

Chapter 2

Universalism—
from principles
to practice

Infographic 2.1 Barriers to universalism



2.

Universalism—from principles to practice



The progress in human development over the past 25 years has been impressive on many fronts. More children are going to school, people are living longer, incomes are higher and people have greater potential to shape their societies and their future under democratic forms of government. But the gains have not been universal, and not all lives have been lifted. This reality was the impetus for the intergovernmental agreement on the 2030 Agenda, which aims to leave no one behind. Millions of people are indeed unable to reach their full potential in life because they suffer deprivations in multiple dimensions of human development—lacking income and secure livelihoods, experiencing hunger and malnutrition, having no or limited access to social services, fearing violence and discrimination and being marginalized from the political processes that shape their lives. There are imbalances across countries; socioeconomic, ethnic and racial groups; urban and rural areas; and women and men. Some groups are more deprived than others, and the most deprived individuals belong to multiple disadvantaged groups—an older, ethnic minority woman in a least developed country, for example.

The absolute deprivations in basic human development remain pronounced and demand urgent attention. But being left behind is a dynamic and relative process, so universalism—human development for everyone—requires a forward-looking approach. As gains are achieved, other deprivations may become more critical, and new groups may bear the burden of being left behind. Many people appear to be doing well according to measures such as minimum schooling and income, but the quality of education and of work conditions are low for many millions of people. Likewise, people are living longer and healthier lives, but many face deficits in political freedom and in opportunities for political participation.

Demographic shifts, transitions from peace to insecurity and other macro threats such as epidemics, financial crises, natural disasters and climate change all generate new forms of advantage and disadvantage. In this digital age a lack of reliable access to information, infrastructure or technology can severely curtail opportunities, even in developed countries, reshaping patterns of deprivation. And even as restrictive social norms—such as restrictions on women working outside the home—lose force in some societies, others—such as discrimination against older people—become more powerful. Who is left behind, how and why are questions with different answers in different places at different times.

Enabling all human beings to realize their full potential demands urgent attention to inequality

and to relative capabilities and opportunities. It is not enough to enable those with the least capabilities to move above minimum thresholds. For instance, even if extreme poverty were to be eradicated globally or universal primary school enrolment attained, the wealthy and highly educated could simultaneously accrue enormous economic resources or achieve higher tertiary enrolment rates, thereby maintaining or even widening gaps in key capabilities. Despite absolute gains for all people, the possibilities for those with the least wealth and education to realize their full potential would continue to lag.

Because the starting points vary widely across individuals, more equitable outcomes may require greater attention and support for the people who are farthest behind. It is particularly important to close the gaps in voice and agency. Institutions and policies may otherwise disproportionately reflect the values and interests of elites, who often have greater voice. There is a risk that gaps could become self-perpetuating and ever more difficult to eradicate. And extreme inequalities in voice and agency can breed economic, social and political instability and conflict.

Human development embodies a commitment to ensure rights, voice, security and freedom—not to most, but to all people in every corner of the world. It also stresses the importance of sustaining capabilities and opportunities throughout an individual's lifecycle and for subsequent generations.

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One of the main challenges of practical universalism—advancing from ideas to actions and institutions—is reaching those who experience the most extreme deprivations and those who are the most socially marginalized and excluded. Technical and financial barriers can be overcome, and there are indeed strong collective efforts in this direction. But deep-seated barriers to universalism, including discriminatory social norms and laws and inequalities in agency and voice, require more attention. There is also a need to appreciate the dynamic nature of deprivations and exclusion—that gains can be reversed by health or financial shocks, that new barriers can emerge if conflict erupts or community security and services deteriorate and that new groups without reliable access to the Internet can be marginalized when that access becomes central to livelihoods.

The goal is not only to reach the most deprived and ensure that no one is left behind today, but also to protect those at risk of being left behind tomorrow. Universalism is a principle of the human development approach, and now is the time to translate it into practice by identifying and breaking down barriers that exclude certain groups, narrowing the wide gaps in life chances among different groups, proposing policy options that fit contexts and levels of development and identifying institutional shortcomings. This is practical universalism.

Momentum towards universalism

Space is opening for the practice of universalism and the extension of human development to everyone. The 2030 Agenda takes a universal approach. Its Sustainable Development Goals embody a shared vision of progress towards a safe, just and sustainable world in which all human beings can thrive. The goals reflect principles of universality that no one and no country should be excluded and that everyone and every country share a common—albeit differentiated—responsibility for the outcomes of all. Global momentum is thus in place to enable policymakers and advocates to move in ways that may have been much more difficult in the past.

Translating principle into policy and institutional practice requires mapping out who the

deprived are, where they live, what the extent of their deprivation is and what the risks of new deprivations are. The *Report on the World Social Situation 2016* noted that universalism is possible only after those who are being left behind have been identified.¹ With this reasoning, this chapter:

- Looks beyond national averages and existing measures.
- Comprehends the development barriers that often block particular groups, such that some groups are disproportionately marginalized and more at risk of emerging threats.
- Contextualizes human development, identifying deprivations and inequalities across the spectrum of countries with different incomes and human development profiles and mapping out how new barriers can emerge, even as some deprivations are overcome.
- Analyses the barriers to practical universalism so that steps can be taken to eliminate them.

Beyond averages—using the family of human development indices

Human development is about improving the life chances of individuals. However, the measures used to monitor progress in human development often cover only countries and not individuals or groups. Disaggregated measures are therefore needed that show who is deprived, where they live and the nature of their deprivations. National, subregional and regional Human Development Reports have identified deprivations by analysing data disaggregated by age, gender, subnational units, ethnicity and other parameters. Disaggregating and analysing the family of human development indices—the Human Development Index (HDI), the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)—are early steps towards quantifying the scale of deprivations globally.

Human Development Index

The HDI is one tool for identifying deprivations in a selection of essential capabilities (a

long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living). Country-level trends on the HDI have been impressive over the past 25 years: Between 1990 and 2015 the number of countries classified as having low human development fell from 62 to 41, and those classified as having very high human development rose from 11 to 51.² These shifts reflect improvements in the life conditions of millions of people. But the trends also reflect average national progress. The unfortunate reality is that millions of people fall on the wrong side of the average and struggle with hunger, poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition, among other deprivations. Making human development work for everyone requires a greater understanding of who these people are and where they live.

Disaggregated HDI values within countries confirm that many people live with unacceptably high deprivation, even though their country appears to have improved in HDI value and rank. Panama is classified as having high human development, but 2 of its 12 provinces are classified as having low human development, while the capital province is classified as having very high human development.³ Ethiopia is classified as having low human development, as are 9 of its 11 regions, but 2 regions are classified as

having medium human development.⁴ In both countries the split is between capital provinces and more rural areas.

Disaggregation at the global level suggests that a third of the world's population lives in low human development (figure 2.1). Many of these people are severely deprived in education, health and income. Medium, high and very high human development countries are home to hundreds of millions of people living in low human development.⁵ Many people are being left behind in countries across the development spectrum.

Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index

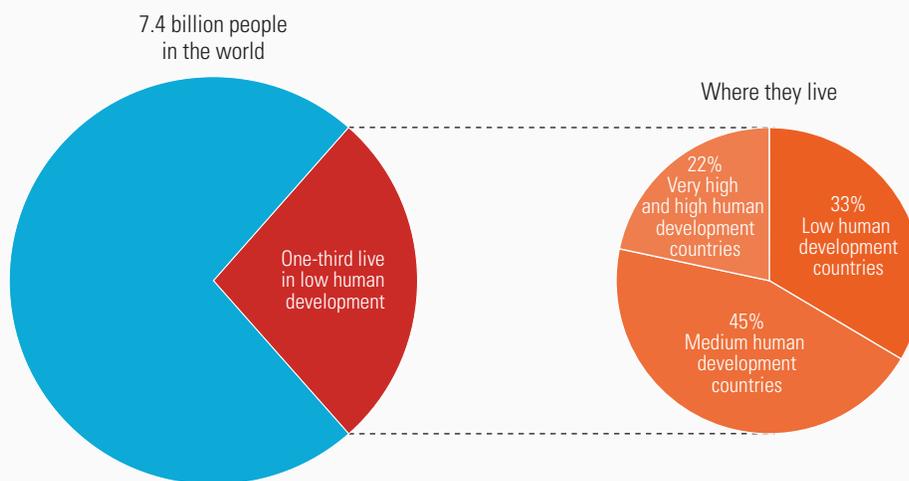
Unequal concentrations of well-being mean that indicators of average human development like the HDI do not reflect the well-being of a vast portion of the population. The IHDI quantifies the effects of inequality on human development, measured in terms of the HDI.

