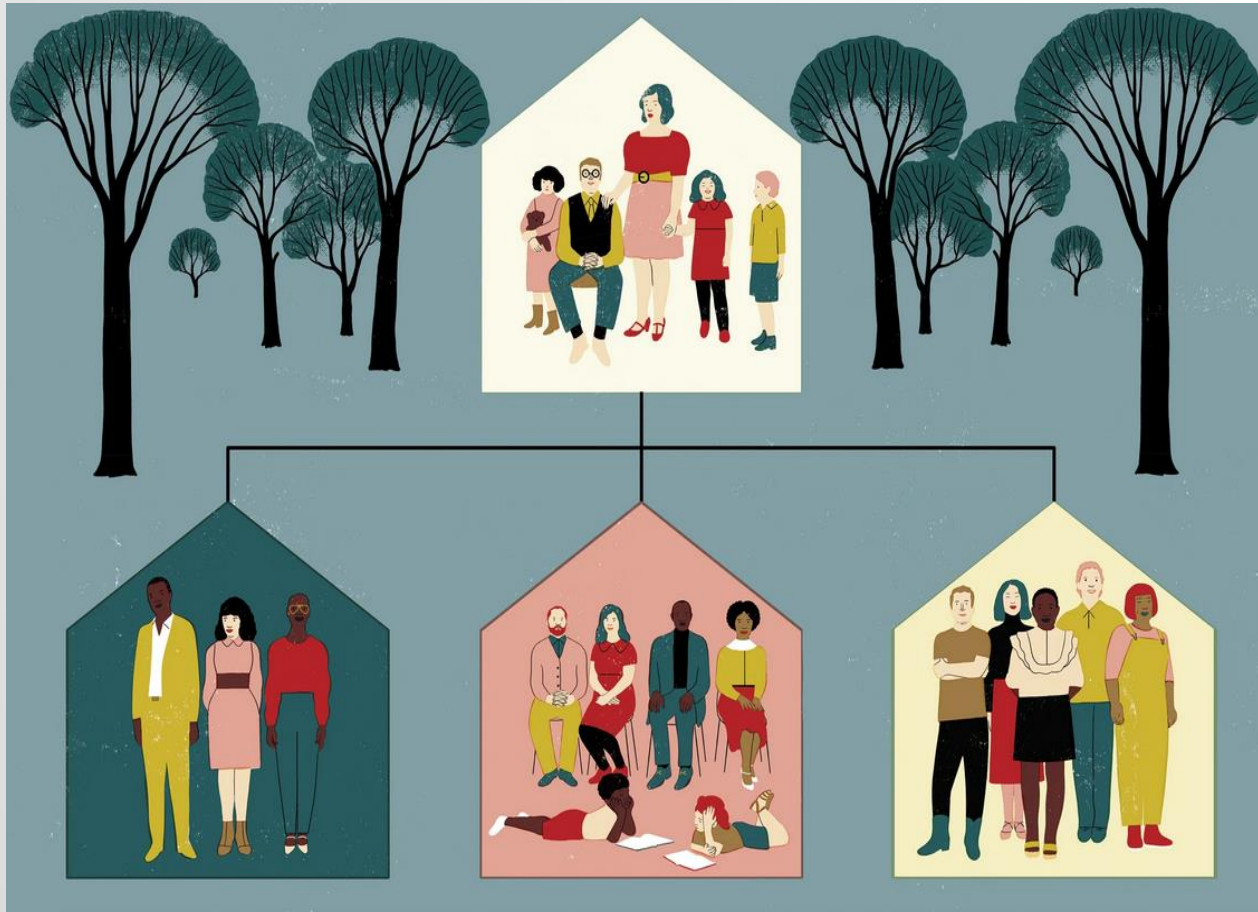
- ✧ Global data indicates
  - ✧ Women spend at least twice as much time as men on domestic work, and when all work (paid and unpaid) is taken into account, women work longer hours than men do (United Nations, 2015; World's Women)
- ✧ In high income Western countries men are taking on **increased childcare** and some elder care
  - ✧ Women spend 15 – 40 hour on child care
  - ✧ Men spend 10 – 30 hours on child care
  - ✧ Finland, Denmark and Sweden closest to parity
- ✧ In general: **less time** on housework but equal on care
  - ✧ Ability to outsource
  - ✧ Ability to earn income gives more “power”

