



Supporting Families: Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity in Globalizing Contexts

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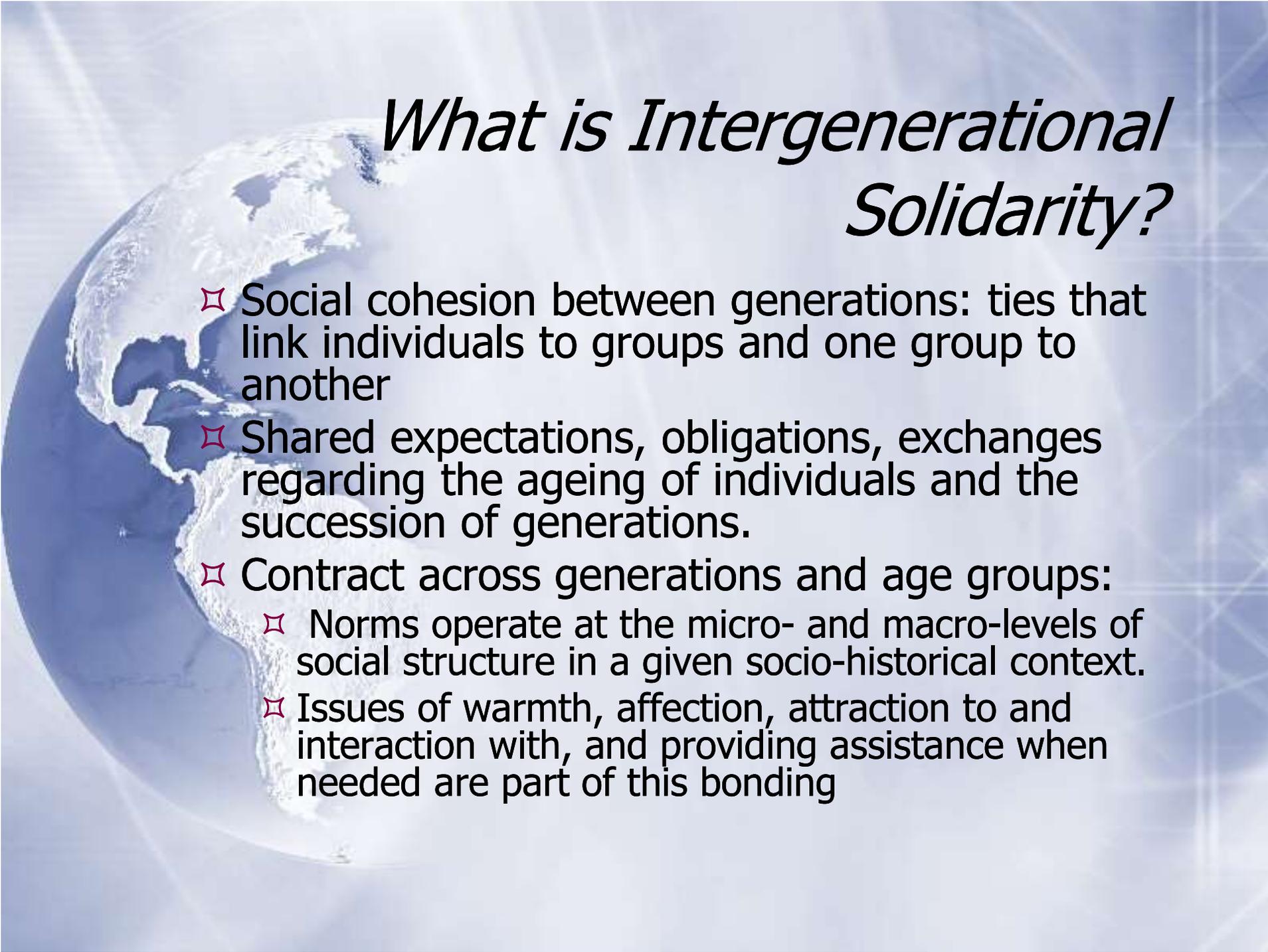
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Intergenerational relations in an ageing world

50th Session of the Commission on Population and Development - Side Event
Tuesday, 4th April 2017 - Conference Room 7 - 1:15-2:30 PM
United Nations Headquarters - New York