Some 22 percent of the world's human development is lost because of inequality.⁶ Inequality in education contributes the most to overall inequality, followed by inequality in income and inequality in life expectancy. Sub-Saharan

Disaggregated HDI values within countries confirm that many people live with unacceptably high deprivation, even though their country appears to have improved in HDI value and rank

FIGURE 2.1

A third of the world's population lives in low human development



Source: Human Development Report Office.

Africa has the highest loss of human development because of inequality (32 percent).⁷

At the country level unequal distribution of human development occurs both in low human development countries, such as Comoros (where 46 percent of human development is lost because of inequality) and in very high human development countries, such as Chile (where 18 percent of human development is lost because of inequality).⁸ The IHDI indicates that human development for everyone will require considerable interventions to overcome unequal distributions in key capabilities within countries.

Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index

Women are more likely than men to suffer from low human development.⁹ Many groups are disadvantaged, but the systemic deprivations of women relative to men deserve to be highlighted because women constitute half the world's population. The deprivations facing women are the most extreme barrier to global progress in human development.

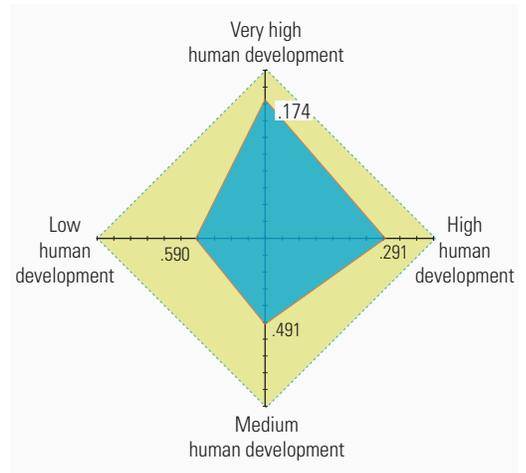
Despite the fact that in all regions women have longer life expectancy than do men and the fact that in most regions the expected number of years of schooling for girls is similar to that for boys, women consistently have a lower HDI value than do men. The largest differences captured by the GDI are in South Asia, where the HDI value for women is 17.8 percent lower than the HDI value for men, followed by the Arab States with a 14.4 percent difference and Sub-Saharan Africa with 12.3 percent.

Much of the variation in HDI between women and men is due to lower income among women relative to men and to lower educational attainment among women relative to men. Part of the variation in the HDI between men and women is generated by barriers to women working outside the home, to accessing education, to voicing their concerns in political arenas, to shaping policies and to receiving the benefits of high-quality and accessible health care.

The GII is a composite index that captures the inequality that many women face in reproductive health, secondary education, political representation and the labour market (figure 2.2). Women are the most disadvantaged in low human development countries.¹⁰

FIGURE 2.2

Women are the most disadvantaged in low human development countries



Note: 1 indicates absolute inequality, as measured by the Gender Inequality Index, and 0 indicates perfect equality.
Source: Human Development Report Office.

A challenge to global progress in human development across all regions and groups, gender inequality is most severe in low and medium human development countries and in the Arab States, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹ As countries' human development improves, women's choices and opportunities must be equal to those of men so that everyone benefits from advances in human development.

Multidimensional Poverty Index

Deprived people often lack capabilities and opportunities across multiple dimensions. The MPI, which is calculated for 102 developing countries, reveals more about the depth and overlapping nature of people's nonincome deprivations than do one-dimensional measures of poverty. Based on 10 indicators, the MPI identifies households that are acutely deprived by their health, education and standard of living. Almost 1.5 billion people in the developing countries for which the MPI is calculated live in multidimensional poverty, 53.9 percent of them in South Asia and 33.5 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹² People are also deprived in developed countries (box 2.1).

Some systematic patterns of deprivation can be inferred from poverty measures. People in rural areas are far more likely than people in urban areas to be multidimensionally poor (29

The deprivations facing women are the most extreme barrier to global progress in human development

BOX 2.1

Poverty is also a developed country problem

Deprivations are a universal problem afflicting people in developed and developing countries alike. An average of 11 percent of the population in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries were below the income poverty line in 2014.¹ As of 2012 there were 633,000 homeless people in the United States and 284,000 in Germany.² OECD countries have the highest incarceration rates of any group of countries: an average of 274 people per 100,000, isolated from society in prison.³ An average of 15 percent of young people ages 15–29 are neither employed nor in education or training and are struggling to find their place in society.⁴ Health

deprivations caused by obesity are also high. The most recent survey data indicate that an average of 53.8 percent of the adult population in OECD countries is overweight or obese and faces high risks of cardiovascular disease, respiratory illnesses, diabetes and other diseases.⁵

The data make clear that not all people in countries classified as having very high human development are able to achieve their full life potential. Poverty can take different forms in developed countries and in developing countries, but it is no less debilitating to the choices and the future of individuals and households experiencing the deprivations.

Notes

1. OECD 2016a. 2. OECD 2015a. 3. Based on UNODC (2016). 4. OECD 2016e. 5. OECD 2015b. Source: Human Development Report Office.

percent versus 11 percent), though there is variation across regions (figure 2.3).

Nearly half of people in rural areas worldwide lack access to improved sanitation facilities, compared with a sixth of people in urban areas.¹³ And twice as many rural children as urban children are out of school.¹⁴ At the same time, slumdweller account for 48 percent of the

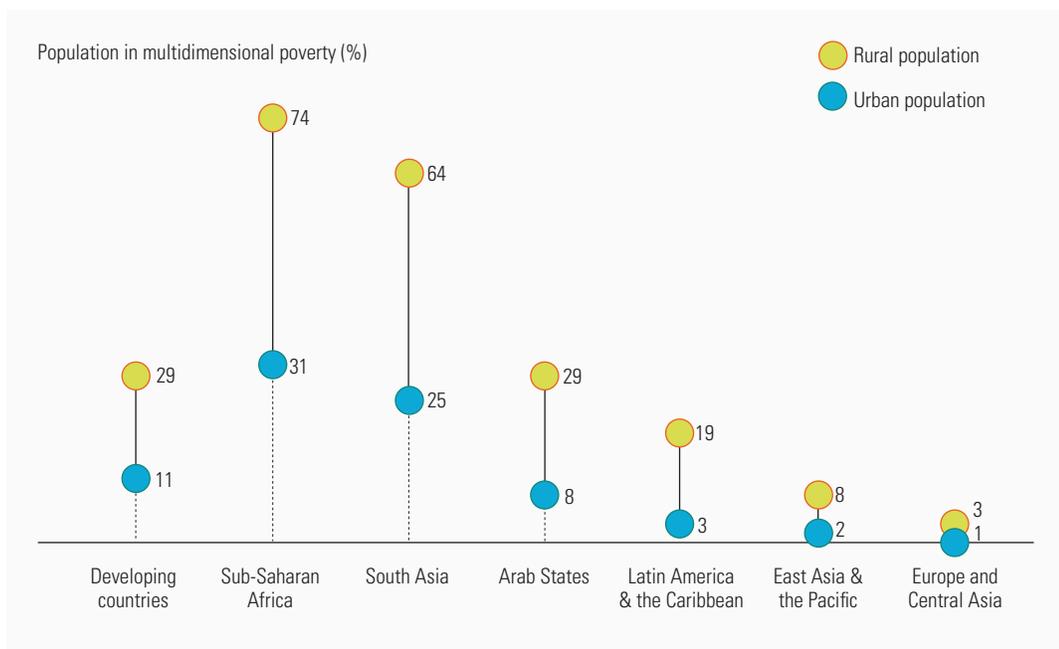
urban population in developing countries and are deprived of many services and opportunities—the very benefits that many deprived people migrated from rural areas to obtain.¹⁵

There is a high likelihood that if a household is deprived in one of the 10 indicators used to calculate the MPI, it will also be deprived in others. To improve the conditions of the most

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FIGURE 2.3

People in rural areas are far more likely than people in urban areas to be multidimensionally poor



Source: Human Development Report Office.

Viewing the nation as the primary unit of analysis for policymaking and measurement has value, but looking directly at the conditions of individuals is essential for identifying who is being left behind

deprived, a more comprehensive cross-sectoral approach to policy may thus be more effective than interventions that separately target particular elements of poverty.

Poverty rates differ between men and women. Although at the global level households headed by men and those headed women are almost equally likely to be multidimensionally poor—29 percent of man-headed households and 28 percent of woman-headed households are multidimensionally poor—there is considerable variation across countries and regions.¹⁶ Because the MPI is calculated at the household level rather than at the individual level, complementary research may be needed to clarify the relationship between gender and poverty.

People are more likely to fall into multidimensional poverty during conflict, and people in conflict areas face particular barriers to moving out of multidimensional poverty. An average of 49 percent of the population in 24 countries in conflict for which the MPI is calculated lives in multidimensional poverty, and another 16 percent live in near-poverty. An average of 27 percent of people in these countries live in severe multidimensional poverty.