Figure 4.22

Time spent on unpaid work by sex, developing and developed countries, 2005–2013 (latest available)



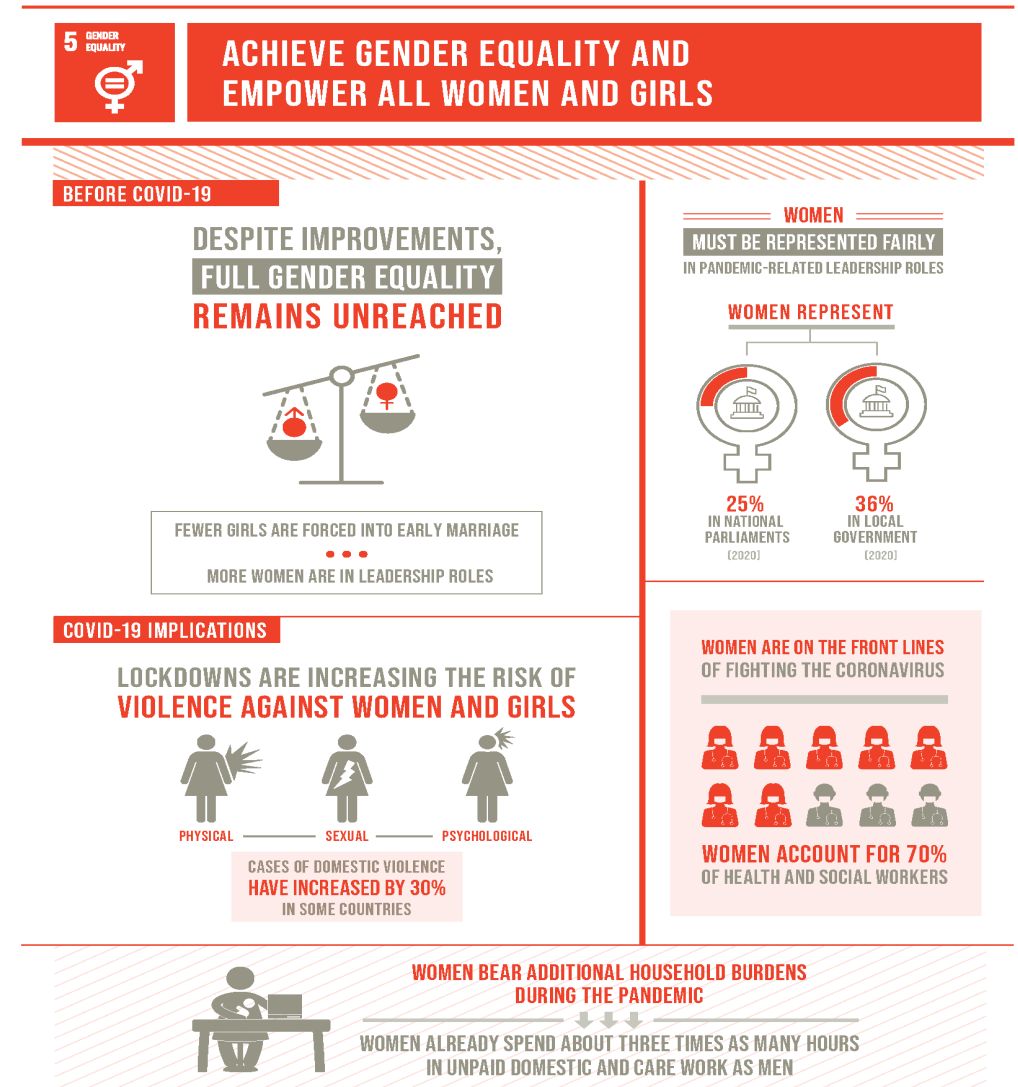
# INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER: **COVID-19** HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE **GLOBAL IMPORTANCE** OF FAMILIES



- Need for intimate supports & security
- Source of stress and tension
- **Need for "more family"** not "less family": "the projected erosion of the family is problematic and possibly invalid....Studies of family values and attitudes show a surprising degree of preference stability..." (Esping-Andersen & Billari, 2015, p. 3).