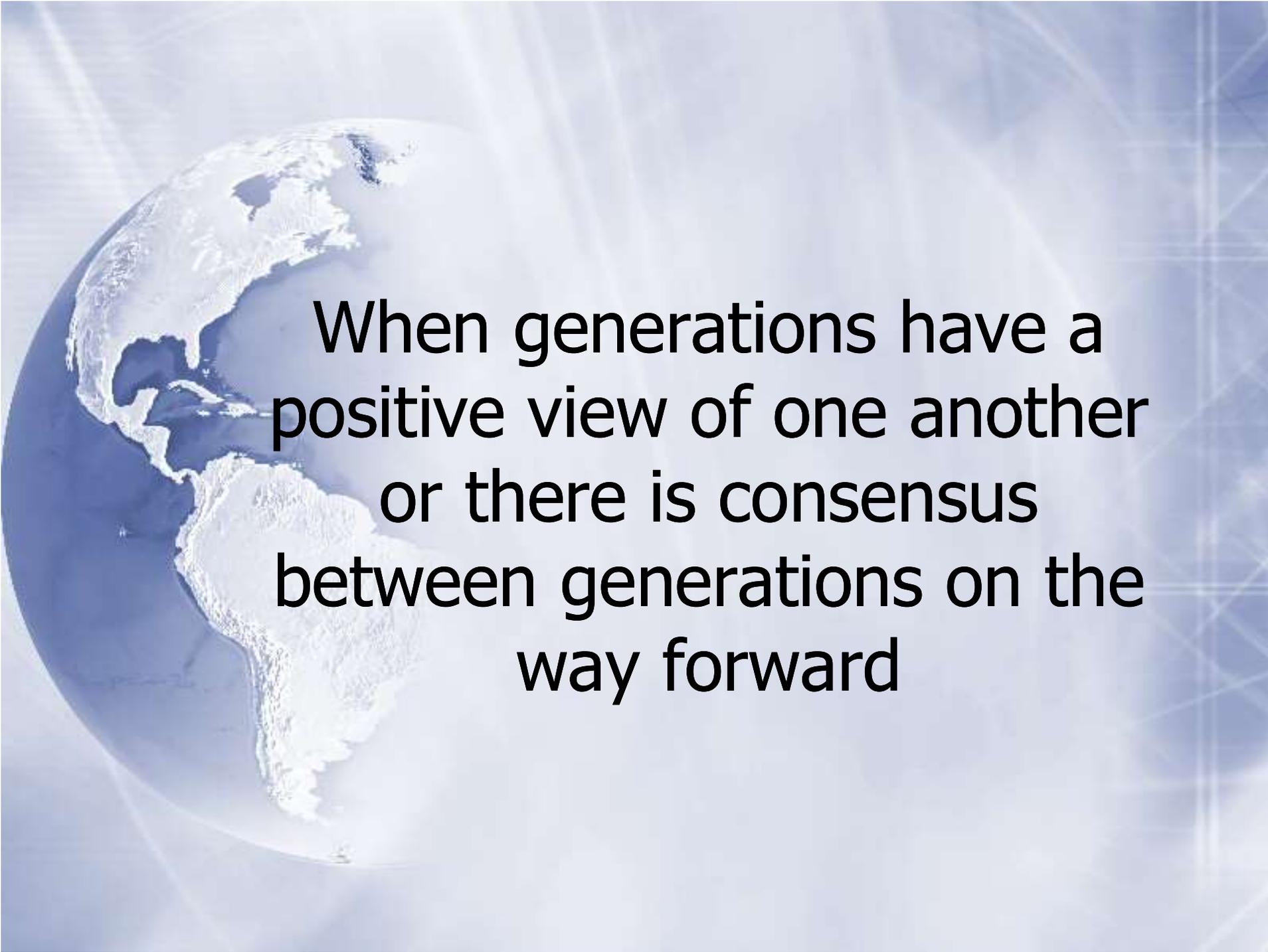
familyperspective.org/ages





What is Intergenerational Solidarity?

- ✧ Social cohesion between generations: ties that link individuals to groups and one group to another
- ✧ Shared expectations, obligations, exchanges regarding the ageing of individuals and the succession of generations.
- ✧ Contract across generations and age groups:
 - ✧ Norms operate at the micro- and macro-levels of social structure in a given socio-historical context.
 - ✧ Issues of warmth, affection, attraction to and interaction with, and providing assistance when needed are part of this bonding



When generations have a positive view of one another or there is consensus between generations on the way forward



Global Trends

✧ Contract across generations is changing around the world:

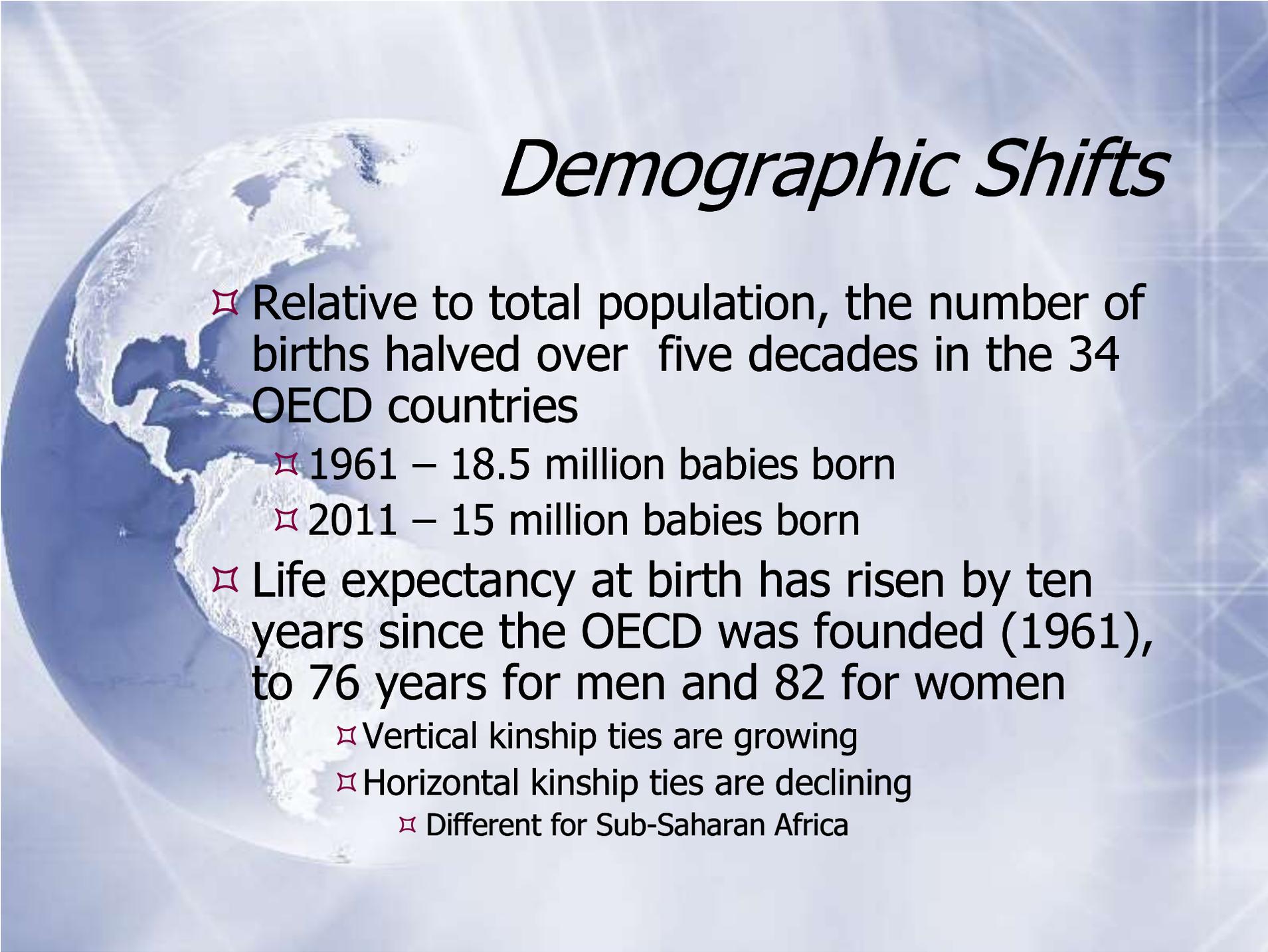
✧ Extension of the life course

✧ Changes in the age structures of nations

✧ Changes in family structures and relationships

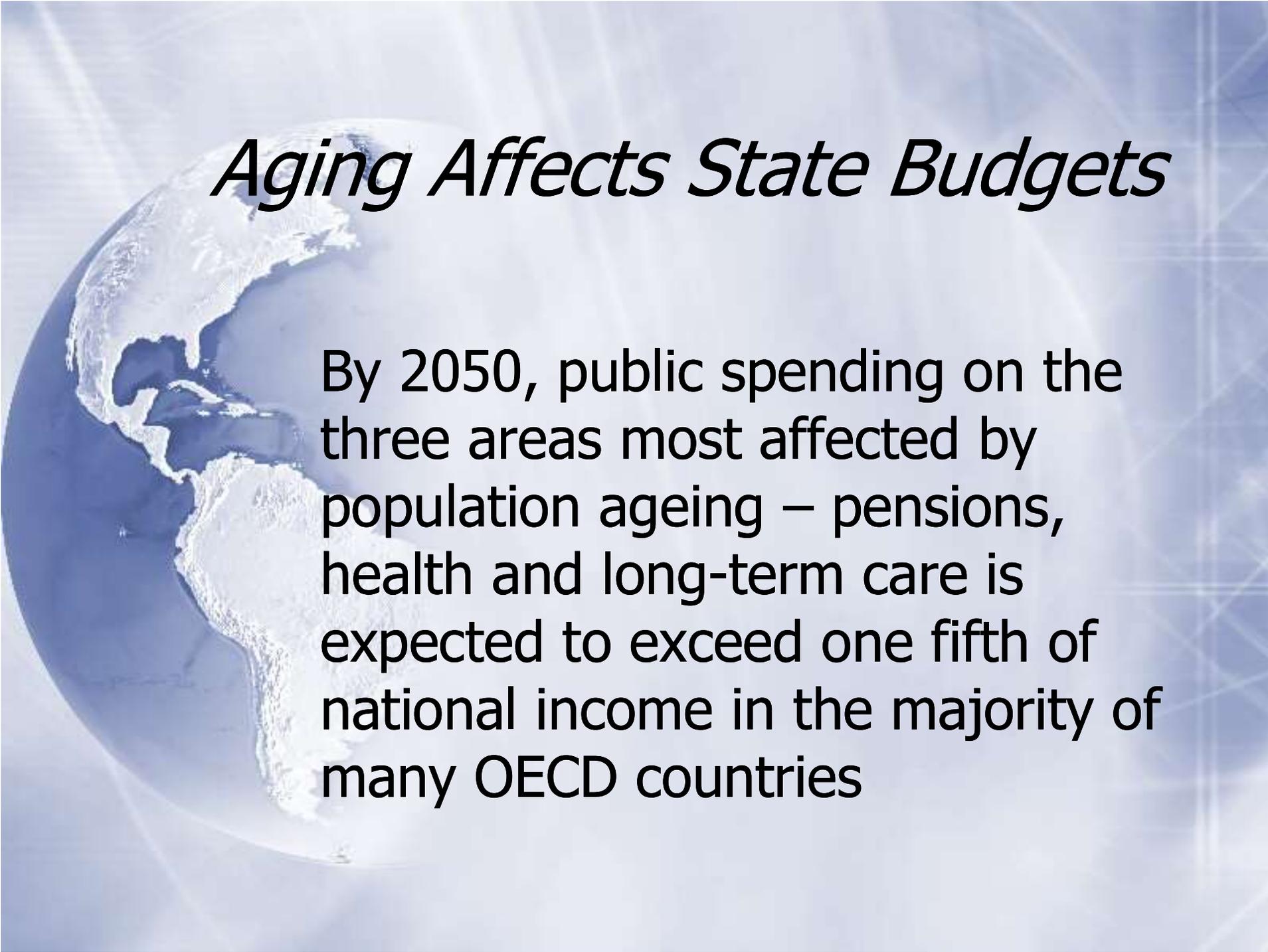
✧ Changes in states' responsibilities

✧ (Bengtson, Lowenstein, Putney, & Gans, 2003)



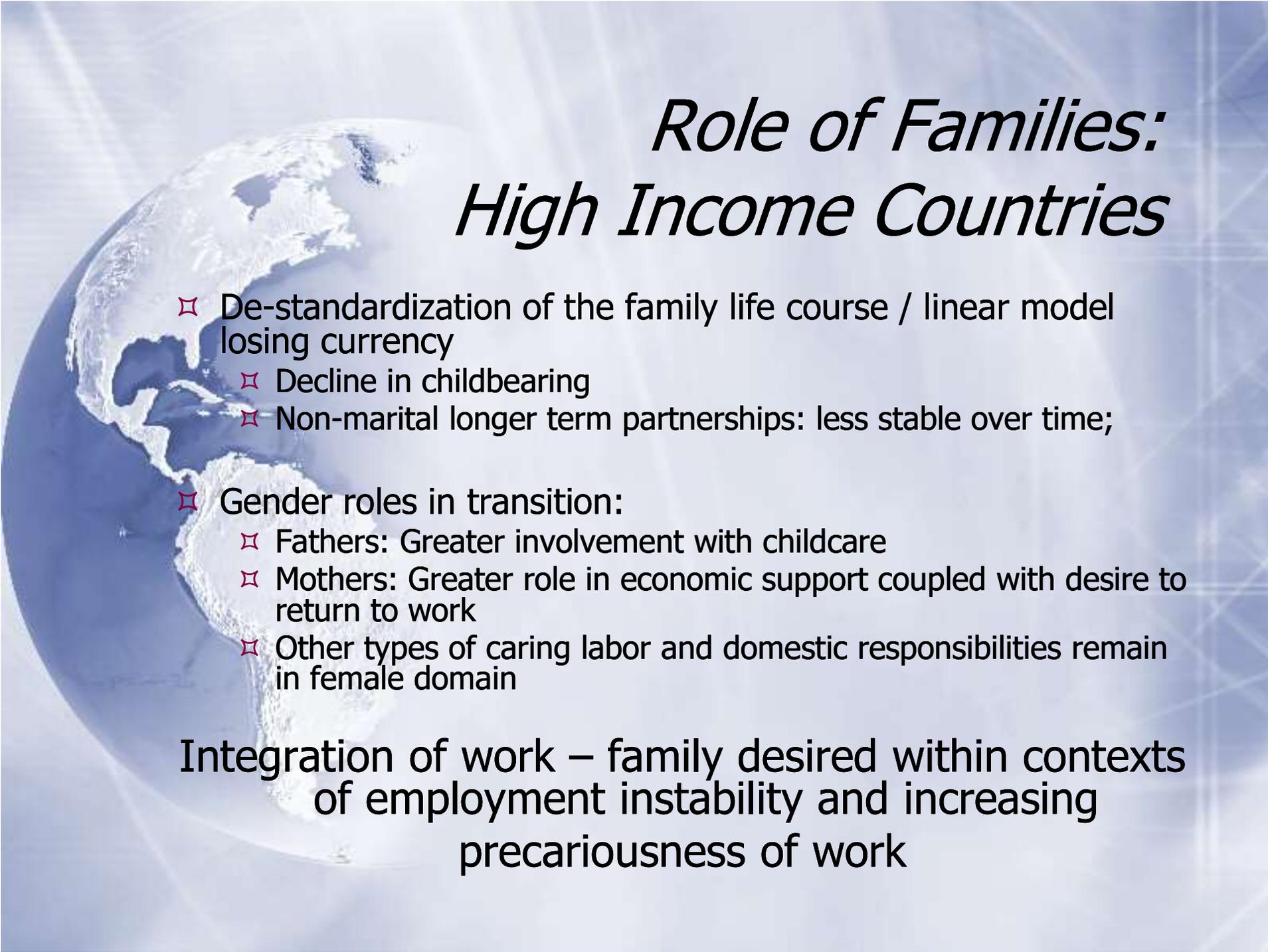
Demographic Shifts

- ✧ Relative to total population, the number of births halved over five decades in the 34 OECD countries
 - ✧ 1961 – 18.5 million babies born
 - ✧ 2011 – 15 million babies born
- ✧ Life expectancy at birth has risen by ten years since the OECD was founded (1961), to 76 years for men and 82 for women
 - ✧ Vertical kinship ties are growing
 - ✧ Horizontal kinship ties are declining
 - ✧ Different for Sub-Saharan Africa