Deprivations also vary across socioeconomic groups. In Sub-Saharan Africa poor people, especially women attending school in rural communities, are far less likely than nonpoor people to be learning critical skills such as reading, writing and mathematics.¹⁷ In Chad the richest quintile of the population averages 6.7 years of schooling, compared with 1.0 for the poorest quintile. The story is similar in Ethiopia—7.5 years for the richest quintile and 1.6 years for the poorest quintile—and in Madagascar—9.8 years and 1.7 years.¹⁸ In South Africa HIV prevalence is higher among the poorest socioeconomic groups. Access to basic social services of acceptable quality is often limited among people living in poverty, intensifying the disparities in well-being. In Zambia poor people are less likely to use public hospitals because of financial and physical barriers, despite having greater need than other income groups.¹⁹

Too many people are still missing out

The HDI, GII, GDI and MPI indicate that not everyone is lifted as countries progress on these

average measures. Despite the overall progress, about one-third of people in the world live in unacceptably low human development. Many of them—especially women and girls, people in rural areas and people in countries in conflict—suffer multiple and overlapping deprivations.

Viewing the nation as the primary unit of analysis for policymaking and measurement has value, but looking directly at the conditions of individuals is essential for identifying who is being left behind. Countries' human development may improve, but this does not mean that entire populations are better off or benefit equally. Supplementing national measures with subnational measures is important for policymaking. Data disaggregation is critical for identifying the integrated actions needed to support universalism and the full realization of life potential among all people (see chapter 3). Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, argues that getting a clearer picture of poverty and deprivation is a fundamental first step towards designing and implementing more effective policies and interventions (see special contribution).

A look at disadvantaged groups

All people in all circumstances are not equally disadvantaged. People with certain characteristics, in certain locations or at particularly vulnerable stages of the lifecycle are more likely than other people to lack access to capability-enhancing resources and opportunities to suffer deprivations. These groups are also disproportionately exposed and vulnerable to emerging threats such as epidemics, climate change and natural disasters, so progress may be less sustainable among these groups even when gains in human development are achieved. Group distinctions such as ethnicity or religion can serve as dividing lines to support discrimination and restrict access to resources and opportunities. The result can be differences in the human development outcomes of particular groups. The following subsections identify some of the groups that are missing out on progress in human development and show how deprivations may take shape in particular contexts and conditions.



Getting a clearer picture of poverty

I was asked last year to select one photograph that has profoundly influenced my life. I chose an image known as Migrant Mother—a haunting picture of a woman named Florence Owens Thompson sitting with three of her children in their makeshift home, a rudimentary tent. The photograph was taken in California in 1936 as millions of American families struggled through the Great Depression. Florence and her family are destitute and desperate.

That iconic photograph, which I first came across in high school, still comes to mind whenever poverty is the topic of conversation. Poverty as a category of analysis is an abstraction. Migrant Mother captures its harsh, biting reality better than any other image—and any dictionary definition or economic indicator—that I have ever seen. And what motivates me is that, 70 years on, this struggle is still daily life for more than a billion people around the world.

In my work I have seen that struggle firsthand. I have seen how lack of family planning advice and contraceptives leaves parents with more mouths to feed than they can afford; how not getting the right food and nutrients leaves people unable to fulfil their potential; and how disease leaves adults too weak to work, and children too sick for school.

So while there are robust and legitimate debates going on about the methodology and measurements we use to classify poverty, first and foremost we must remember what it actually means to be poor. Essentially, being poor is about deprivation. Poverty not only deprives people of food, shelter, sanitation, health, income, assets and education, it also deprives them of their fundamental rights, social protections and basic dignity. Poverty also looks different in different places. While in East Africa it is related mostly to living standards, in West Africa child mortality and lack of education are the biggest contributors.

All this complexity and variation is impossible to capture in a definition of poverty as simplistic as living on less than \$1.90 a day. If we really mean to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere,” as laid out in the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), then it fits that we have to know what all those forms are. We need to have a far clearer picture of the most marginalized and most vulnerable. Not just those who are financially poor, but those facing a number of distinct disadvantages, such as gender, race and ethnicity, that taken together deprive them of the chance to lead healthy, productive lives.

One of the reasons I find Migrant Mother so powerful is that it focuses on the plight of a woman and how she is scarred by deprivation, at a time when their hardship and suffering was sometimes overlooked by politicians and policymakers. It is critical to know more about the lives of today’s Florence Owens Thompsons since women and girls are widely recognized as one of the most disregarded and disenfranchised groups in many developing countries. Indeed, the World Bank argues that a “complete demographic

poverty profile should also include a gender dimension,” given that most average income measurements miss the contribution and consumption of women and girls within households entirely.

For a long time, for example, when data collectors in Uganda conducted labour force surveys, they only asked about a household’s primary earner. In most cases, the main breadwinner in Ugandan households was the man, so the data made it look like barely any women were participating in the workforce. When the data collectors started asking a second question—who else in the household works?—Uganda’s workforce immediately increased by 700,000 people, most of them women. Obviously, these women had existed all along. But until their presence was counted and included in official reports, these women and the daily challenges they faced were ignored by policymakers. Similarly, because many surveys tend to focus solely on the head of household—and assume that to be the man—we have less idea of the numbers of women and children living in poverty and the proportion of woman-headed households in poverty.

Getting a clearer picture of poverty and deprivation is a fundamental first step towards designing and implementing more effective policies and interventions, as well as better targeting scarce resources where they will have the greatest impact. That’s why our foundation is supporting partners to better identify who and where the poorest and most vulnerable are, collect better information on what they want and need to improve their lives and develop a better understanding of the structural barriers they face. The findings will then be used to develop strategies that specifically target those identified within the first 1,000 days of SDG implementation.

This report is a welcome contribution to these efforts, along with the United Nations Development Programme’s ongoing work to revamp the Human Development Index (HDI), including an explicit focus on women and girls. Since its creation in 1990 the HDI has been a central pillar of multidimensional poverty and a key instrument to measure both how much we have achieved and the challenges ahead. The report is also a timely addition to the calls made by the Commission on Global Poverty, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development and others for incorporating quality of life dimensions into the way we understand and determine human deprivation.

I am excited by the prospect of a broader, more sophisticated approach to determining poverty. But all the best data in the world won’t do us much good if they sit on a shelf collecting dust. They must be used to influence decisionmaking and accountability, and ultimately to transform the lives of the world’s most vulnerable people. The last 15 years have shown us that progress on poverty is possible. But we also know that it is not inevitable—nor has it been universal. My hope is that this report will catalyse the global community to ensure that, this time, no one is left behind. Let’s not squander this momentum.

Melinda Gates

Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Gender disparities in human development, while narrowing slowly, are embedded in social norms and long-standing patterns of exclusion from household and community decisionmaking that limit women's opportunities and choices

Women and girls

Women and girls are not able to live their lives to their full potential in many countries. Gender disparities in human development, while narrowing slowly, are embedded in social norms and long-standing patterns of exclusion from household and community decision-making that limit women's opportunities and choices (box 2.2).

Gender-based discrimination starts before school, even before birth. The preference for a son can lead to sex-selective abortions and missing women, particularly in some South Asian countries. Discrimination continues in families through intrahousehold resource allocation. The gender politics of food—nurtured by the assumptions, norms and values about women needing fewer calories—can push women into a perpetual state of malnutrition and protein deficiency. Women and girls sometimes eat last and least within the household. Early marriage among girls limits their long-term capabilities

and potential. Each year, 15 million girls in developing countries marry before age 18, and if there is no reduction in the incidence of early marriage among girls, by 2050, 18 million girls will be married before age 18.²⁰ Worldwide, one out of eight age-eligible girls does not attend primary or secondary school.²¹ Only 62 of 145 countries have achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education.²²

As highlighted in the 2015 Human Development Report, women face numerous disadvantages in paid and unpaid work. The global labour force participation rate is 49.6 percent among women and 76.2 percent among men.²³ Women employed in vulnerable work or the informal economy may lack decent work conditions, social security and voice and have lower earnings than do other workers. Women also suffer discrimination in relation to productive assets, such as the right to land and property. Women are barred from owning land because of customary laws and social norms and practices. Only 10–20 percent of landholders

BOX 2.2

Gender-based inequalities in South Asian households

Women in South Asia are often excluded from decision-making, have limited access to and control over resources, are restricted in their mobility and are often under threat of violence from male relatives. These deprivations are linked strongly to patriarchal social norms and attitudes that impede equitable gender relationships within households. They have consequences for health, education and community participation.