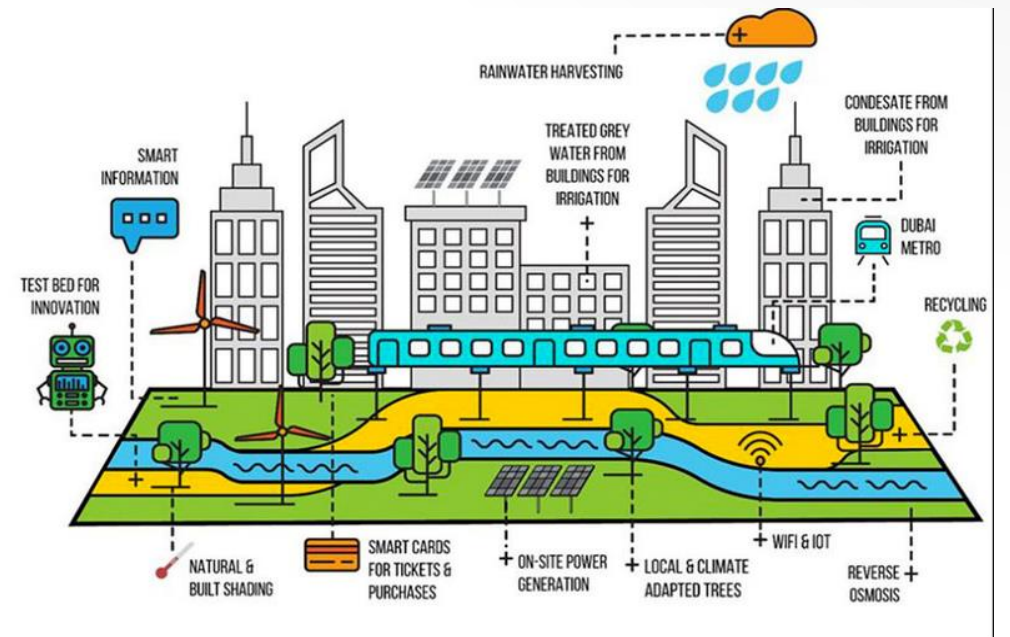
# ISSUES AROUND STRENGTHENING INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

- What are the best ways to combine intergenerational family supports with government support?
- What measures can governments take to support **care** arrangements within families?
- What supports do family caregivers for older people and for people with disabilities, the terminally ill and mental illnesses need and how can they best be provided?
- How do we promote gender equality with respect to integrating work and care responsibilities?



# POLICIES THAT PROMOTE INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

- Educational:
  - Bringing together generations to learn from one another in formal and informal settings
  - Curricula that emphasize intergenerational perspectives, family issues, early care, youth, and aging
  - Teaching each other about technology helps keep generations interconnected (Freeman et al. 2020)
- Urban planning
  - Multi-generational housing
  - Green spaces that facilitate interactions
- Supporting faith-based organizations
  - Allow for interactions between generations
- Poverty reduction
  - Focus on needs of different generations
  - Culturally specific social services