Aging Affects State Budgets

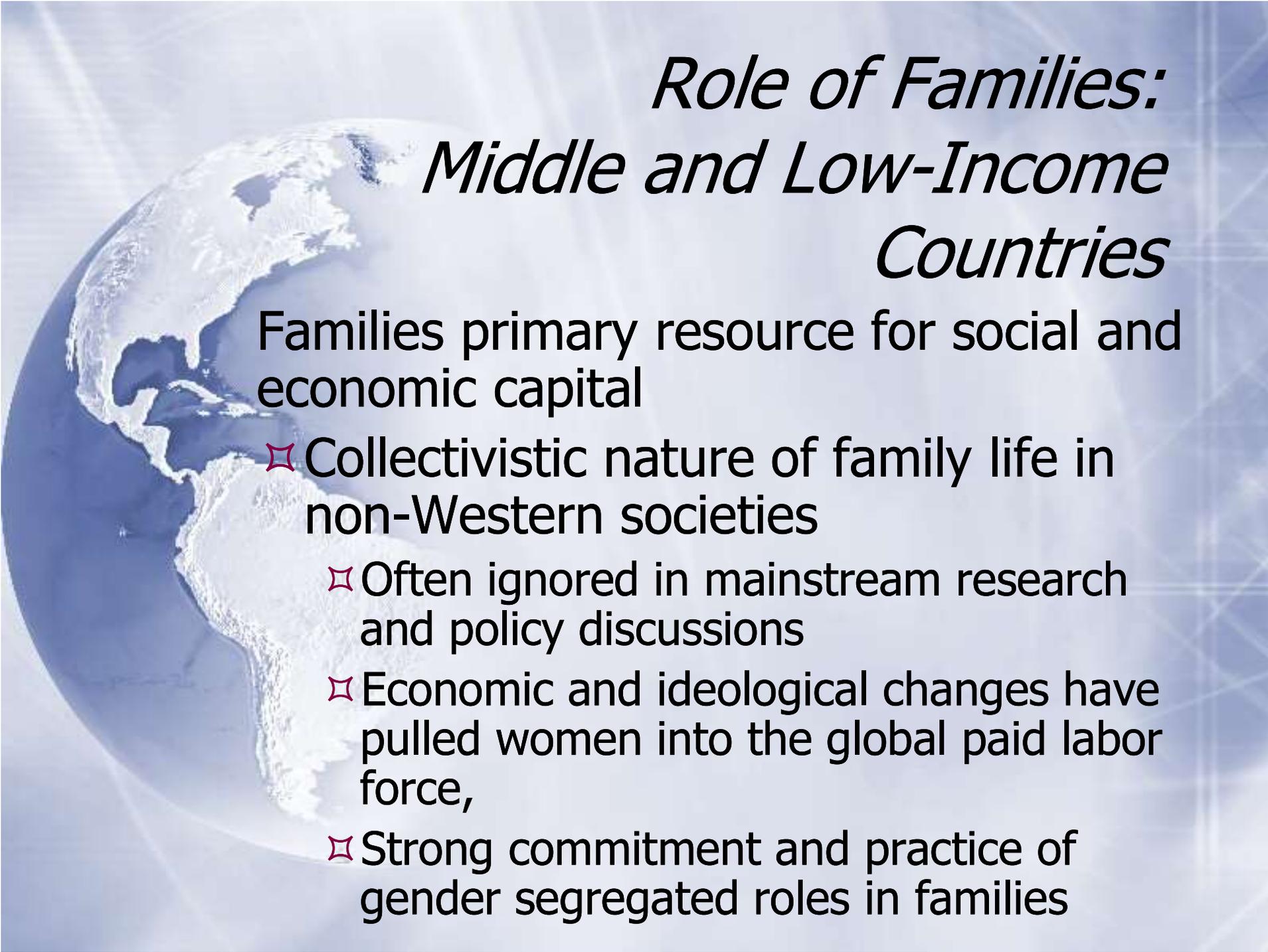
By 2050, public spending on the three areas most affected by population ageing – pensions, health and long-term care is expected to exceed one fifth of national income in the majority of many OECD countries



Role of Families: High Income Countries

- ✧ De-standardization of the family life course / linear model losing currency
 - ✧ Decline in childbearing
 - ✧ Non-marital longer term partnerships: less stable over time;
- ✧ Gender roles in transition:
 - ✧ Fathers: Greater involvement with childcare
 - ✧ Mothers: Greater role in economic support coupled with desire to return to work
 - ✧ Other types of caring labor and domestic responsibilities remain in female domain