Discrimination at each stage of the female life-cycle contributes to health disparities—from sex-selective abortions (particularly common in India and Pakistan) to lower nutrition intake and the neglect of health care among girls and women. A girl between her first and fifth birthdays in India or Pakistan has a 30–50 percent greater chance of dying than a boy. The maternal mortality ratio in South Asia is also stubbornly high, second only to that in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is partly because many births are not attended by skilled health personnel (44 percent in Bangladesh). Decisions about seeking care are made largely by husbands or older male and female household members, and mistrust or misinformation about modern health facilities for child delivery restricts access by women.

Inequality in work and education begins in childhood. Girls in South Asia learn domestic skills in the household and begin to take on domestic duties and child care. There are strong beliefs in rural areas that sons should be educated because they will remain in the family and support ageing parents, while daughters are likely to serve other families after marriage. Cultural beliefs that the role of a woman is to be a wife and mother have direct consequences on parents' incentives to invest in expanding their daughters' capabilities through education and preparation for paid work. Another common perception is that education for girls beyond primary school will make it harder for a woman to find a husband.

Legislation promoting gender equality is vital for women in South Asia. But households are where most decisionmaking takes place, and norms and values continue to perpetuate inequalities between men and women across generations, even when such laws are in place. If women are not encouraged to work outside the home, labour laws will not reach them. If families do not allow girls to attend school, scholarships and school gender quotas will not support them. And if violence against women is overlooked in the home, women will not feel empowered to voice their concerns.

Source: Banu 2016.

in developing countries are women.²⁴ Women take on a disproportionate amount of unpaid work in the home, forgoing opportunities for other activities, including education, visits to health centres and work outside the home. There are more women than men living in poverty. In 2012 in Latin America and the Caribbean there were 117 women in poor households for every 100 men, an 8 percent increase since 1997.²⁵

In many countries outcomes in educational attainment and health are worse for girls than for boys. Globally, 60.3 percent of adult women have at least some secondary education, compared with 69.2 percent of adult men.²⁶ Maternal mortality ratios and adolescent birth rates are declining but remain high in Sub-Saharan Africa, at 551 deaths per 100,000 live births and 103 births per 1,000 women ages 15–19.²⁷

One of the most brutal forms of women's disempowerment is violence against women, including in the home, in all societies, among all socioeconomic groups and at all levels of education. According to a 2013 global review, one-third of women—and more than two-thirds in some countries—have experienced physical or sexual violence inflicted by an intimate partner or sexual violence inflicted by a nonpartner. Some 20 percent of women experienced sexual violence as children.²⁸ Nearly a quarter of girls ages 15–19 worldwide reported having been victims of violence after turning 15.²⁹

Violence against women can be perpetuated through social norms. For example, female genital mutilation and cutting remain widespread. New estimates indicate that 200 million women and girls living today have undergone female genital mutilation, even though the majority of men and women oppose the practice in many countries where it is performed.³⁰ Acid attacks against women are a heinous form of violence common in communities where patriarchal gender orders are used to justify violence against women. In the last 15 years more than 3,300 acid-throwing attacks have been recorded in Bangladesh, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda and the United Kingdom.³¹ The true number is likely much higher because many cases go unrecorded. In some societies women are also targets of honour-based violence, where the concept of honour and shame is fundamentally bound

up with the expected behaviours of women, as dictated by their families or societies. Worldwide, 5,000 women a year are murdered in such honour killings.³²

When women are discriminated against, society suffers. Even in a narrow economic sense, gender gaps in women's entrepreneurship and labour force participation account for estimated economywide income losses of 27 percent in the Middle East and North Africa, 19 percent in South Asia, 14 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean and 10 percent in Europe.³³ In Sub-Saharan Africa annual economic losses because of gender gaps in effective labour (the labour force participation rate and years of schooling) are estimated at \$95 billion.³⁴

Ethnic minorities

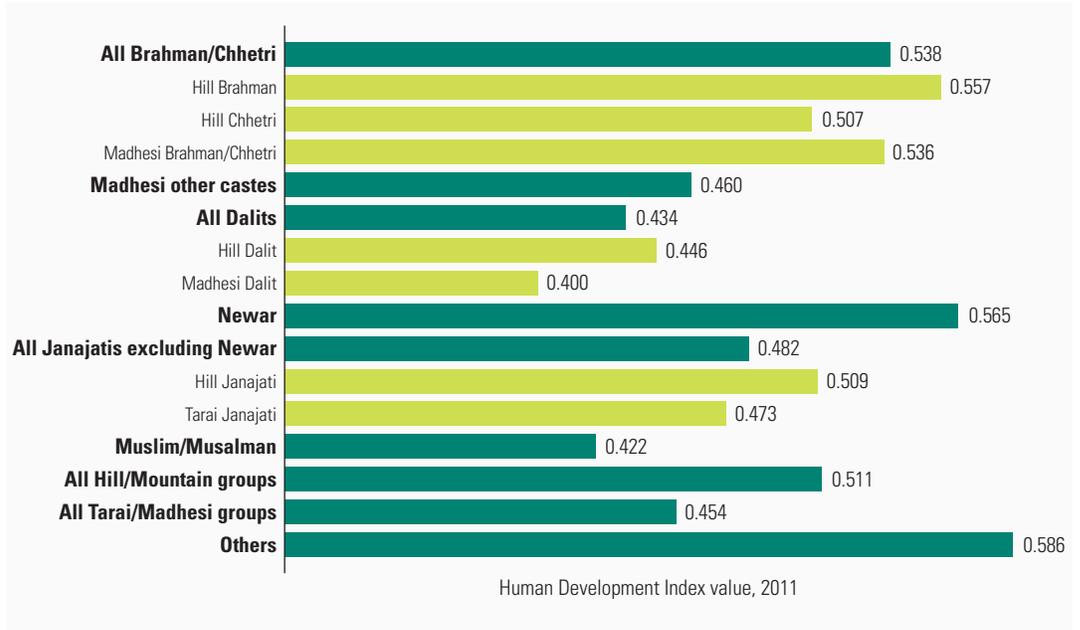
In many developing and developed countries ethnic minority status is associated with lower capabilities and opportunities. More than 250 million people worldwide face discrimination solely on the basis of caste or inherited status.³⁵ In Viet Nam there are gaps between the capabilities of ethnic or linguistic minorities and the Kinh-Hoa majority. In 2012, 50.9 percent of the ethnic minority population was living in multidimensional poverty, compared with only 16.5 percent of the Kinh-Hoa population. In 2008 the poverty rate was 51 percent among ethnic minorities and 54 percent among non-Vietnamese speakers, compared with only 26 percent among the Kinh-Hoa population. Some 84.6 percent of Kinh-Hoa children ages 12–23 months were fully immunized in 2014, compared with 69.4 percent of ethnic minority children.³⁶

Evidence from Nepal shows similar patterns of disadvantages among ethnic minority groups. The 2014 Nepal National Human Development Report found wide variations in HDI values across population groups, although the trends are towards less inequality. The Newar people have the highest HDI value, 0.565, followed by the Brahman-Chhetris (0.538), followed by Janajatis (0.482), Dalits (0.434) and Muslims (0.422; figure 2.4). The variations in HDI values are significant within these groups, depending on location. The highest inequalities are in education, and this may have pronounced long-term effects on capabilities later in life.

In many developing and developed countries ethnic minority status is associated with lower capabilities and opportunities

FIGURE 2.4

Variations in Human Development Index values are wide across population groups in Nepal



Source: UNDP 2014e.

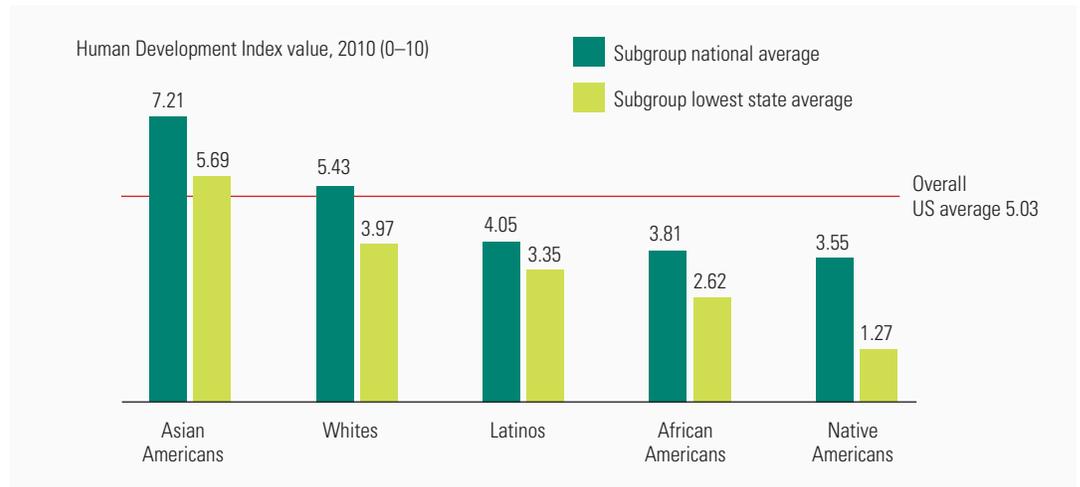
Deprivations among ethnic minorities are also apparent in very high human development countries

Deprivations among ethnic minorities are also apparent in countries classified as having very high human development. Measure of America produces an HDI value that is disaggregated by ethnic group for each state in the United States. The country's average HDI value

(scaled from 0 to 10) is 5.03; the HDI value for Latinos (4.05), African Americans (3.81) and Native Americans (3.55) are below this average, while the HDI values for Whites (5.43) and Asian Americans (7.21) are above it (figure 2.5). Box 2.3 focuses on the issue of human

FIGURE 2.5

In the United States the Human Development Index value is below the country average for some ethnic groups but above it for others



Note: Data refer to the Human Development Index produced by Measure of America, which differs from the Human Development Index produced by the Human Development Report Office.