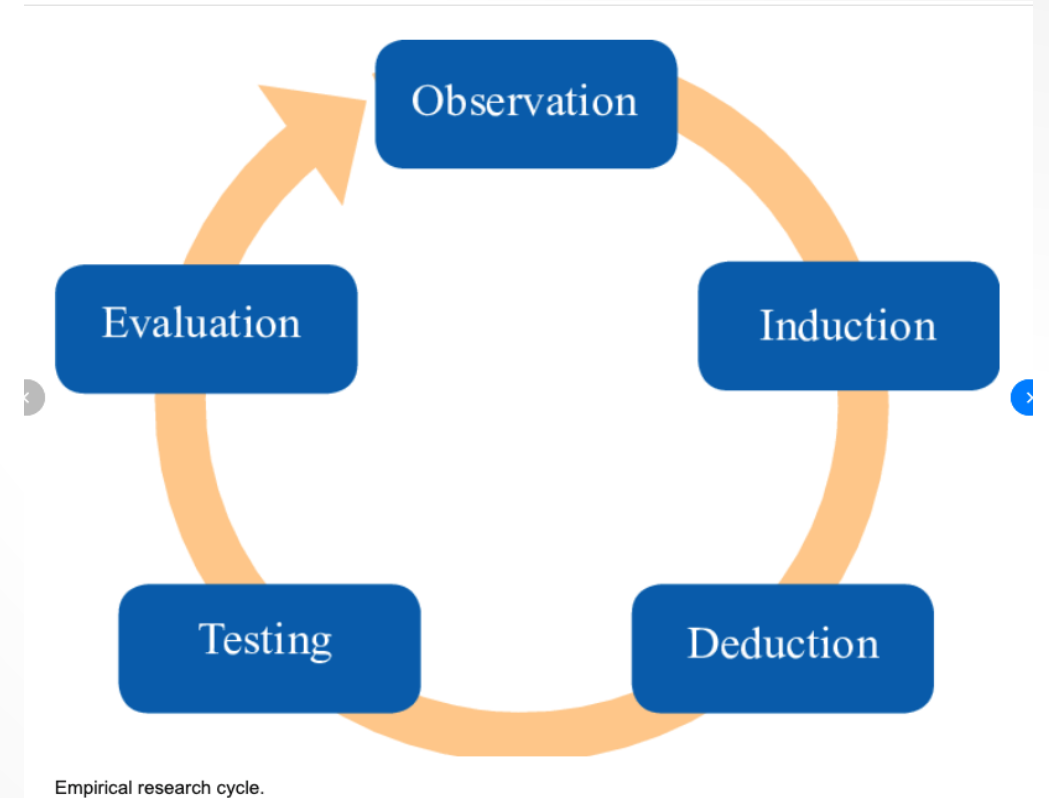
# POLICIES THAT PROMOTE INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY

- Focus on work-care-life arrangements
  - Work flexibility
  - Sandwich generation responsibilities
  - Gender awareness of responsibilities and furthering gender equality
  - Taking into account caring for individuals with disabilities and long-term illnesses
- Health based services
  - Mental health supports across life span
  - Violence prevention plans
- Initiatives that mitigate age-based discrimination and prejudice:
  - Media efforts that highlight the positive nature of intergenerational solidarity including cultural flows between generations
  - Family life education about aging related issues to prevent discrimination and prejudice against the elderly



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to create family and socially supportive policies we need **empirical evidence**
- Creation of **key uniform indicators** to track and monitor different dimensions of solidarity
  - Country and culturally specific
- Indicators should be **included** in current social and economic measures and data collection efforts
- **Consistent** data collection is critical



# CONCLUSION

- Promoting intergenerational solidarity leads to:
  - Greater **social cohesion**
  - More responsible citizens
  - More **peaceful and secure** societies
- Each generation has a **distinctive** role to play – needs to be empowered – in order to create **sustainable** future for all
  - ✧ Far from being abandoned by family, the elderly in high-income and low-income societies are in close contact with kin, engage in warm relationships with them, and are both a giver and receiver of support and assistance (Bengtson & Oyama, 2007; Thomas & Umberson, 2017)
  - ✧ It is **CRITICAL** that debates, educational and media foci as well as policies be **family-centered** and take changing roles, needs and demands of all generations and gender issues into account



THANK YOU 😊