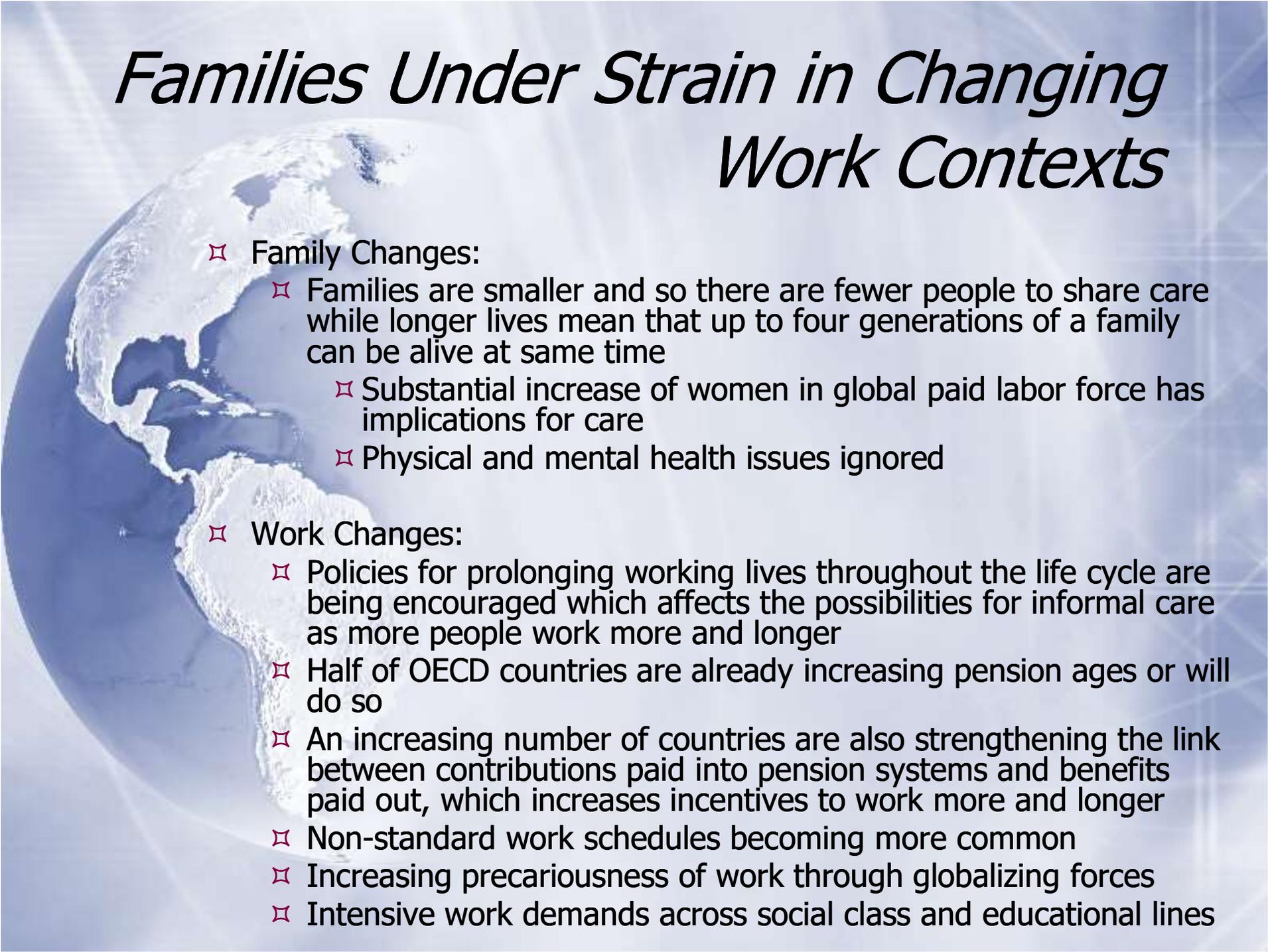
Integration of work – family desired within contexts of employment instability and increasing precariousness of work



Role of Families: Middle and Low-Income Countries

Families primary resource for social and economic capital

- ✧ Collectivistic nature of family life in non-Western societies
 - ✧ Often ignored in mainstream research and policy discussions
 - ✧ Economic and ideological changes have pulled women into the global paid labor force,
 - ✧ Strong commitment and practice of gender segregated roles in families



Families Under Strain in Changing Work Contexts

✧ Family Changes:

- ✧ Families are smaller and so there are fewer people to share care while longer lives mean that up to four generations of a family can be alive at same time
 - ✧ Substantial increase of women in global paid labor force has implications for care
 - ✧ Physical and mental health issues ignored

✧ Work Changes:

- ✧ Policies for prolonging working lives throughout the life cycle are being encouraged which affects the possibilities for informal care as more people work more and longer
- ✧ Half of OECD countries are already increasing pension ages or will do so
- ✧ An increasing number of countries are also strengthening the link between contributions paid into pension systems and benefits paid out, which increases incentives to work more and longer
- ✧ Non-standard work schedules becoming more common
- ✧ Increasing precariousness of work through globalizing forces
- ✧ Intensive work demands across social class and educational lines

Care, Globalization and Gender Roles

- ✧ Care work includes: children AND sick, elderly and disabled
 - ✧ Current policy focus primarily on families with young children
- ✧ Globalization has intensified the market for household and care work to be serviced out
- ✧ Increased migration of women from developing world to industrialized world for care related work
- ✧ Re-definition of manhood and male roles as men lose jobs and/or earn less;
 - ✧ Breadwinner role not universally masculine anymore
 - ✧ Forced to participate in domestic realm
 - ✧ Resistance to this takes many forms

Unpaid Care Work

✧ Survey data indicates that in all countries:

✧ 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, (2010). *The World's Women 2010: Trends and Statistics*)

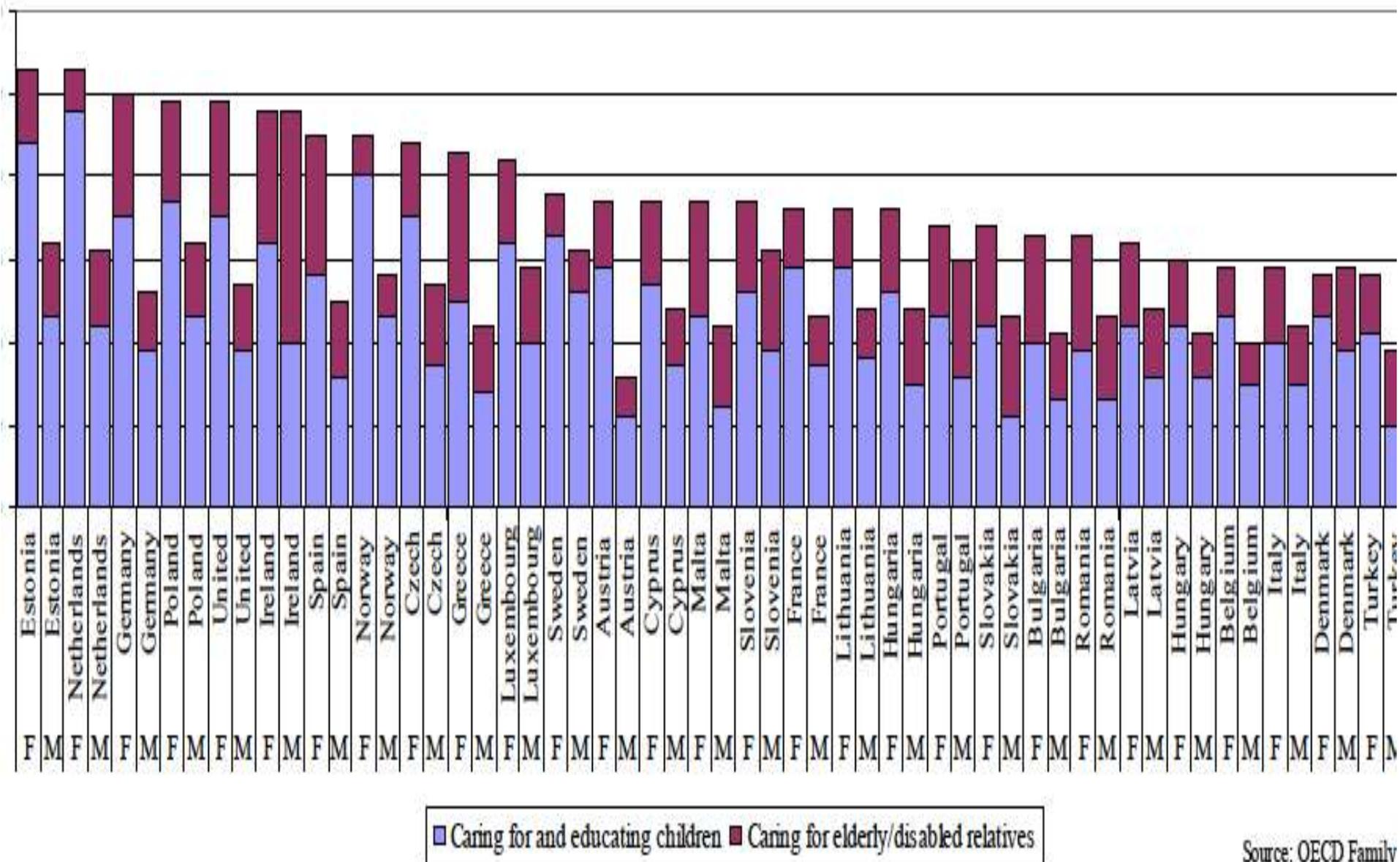
✧ In high income countries men are taking on increased child care and some elder care