Source: Human Development Report Office estimates based on Lewis and Burd-Sharps (2013).

BOX 2.3

Human development among African Americans in the United States

African Americans' life expectancy is shorter than that of other ethnic and racial groups in the United States. African Americans also trail Whites and Asian Americans in education and wages: Whites earn 27 percent more on average. In some metropolitan areas the disparity is particularly striking. The life expectancy of African Americans in Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, St. Petersburg and Tampa is now close to the national average in the late 1970s.¹ The reasons are complex but linked to a long history of legal and social discrimination.

Policies that improve educational achievement can expand opportunities for African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities in work and other areas. Equalizing educational achievement could reduce disparities in employment between African Americans and Whites by 53 percent, incarceration by 79 percent and health outcomes by 88 percent.²

Differences in wages between African Americans and Whites are also related to discrimination in the job market. Discrimination accounts for an estimated one-third of wage disparities, all else (including education) being equal.³ This indicates that policies are needed to ensure that skills and education are rewarded equally. Social pressures within the African American community can limit choices and later life chances among adolescents. Being labelled as "acting White"—whereby high-achieving African American students are shunned in some contexts by their peers for doing well academically—can discourage good performance in school.⁴ Reducing the stigmatization of academic achievement among African American youth could be a step towards reducing inequalities in human development outcomes.

Notes

1. Lewis and Burd-Sharps 2013. 2. Curto, Fryer and Howard 2011. 3. Fryer, Pager and Spenkuch 2013. 4. Fryer 2006.

Source: Human Development Report Office.

development among African Americans in the United States.

Deprivations in capabilities linked to ethnicity can be exacerbated by greater exposure to external pressures such as climate change. In Cambodia indigenous peoples are disadvantaged by higher poverty rates, limited access to education and health, and fewer representatives in national and subnational decisionmaking institutions. The same groups are doubly deprived because their livelihoods rely more heavily on natural resources and agriculture than those of other population groups, and the impact of climate change on their livelihoods has been high.

People in vulnerable locations

Where individuals are born has an immense effect on their potential capabilities and opportunities. People born in the least developed countries, fragile states and countries in conflict suffer huge disadvantages relative to people born in stable, highly developed countries. Citizenship, an ascribed group characteristic, can tie individuals to place-based conditions of violence and insecurity, under-resourced public programmes or vulnerability to environmental

change and economic shocks, with devastating effects on life chances (box 2.4).

The resources available to individuals to enhance their capabilities vary by country. For example, public spending on health care programmes and insurance in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries averages 7.7 percent of GDP, while public health expenditures in the least developed countries average only 1.8 percent of GDP.³⁷ Public expenditure on education is 5.1 percent of GDP in OECD countries but 3.3 percent in the least developed countries.³⁸ In 2010 the share of the population living on degraded land (land with limited productive capacity) was only 3.4 percent in OECD countries but 23.5 percent in the least developed countries.³⁹ These statistics suggest why people in different countries face different means of reaching their full potential.

Individuals born into communities that are geographically isolated, predominantly home to politically and socially excluded minorities or disproportionately exposed to environmental pressures have fewer opportunities. Whole communities risk being left behind unless unbalanced service distribution is rectified.

Individuals born into communities that are geographically isolated, predominantly home to politically and socially excluded minorities or disproportionately exposed to environmental pressures have fewer opportunities

Limitations in opportunities among young people in small island developing states

Small island developing states face several economic challenges stemming from the limited resource base, remoteness from markets and barriers to economies of scale. Extreme vulnerabilities to climate change place additional stress on economic activity, particularly in tourism, fisheries and agriculture. The economic vulnerabilities translate into limited choices and opportunities among citizens. The obstacles are especially high for young people looking for decent work. The youth unemployment rate ranges from 18 percent to 47 percent among countries in the Caribbean, with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago, and the jobs available to working young people are often in low-skill areas with limited mobility.¹ Likewise, in the Pacific Islands, youth unemployment is estimated at 23 percent but reaches 63 percent in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 54 percent in Kiribati and 46 percent in the Solomon Islands.² The lack of stable employment opportunities is detrimental to income generation and

poverty reduction efforts and negatively affects security by exacerbating crime and violence. Indeed, in 2012, 17–24 percent of male school-age young people in 10 Caribbean countries admitted to having been involved in gangs.³ High rates of crime and violence can contribute to a vicious cycle whereby youth imprisonment and declines in revenues from tourism reduce overall economic activity and opportunities.

There are formidable challenges to expanding choices among young people and other vulnerable groups in small island developing states, but some of these challenges could be transformed into opportunities with the right mix of policies. Investments in climate-resilient infrastructure could turn climate change into a generator of employment. Investments in high-quality education and youth training programmes could increase entrepreneurship and remittances from labour migration and invigorate sectors such as telecommunication, tourism and creative industries.⁴

Notes

1. UNDP 2016b. 2. ILO 2014b. 3. UNDP 2016b. 4. ILO 2014b.

Source: Human Development Report Office.

People in conflict-affected countries experience severe and immediate impacts on human development. Modelling of the losses in each dimension of the HDI by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in 2013 suggested that over two conflict years the Syrian Arab Republic lost the equivalent of 35 years of progress in human development.⁴⁰

Conflict limits the availability of essential human development-enhancing services such as health care and education. Children in conflict-affected countries accounted for half of all children denied an education in 2011, even though they made up only 22 percent of the world's primary school-age children.⁴¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization reported in 2013 that 28.5 million children in conflict-affected countries were out of school.⁴² Livelihoods are similarly disrupted when violence interferes with trade, infrastructure and service provision.

The distribution of opportunities and social services is uneven between and within countries. The ability to access health care, education, water and housing can vary greatly by region in

a country, as can the quality of these services.⁴³ Financial support—national and official development assistance—also varies across regions, with different effects on development outcomes. Thus, a far greater proportion of people are poor in rural areas than in urban areas, and in urban areas poor people are often clustered in slums.

Health care in India exemplifies the extreme geographic differences in health services. In the mid-2000s, 39 percent of children overall and 59 percent in urban areas benefited from full immunization coverage, theoretically provided by the public sector. Kerala had one public hospital bed per 1,299 people, but Uttar Pradesh only one bed per 20,041. Almost all births in Kerala were attended by health personnel, compared with just 27 percent in Uttar Pradesh.⁴⁴

Geography in Tunisia counts much more than wealth, gender or the education level of the household head in determining access to some opportunities. Whether a person was born in a rural or urban area explains 30 percent of the inequality in school attendance and almost 50 percent of the inequality in access to sanitation. The pattern is similar in other Arab States, including Egypt and Morocco.⁴⁵ And in

The ability to access health care, education, water and housing can vary greatly by region in a country, as can the quality of these services

Sudan in the mid-2000s the use of antenatal health care services was five times greater in urban areas than in rural areas.⁴⁶

The 2016 Mongolia National Human Development Report highlights differences in levels of inequality in human development across *aimags*, first-level administrative subdivisions.⁴⁷ Likewise, the HDI in China varies considerably across regions: from the equivalent of a medium human development country in some provinces (for example, Gansu, at 0.689) to the equivalent of a high human development country in other provinces (for example, Fujian, at 0.758) and to the equivalent of a very high human development country in Beijing (at 0.869).⁴⁸

Migrants and refugees

Individuals born into disadvantage—in conflict-affected situations, countries at risk of environmental disaster or areas with few economic opportunities—have few strategies available to better their conditions. One option may be to leave their home and community in search of more physically and economically secure environments despite the risks the journey presents and the potential obstacles to be faced.

The United Nations Population Fund reported in 2015 that 244 million people were living outside their home countries.⁴⁹ Many are seeking better economic opportunities and hope to enhance their livelihoods and send money back home. A 2012 survey in Somalia reported that more than 60 percent of young people intended to leave the country in search of better work opportunities.⁵⁰ In 2010/2011 one person in nine born in Africa who had obtained a tertiary diploma lived in an OECD country.⁵¹

Not all migrants move because of hardship, and not all move because of a lack of choices at home. Many migrants return with new skills and experience as opportunities for employment at home increase, particularly in emerging economies. But many migrants, especially the world's nearly 23 million refugees, asylumseekers and stateless people, are fleeing extreme conditions.⁵² And there are 50 million irregular migrants who seek better conditions at great risk, often relying on smugglers for travel.⁵³ People migrating to flee conflict and insecurity usually experience declines in their overall human development, but migration is still a better

choice than exposure to the harms they would face by staying home. Migrants who leave without the push of violence typically improve their human development potential by migrating.⁵⁴

Migrants fleeing conflict are cut off from their main sources of income and may lack access to health care and social services beyond emergency humanitarian assistance (box 2.5). They frequently face harassment, animosity and violence in receiving countries. Trying to find work and earn an income is the single greatest challenge. In many countries refugees are not permitted to work; when they are, they see few opportunities. Many also lack identification papers, limiting access to formal jobs and services. People fleeing conflict are especially vulnerable to trafficking, forced labour, child labour, sex work and work in other exploitative, high-risk activities.

Migrants also confront barriers to participation in political and public life. Numerous countries impose restrictions on noncitizens in voting and holding elected public office. The restrictions may be based on the duration of the stay of the migrants, reciprocal laws in the country of origin or the scope of the election—most countries grant noncitizens the right to vote at communal but not regional or national elections. Language barriers can also be a key obstacle to community engagement. Newspapers, websites, television and radio programmes covering host country political and public issues in the migrants' native language can encourage civil participation.

As migrant and refugee flows surge, the infrastructure and services of host countries are challenged to absorb the newcomers. The pressure is especially intense in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, which have taken in the vast majority of refugees from the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.⁵⁵ All basic services in Lebanon are under stress, especially the education system, which has welcomed refugee children from the Syrian Arab Republic but is now stretched thin.⁵⁶

Indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples are characterized by distinct cultures and close relationships with the land they inhabit. There are more than 370 million self-identified indigenous peoples in some 70 countries. Latin America alone numbers more than 400 groups, and Asia and the Pacific

Individuals born into disadvantage have few strategies available to better their conditions. One option may be to leave their home and community in search of more physically and economically secure environments

Disadvantages facing migrants

Migrants face barriers in accessing services to maintain their capabilities. They may not have the legal or financial resources to access health care in their host countries and may therefore develop physical or mental problems that are aggravated by poor transit and living conditions. When they are able to access health care, they may not find health practitioners experienced in treating diseases that are uncommon in the host country, such as tropical diseases in northern latitudes or the psychological trauma associated with migration. They may also face discrimination from health practitioners or be unable to express themselves in the same language. Health care provided in refugee camps is not always of adequate quality and quantity, and people in transit may not be available for long-term treatments. The poor living conditions and the high population density in most camps can propagate communicable diseases. Women often confront threats of violence and physical insecurity.

Education is another challenge among migrants. Migrant children often have difficulty adapting in the host country's classrooms, where the teaching methods, curriculum and language are unfamiliar. An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development study in 23 countries showed that first-generation immigrant students have much lower scores than do local students; second-generation immigrant students do slightly better.¹ The variations across host countries are important, which may indicate that policies to integrate migrant students affect these students' outcomes. Migrant children may be experiencing school for the first time in the host country at an age when their peers have already been in school. Besides the stress of adapting to a new country, migrant children must catch up to become integrated in their new schools. Some migrant children do not have access to education in their host country, especially if they are undocumented.

Note

1. Keeley 2009.

Source: Human Development Report Office.

Because indigenous self-determination is explicitly limited by the right of states to territorial integrity, the representation of indigenous groups in parliament is a powerful symbol of self-determination and of inclusion more widely

an estimated 705.⁵⁷ Indigenous peoples account for around 5 percent of the world's population but 15 percent of people living in poverty.⁵⁸ Indigenous peoples face deprivations caused by social, economic and political exclusion. In Africa indigenous peoples are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS because of a range of factors, including stigmatization, structural racism and discrimination, and individual and community disempowerment.⁵⁹ In the United States Native Americans die at rates higher than the national average, especially as a result of liver disease, diabetes, accidents, homicide, suicide and chronic lower respiratory diseases.⁶⁰

Indigenous children are challenged in education systems by daily schedules that do not accommodate nomadic movement, and curricula rarely incorporate their history, culture and language.⁶¹ In many countries this leads to substantial gaps in years of schooling between indigenous children and nonindigenous children (table 2.1). In Guatemala nonindigenous children average twice as many years of schooling as indigenous children. Income-generating opportunities are more difficult to access when indigenous young people have low educational attainment.

Calls for self-determination through self-government have been at the forefront of the relationship between states and indigenous communities since the mid-20th century. Because indigenous self-determination is explicitly limited by the right of states to territorial integrity, the representation of indigenous groups in parliament is a powerful symbol of self-determination and of inclusion more widely.

In some cases, indigenous peoples have established their own parliaments or councils that act as consultative bodies—for example, the Sami people of Finland, Norway and Sweden. In other cases, such as the Maori in New Zealand, parliamentary seats are allocated for indigenous representatives.⁶²

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals

In many countries people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex suffer extreme discrimination and insecurity that deprive them of dignity, basic rights and opportunities. Statistics on sexual orientation are scarce, especially in countries where same-sex sexual acts are illegal or socially invisible. But recent surveys in

TABLE 2.1

Years of schooling, indigenous and nonindigenous children, selected countries

Country	Nonindigenous	Indigenous	Difference
Bolivia	9.6	5.9	3.7
Ecuador	6.9	4.3	2.6
Guatemala	5.7	2.5	3.2
Mexico	7.9	4.6	3.3
Peru	8.7	6.4	2.3

Source: UNDESA 2009.

developed countries give some indication of the size of the population. In Australia 3 percent of the adult population self-identified as gay, lesbian or “other” in 2014.⁶³ In the United Kingdom 545,000 adults identified as gay or lesbian, and 220,000 identified as bisexual in 2012.⁶⁴ In the United States 3.4 percent of adults identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.⁶⁵ In these surveys younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to self-report as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex, suggesting that social norms influence the likelihood of higher response rates.

Same-sex sexual acts are illegal among men in 73 countries and among women in 45. In 13 countries people who engage in such acts can face the death penalty.⁶⁶ Even in countries where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are not considered criminals, their prospects for human development are limited by discrimination in social and economic life. Unlike other minorities the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community is often hidden. Sexual minorities may not disclose their identity for fear of legal punishment, social abuse, hostility and discrimination by society or by close friends and family members. Because differences in sexual orientation are not openly recognized in many societies, data on discrimination are not widely available, and evidence-based policymaking is difficult.

For 25 countries with data, attitudes towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community have become more tolerant since the 1990s (figure 2.6). Social acceptance has increased as the adoption of antidiscrimination legislation has moved forward. Social norms and legislation have positively reinforced

one another. Where intolerance remains high, legislation is critical to pushing back against hostile and discriminatory behaviour that limits the choices of a large global population.

Older people

Given that many countries have an ageing population, what are the deprivations facing older people? By 2020 the number of people ages 60 and older will be greater than the number of children under age 5. The proportion of the world’s population over age 60 will double between 2015 and 2050, to 22 percent.⁶⁷ Few countries are prepared to cope with this demographic transition. Without adequate health systems, social protection, and work and retirement schemes in place, older people are deprived of opportunities to maintain and expand their capabilities. They also suffer from prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory policies and practices, often referred to as ageism.⁶⁸