✧ Women spend 15 – 40 hour on child care

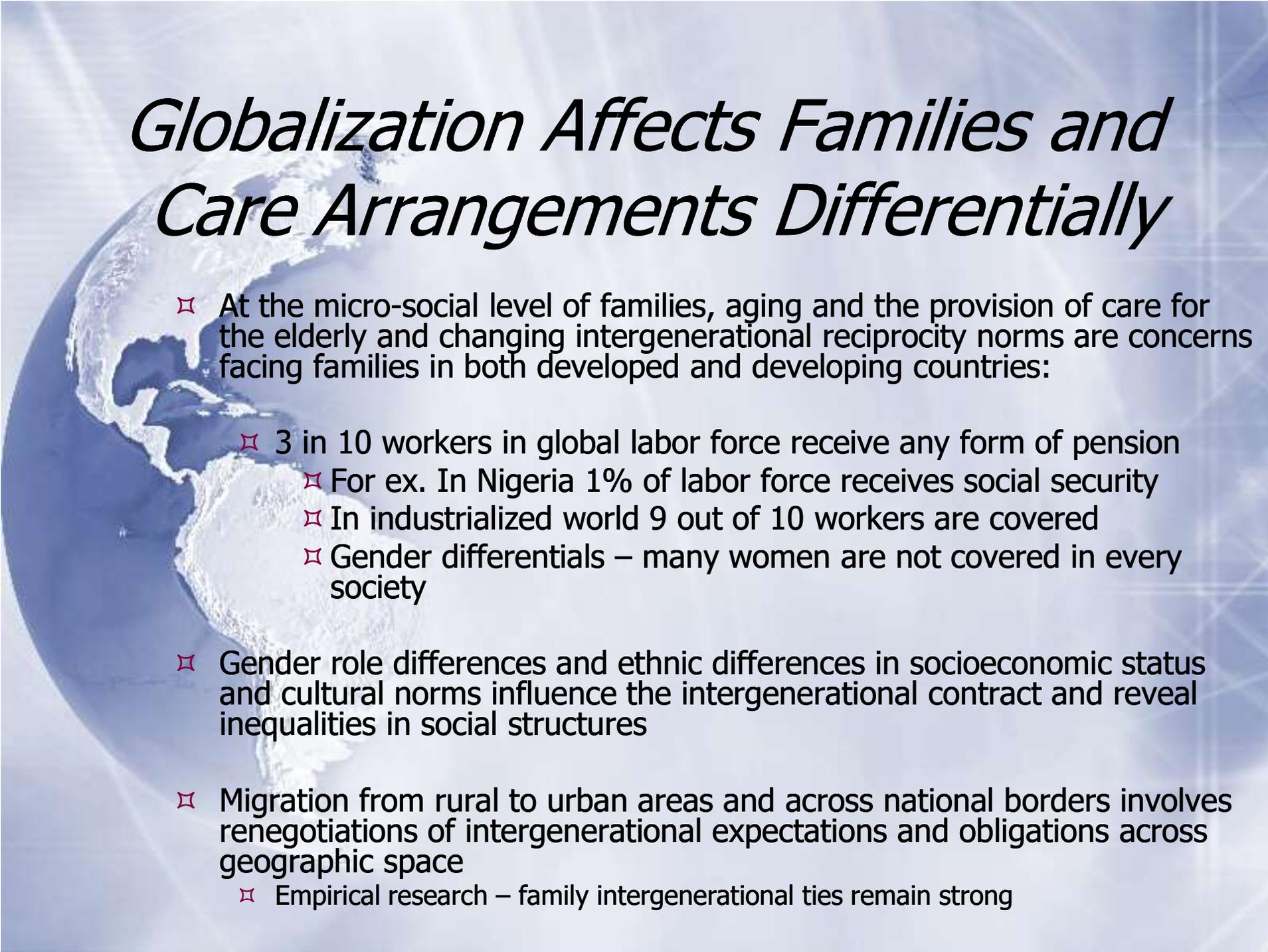
✧ Men spend 10 – 30 hours on child care

✧ Finland, Denmark and Sweden closest to parity

Average weekly hours allocated to care activities (by gender)

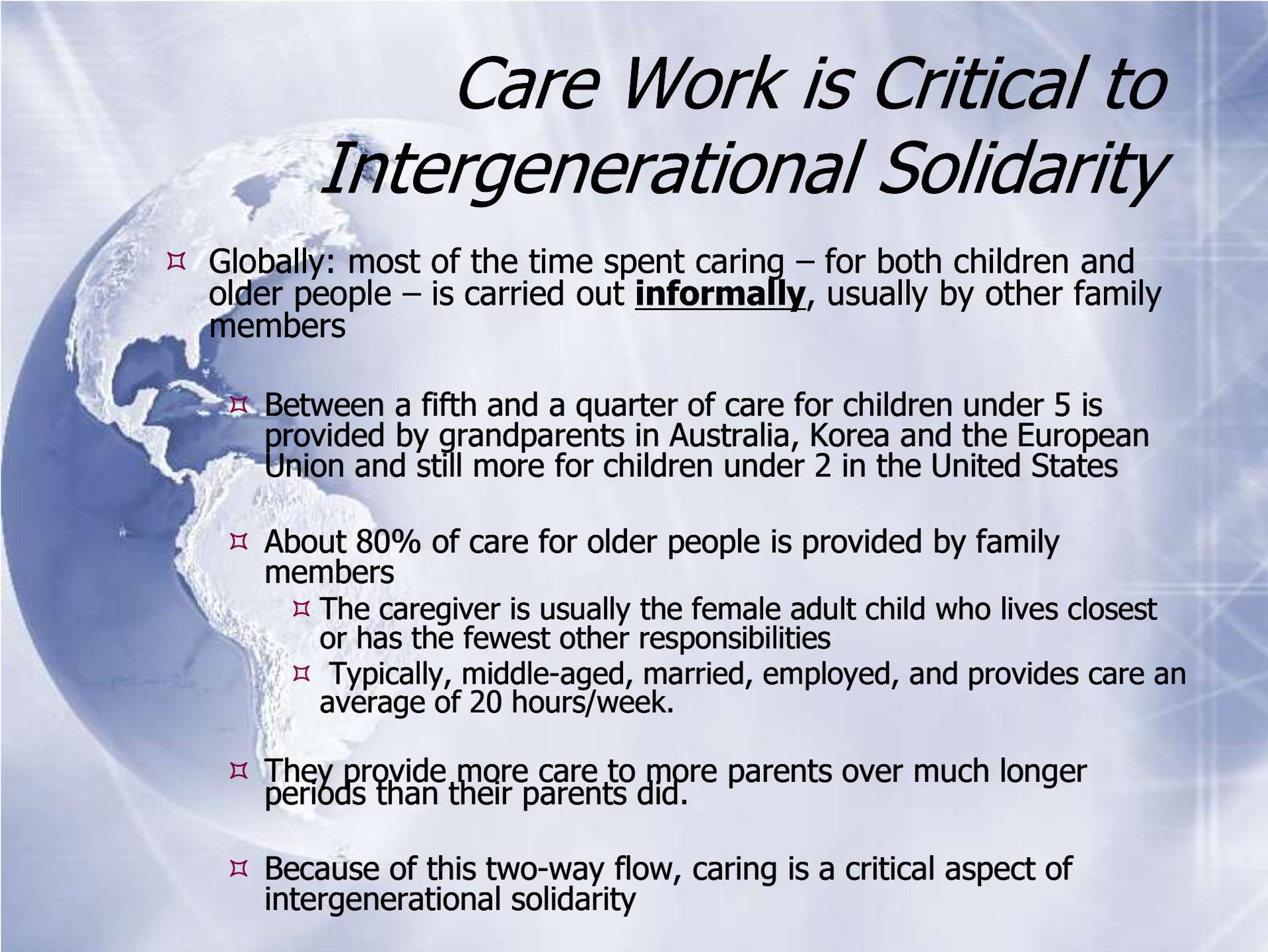


Source: OECD Family



Globalization Affects Families and Care Arrangements Differentially

- ✧ At the micro-social level of families, aging and the provision of care for the elderly and changing intergenerational reciprocity norms are concerns facing families in both developed and developing countries:
 - ✧ 3 in 10 workers in global labor force receive any form of pension
 - ✧ For ex. In Nigeria 1% of labor force receives social security
 - ✧ In industrialized world 9 out of 10 workers are covered
 - ✧ Gender differentials – many women are not covered in every society
- ✧ Gender role differences and ethnic differences in socioeconomic status and cultural norms influence the intergenerational contract and reveal inequalities in social structures
- ✧ Migration from rural to urban areas and across national borders involves renegotiations of intergenerational expectations and obligations across geographic space
 - ✧ Empirical research – family intergenerational ties remain strong



Care Work is Critical to Intergenerational Solidarity

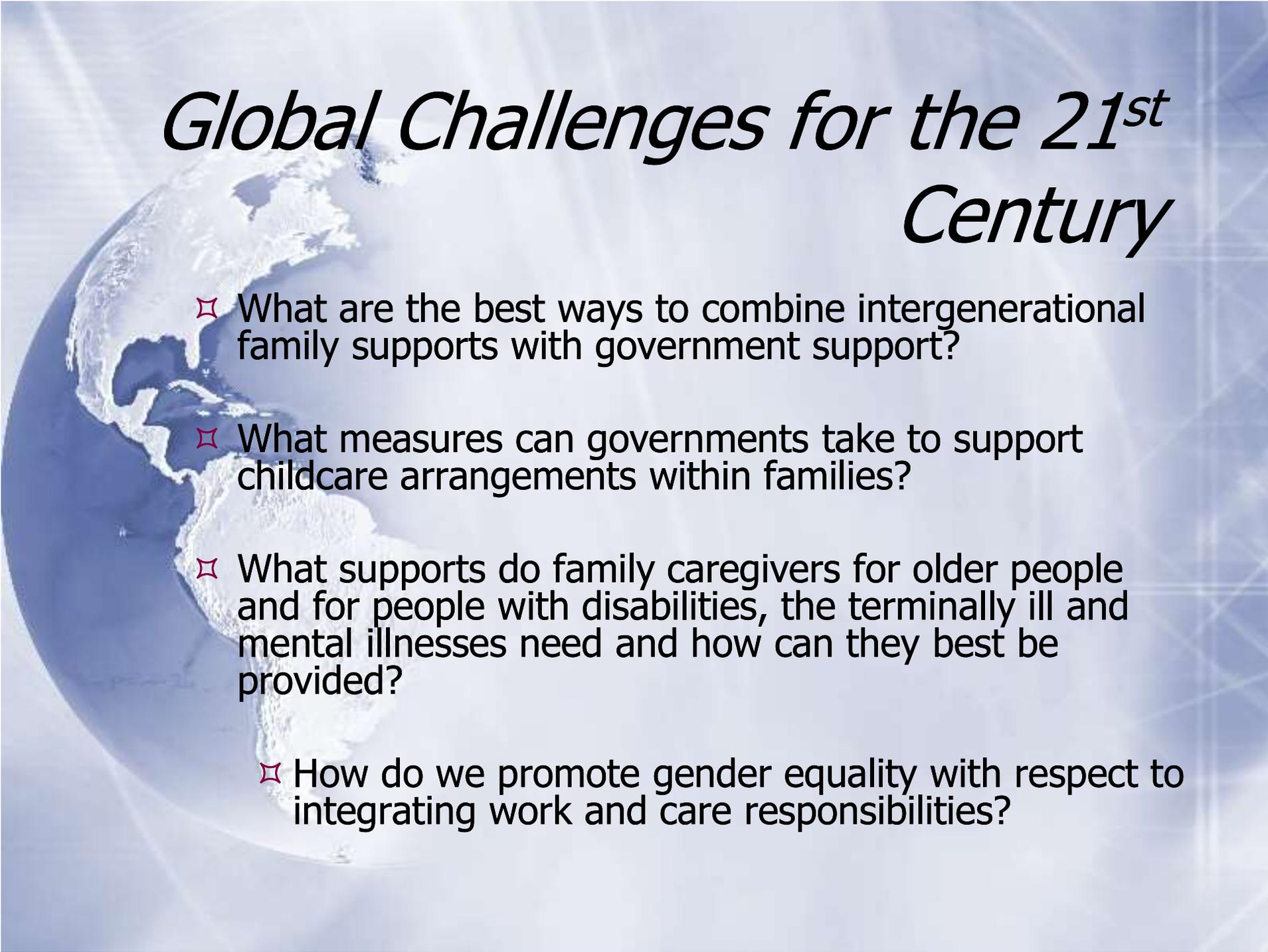
- ✧ Globally: most of the time spent caring – for both children and older people – is carried out **informally**, usually by other family members
- ✧ Between a fifth and a quarter of care for children under 5 is provided by grandparents in Australia, Korea and the European Union and still more for children under 2 in the United States
- ✧ About 80% of care for older people is provided by family members
 - ✧ The caregiver is usually the female adult child who lives closest or has the fewest other responsibilities
 - ✧ Typically, middle-aged, married, employed, and provides care an average of 20 hours/week.
- ✧ They provide more care to more parents over much longer periods than their parents did.
- ✧ Because of this two-way flow, caring is a critical aspect of intergenerational solidarity