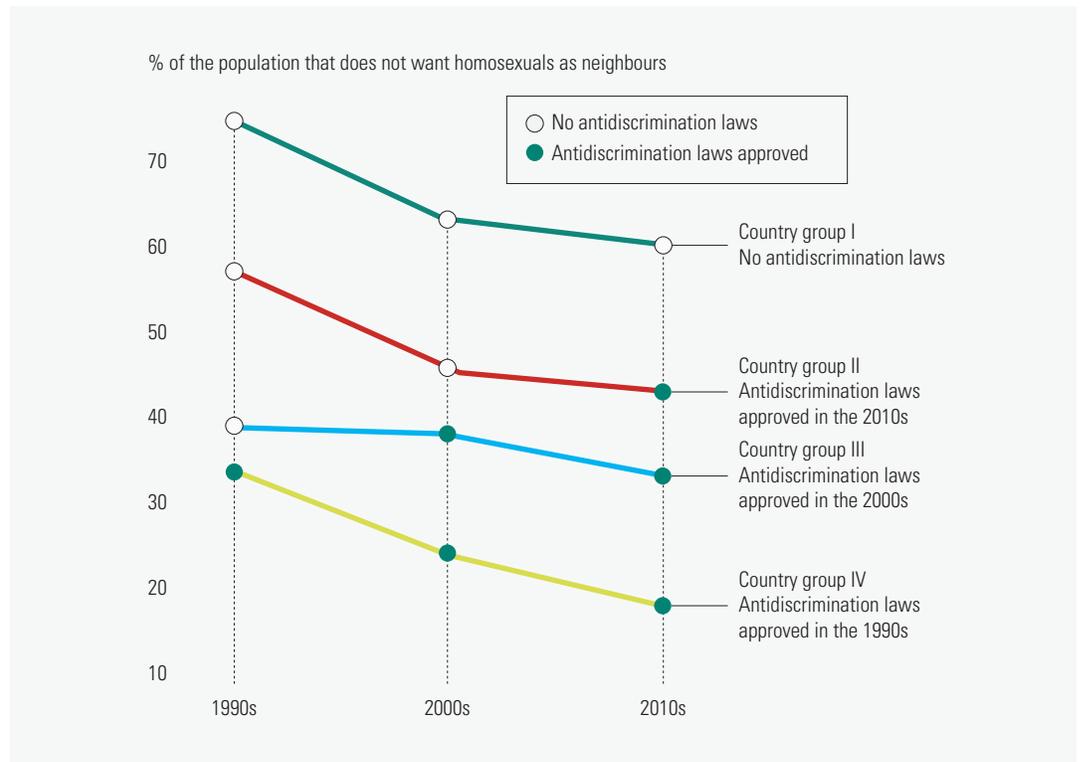
These issues may be particularly pertinent for women, because the life expectancy of women usually exceeds that of men. Pensions may be unavailable to women who have performed unpaid care work for much of their lives or who have worked in the informal sector. Older men are more likely to have pensions as a benefit of their paid formal work. Poverty rates are higher among older women than among older men.⁶⁹ In the European Union older women are 37 percent more likely than older men to live in poverty.⁷⁰

Women are often expected to continue well into old age unpaid care work for spouses and grandchildren. This can be a source of fulfilment but also takes a physical toll and may come with little recognition. Many older people,

Even in countries where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are not considered criminals, their prospects for human development are limited by discrimination in social and economic life

FIGURE 2.6

Since the 1990s attitudes towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community have become more tolerant, and the number of antidiscrimination laws has increased



Source: Human Development Report Office estimates based on ILGA (2016a) and WVSA (2016).

Deprivations suffered in old age are generally accumulated through the lifecycle

particularly women, are also constrained by psychological and physical abuse that reduces their sense of security and dignity. A HelpAge International study found that two-thirds of older people who experience emotional, economic and physical abuse in Moldova are women.⁷¹

The general increase in life expectancy means that older people have many healthy, productive years ahead of them. In 2014, 11 percent of entrepreneurs in the United States were in the 55–64 age group.⁷² Many older people are still capable and willing to work, and many need to continue working if adequate retirement schemes are not in place. But hiring practices that discriminate against older people limit their opportunities for work, and a mandatory retirement age may force older people to leave the labour market.

Deprivations suffered in old age are generally accumulated through the lifecycle. Children in poorer households may suffer from malnutrition, have poorer health, have less schooling and end up in a low-skilled, low-paid job

without health insurance or retirement benefits. In the United Kingdom people in wealthier neighbourhoods live six years longer than people in poor neighbourhoods and spend 13 more years without disability.⁷³

Persons with disabilities

Physical and social barriers may deprive persons with disabilities of the chance to achieve their full life potential. Special facilities allow persons with disabilities, older people and other groups with limited mobility to fully participate in public life. Although around 1 billion people worldwide live with some form of disability, adequate infrastructure for persons with disabilities is still underdeveloped, making independent mobility a challenge for many.⁷⁴ Remote rural areas present severe mobility challenges. Additional impediments may remain even when infrastructure is in place—such as discriminatory hiring practices that limit access to jobs for persons with disabilities.

People with mental health conditions are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion. In 27 European countries the gap in unemployment rates between individuals with mental health conditions and those without widened between 2006 and 2010 (before and after the financial crisis), and social stigmatization was an important factor contributing to job insecurity.⁷⁵ In Germany the unwillingness to recommend an individual with depression for a job increased between 1990–2000 and 2000–2010.⁷⁶ An estimated 350 million people worldwide are affected by depression, about 60 million are affected by bipolar affective disorders, 21 million by schizophrenia and other psychoses and 47.5 million by dementia.⁷⁷ The fact that half a billion people suffer from these conditions means that the exclusion of people with mental health conditions from work and social activities is a major barrier to universalism.⁷⁸

Deprivations in human development as a dynamic process

The universal achievement of some basic capabilities will not enable all people to realize their full life potential. Many dimensions of human development may still be lacking, including agency, security and sustainability. And the capabilities that matter most vary in different contexts and at different stages of the lifecycle. Security may be at the top of the list for a household in a conflict-affected country, while interesting work opportunities may be the top priority of an educated young person. Nor does rising above the low human development threshold ensure that people are protected from emerging and future threats to human development. Indeed, 900 million people live close to the threshold of multidimensional poverty and risk falling into poverty after even a minor setback in health, education or livelihood.⁷⁹ The condition of being deprived is therefore dynamic.

Deprivations can materialize when development leads to new needs and new mechanisms of exclusion. Political transitions, demographic shifts and outbreaks of violence put pressure on achieved gains. Climate change, financial crises

and epidemics push people into multidimensional poverty. People in developed countries can lack opportunities for work, education and access to information, despite extensive information and communication technology infrastructure because broadband Internet systems do not reach some rural areas or carry prohibitive costs. This section elaborates on important but perhaps underemphasized issues of human development—quality, information access, security, and lifecycle and intergenerational deprivations—that are increasingly central to people’s life potential.

From quantity to quality in human development

Over the last quarter-century, assessments of human development have focused primarily on quantitative achievements. But with substantial progress in human development linked to measures of quantity, such as years of schooling or life expectancy, there are questions about whether quality has also improved. Has quality in education, health and standards of living been enhanced? Quality is an important yardstick against which the progress in human development across countries and individuals should be examined. Large variations in the quality of human development across groups can become the basis for inequality and the perpetuation of deprivations throughout an individual’s lifecycle and across generations. Within the human development approach, the concept of quality can be explored in opportunities for public participation, the enforcement of rights and the quality of work. As a starting point, the analysis is directed at the quality of education, health and living standards—the dimensions of human development that compose the HDI.

Many countries have made gains in access to education, but improvements in the quality of education have not kept pace. One-third of primary school-age children are not learning basic mathematics and reading even though half of them have spent at least four years in school.⁸⁰ Girls’ enrolment in primary education has increased, but the results in terms of literacy are not encouraging. In half of 53 developing countries with data, the majority of adult women who completed four to six years of

Deprivations can materialize when development leads to new needs and new mechanisms of exclusion

People are living longer but also spending more years suffering because of illness and disability

primary school are illiterate.⁸¹ These outcomes are linked partly to the quality of teaching. The number of primary school teachers trained according to national standards is below 75 percent in around a third of the countries for which data are available.⁸² High pupil–teacher ratios are also a challenge to quality of education. Ratios in primary education were above 40 to 1 in 26 countries (23 in Sub-Saharan Africa) in 2011.⁸³ Such lack of support diminishes the prospects of learning and raises the likelihood of dropping out of school.

Health is improving worldwide. People are living longer. Life expectancy at birth globally was four years longer in 2015 than in 2000.⁸⁴ This is due in part to declines in death and illness caused by HIV and AIDS and malaria in the past decade as well as to advances in treating communicable, maternal, neonatal and nutritional disorders. Improvements in sanitation and indoor air quality, greater access to immunization and better nutrition have also enabled children in poor countries to live longer.⁸⁵ But are the added years of life expectancy healthy years or years with illnesses and disability? The World Health Organization has examined healthy life expectancy by measuring the years lived in good health without disability. Analysis for 188 countries in 1990, 2005 and 2013 indicates that there have been increases in healthy life expectancy but that they have not been as dramatic as the increase in overall

life expectancy.⁸⁶ The difference between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy can be interpreted as years that are burdened with illness and disability. In 2015 the difference was more than 10 years in nine countries (table 2.2). People are living longer but also spending more years suffering because of illness and disability.

It is assumed that people’s living standards improve when incomes rise. However, the quality of people’s lives can vary greatly even as per capita income rises. Per capita income measures can rise when goods and services that are consumed in response to social malaise and problems—such as police protection, prison systems, legal services and mental health services—increase. Per capita income likewise excludes some goods and services that may raise the quality of people’s lives, such as unpaid care work and ecological services. Qualitative improvements in people’s standard of living thus need to be assessed beyond quantitative growth in per capita income.