Global Challenges for the 21st Century

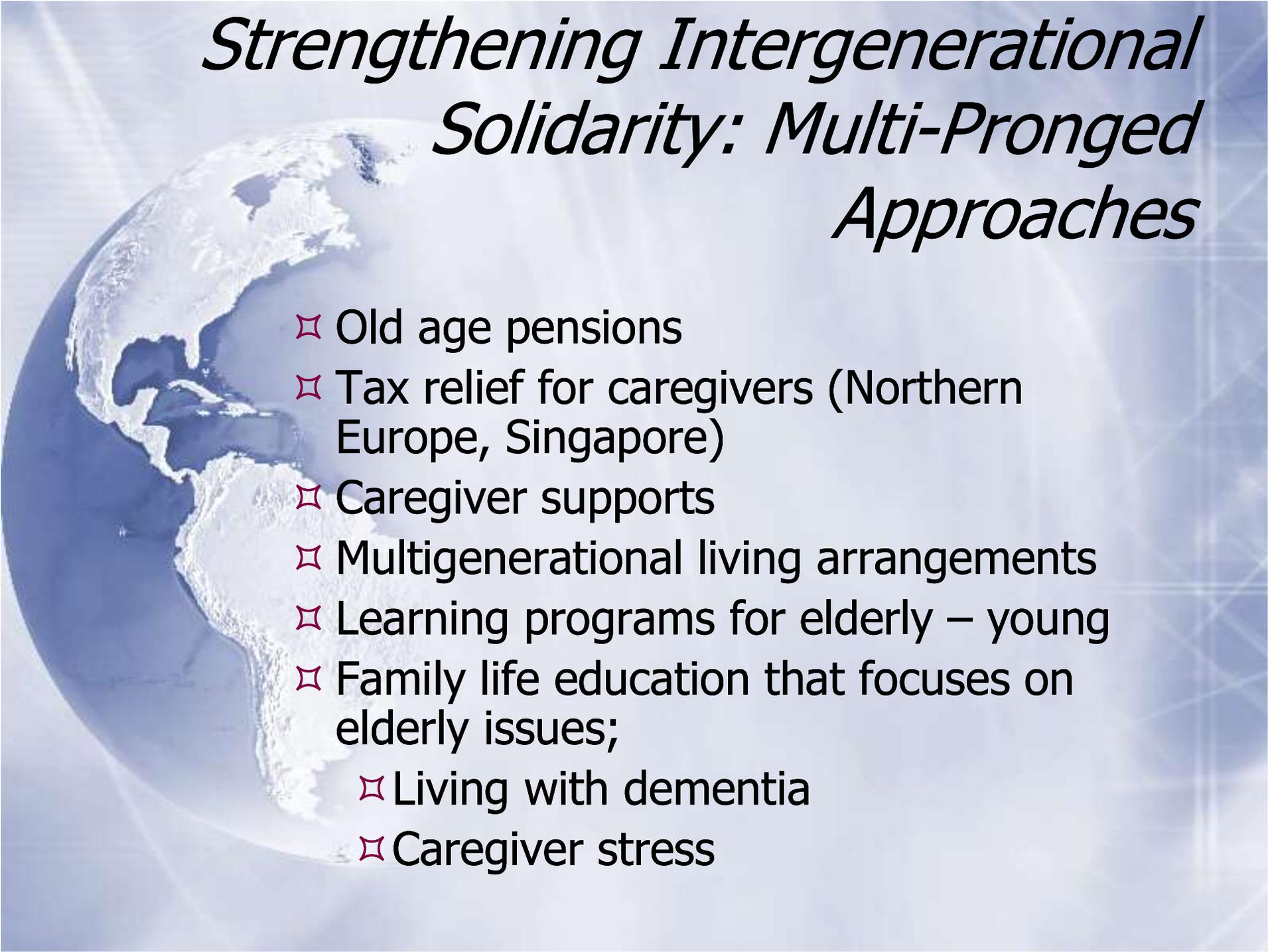
✧ Balance:

- ✧ Providing adequate benefits to all age groups through social protection and care schemes
- ✧ Maintaining expenditures at a manageable level
- ✧ Design reasonable labor market policies that promote longer and healthier working lives for active workers



Global Challenges for the 21st Century

- ✧ What are the best ways to combine intergenerational family supports with government support?
- ✧ What measures can governments take to support childcare 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?



Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity: Multi-Pronged Approaches

- ✧ Old age pensions
- ✧ Tax relief for caregivers (Northern Europe, Singapore)
- ✧ Caregiver supports
- ✧ Multigenerational living arrangements
- ✧ Learning programs for elderly – young
- ✧ Family life education that focuses on elderly issues;
 - ✧ Living with dementia
 - ✧ Caregiver stress



Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity: Multi-Pronged Approaches

- ✧ Social supports for families caring for elderly (eg. Networks)
- ✧ Preventative healthcare
 - ✧ Starting in middle age
- ✧ Age integration presents a useful, and arguably the best, strategy for aiding in the reduction of ageism
 - ✧ Education
 - ✧ Housing
 - ✧ Health and community services



Conclusion

- ✧ Empirical research on intergenerational solidarity indicates:
 - ✧ Each generation has a distinctive role to play – needs to be empowered – in order to create sustainable future for all
 - ✧ Needs supportive social and economic environments: foster exchange and cooperation
 - ✧ Families are one critical sphere for these efforts
 - ✧ 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
 - ✧ It is **CRITICAL** that policies and educational foci be family centered and take gender issues into account



Thank you 😊