Inequality in access to advanced, high-quality education, health care and other services restricts the ability of some people to expand their capabilities. It also affects the distribution of income in the long run. Inequality in the quality and quantity of education is directly related to unequal income. Segregated education systems can reinforce class distinctions and the intergenerational perpetuation of inequalities.⁸⁷ Governments can take steps to reduce differences in service quality between

TABLE 2.2

The difference between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in selected countries

Country	Relative difference between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy (percent)	Absolute difference between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy (years)
Nicaragua	14.8	11.1
Qatar	13.4	10.5
Saudi Arabia	13.4	10.0
Australia	13.2	10.9
United States	12.9	10.2
Sweden	12.6	10.4
Spain	12.6	10.4
Chile	12.5	10.1
Finland	12.5	10.1

Source: Human Development Report Office estimates based on WHO (2016e).

private and public providers and standardize costs, including by taxing private suppliers to support public services (box 2.6). The key is to build the support across all population groups for good-quality, universal services so that all classes, genders and ethnicities have an interest in fair and adequate provision to all.

Expanding digital access

Broadband coverage and variations in access to computers and smartphones could generate new forms of exclusion. Inexpensive and reliable access to the Internet is becoming essential to the development of capabilities in other areas, such as education, work and political participation. Access to information is crucial for high-quality education and thus for expanding opportunities among children and youth. The biggest challenge is to make these benefits available to all people everywhere. However, the digital divide continues to impede universal

benefits and could push people who are already deprived in other areas further behind.

Less than half the world's population (47 percent) uses the Internet. Only 25 percent of people in Sub-Saharan Africa are users, and only 42 percent of people in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States are. In contrast, two-thirds of the population is online in the Americas and in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The rate in Europe is 79 percent.⁸⁸

Prices in many regions make connecting to the Internet prohibitively expensive. Basic mobile or fixed broadband plans cost much more in developing countries than in developed countries and cost the most in the least developed countries (figure 2.7). But digital divides exist even in developed countries.

To enable all people to benefit from the opportunities that information and communication technology holds for human development, striving for universal access to free Wi-Fi may be needed. Combined with access

The digital divide continues to impede universal benefits and could push people who are already deprived in other areas further behind

BOX 2.6

The challenge of a two-tier public and private system for universal access to quality services

Despite advances towards universal public education, health care and social protection in many countries, people are still being left behind in accessing high-quality services. Quality differs greatly between public and private services in some cases. Access to high-quality services is too often a privilege reserved for well-off populations. Highly unequal societies face the risk of segmentation between a universal public system and a smaller private system for elites.

Take Argentina. Despite expanded investment in public schools between 2003 and 2011, enrolment in private schools increased from 22 percent to 39 percent.¹ In Latin America and the Caribbean on average 50 percent of children of households in the highest income quintile attended private primary and secondary schools in 2010, compared with less than 4 percent of children of households in the lowest income quintile.² In Turkey expansion among private health care providers has resulted in more social stratification in the consumption of health services because higher income patients are abandoning public services for private services that are often better in quality.³

The use of private services by middle and upper segments of the welfare distribution across countries increases the likelihood of poor-quality public services because large segments of the population do not have a vested interest in public service quality, social pressure is insufficient to maintain good-quality, universally accessible public services and public services are becoming less cost-efficient because of user flight. The sustainability of funding for public programmes is at risk if the middle class does not have a vested interest in the programmes.

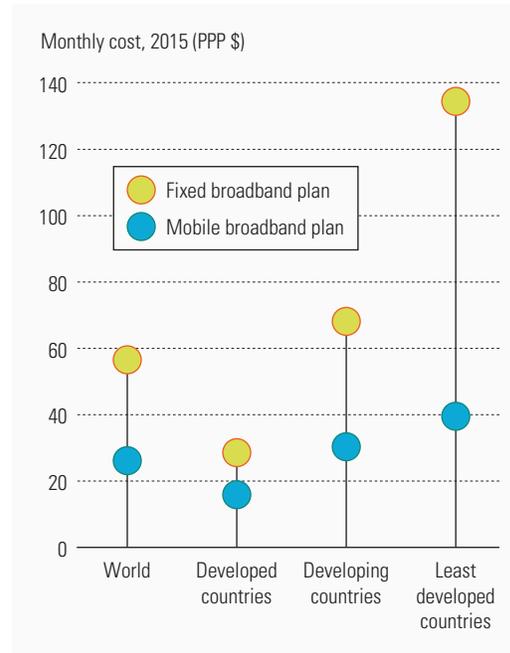
A two-tier public and private service system is not inherently negative. It is problematic only if there are extreme variations in quality between the two options that reinforce inequalities in opportunity among those who can pay and those who cannot. There are wide disparities in quality between public and private education services in many developing countries. A recent review of 21 studies in Ghana, India, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria and Pakistan found that students in private schools tend to achieve better learning outcomes than do students in state schools. Teaching is also often better in private schools than in state schools—for example, in India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and Tanzania.⁴

Notes

1. Martínez-Franzoni and Sánchez-Ancochea 2016. 2. Daude 2012. 3. Agartan 2012. 4. Day Ashley and others 2014.
Source: Human Development Report Office.

FIGURE 2.7

Basic mobile or fixed broadband plans cost much more in developing countries than in developed countries and cost the most in the least developed countries



Source: ITU 2016b.

to high-quality education, universal Internet access could greatly increase opportunities and reduce inequalities everywhere.

Security threats

There may be threats to the security of the more abundant choices and opportunities available to people today. Epidemics, violence, climate change and natural disasters can quickly undermine the progress of individuals who have exited poverty and push poor people into more extreme poverty. They can also generate new deprivations. Millions of people around the world are exposed to climate-related natural disasters, droughts and associated food insecurities and subsist on degraded land. Between 1995 and 2014 more than 15,000 extreme weather events resulted in more than 525,000 deaths worldwide and economic losses of more than \$2.97 trillion.⁸⁹

Some groups are more exposed to threats than others. Many women depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and are therefore disproportionately exposed to climate pressures on food

production. Children are physiologically and metabolically less able than adults to adapt to heat and other climate-related exposure and are more likely to be injured or killed during natural disasters.⁹⁰ They may also be kept out of school following disasters. During the Ebola outbreak in 2014 an estimated 5 million children were deprived of education in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone because schools were closed for months.⁹¹ Women were also disproportionately affected by the Ebola outbreak: they faced higher risks of infection because of their role caring for the sick, and they suffered from less antenatal, perinatal and postnatal care. In Sierra Leone's Kenema District avoidance of hospitals and birthing centres for fear of exposure to Ebola resulted in 29 percent fewer antenatal care visits and 21 percent fewer postnatal care visits.⁹²

Voicing concerns about these emerging threats can carry risk. Defenders of land and the environment around the world suffer from threats and physical violence, criminalization and restrictions on their freedoms. As environmental pressures have increased, so have physical threats against environmental activists. A record number of environmentalists were killed in 2015—185 in 16 countries, up 59 percent from 2014. Members of indigenous groups, who accounted for 40 percent of the deaths in 2015, are among the most at risk.⁹³

The physical insecurity of those who speak out about environmental pressures is part of a larger condition of physical insecurity and violence that severely restrict the choices and freedoms of individuals around the world. Many people feel insecure in their homes and communities. One billion girls and boys ages 2–17 worldwide experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence in the prior year, according to one study.⁹⁴ Some 25 percent of children suffer physical abuse, and nearly 20 percent of girls are sexually abused at least once in their life.⁹⁵ Elder abuse remains a hidden problem:⁹⁶ 10 percent of older adults were abused in the prior month.⁹⁷ Homicide is also a major social concern. In 2012, 437,000 people worldwide were the victims of intentional homicide.⁹⁸ Average homicide rates in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2010 and 2014 exceeded 20 per 100,000 people.⁹⁹

Freedom from violence was one of the most frequently cited concerns among respondents

Epidemics, violence, climate change and natural disasters can quickly undermine progress in human development

to a survey on human security carried out by the Human Development Report Office. Physical security and freedom from the threat of violence were particular concerns among female respondents (box 2.7). For women, real or perceived physical and emotional violence is a major barrier to meeting their full human potential and feeling free to move about.

Deprivations throughout the lifecycle and across generations

Lifelong deprivations among children and adults can begin even before birth (figure 2.8). Starting at conception, the environment to which pregnant women are exposed and the choices available to them shape the future skills and abilities of their children in ways that are difficult to alter as the children grow. A lack of medical attention, poor nutrition and heavy physical demands put unborn children at risk.

Poor children are more likely than their more affluent peers to experience myriad environmental risks before birth, including household disruption, pollution and violence. These antenatal exposures to stress have been found to mould life trajectories in health and cognitive and socioemotional development—precisely the areas of development that might otherwise allow individuals to be productive members of society (box 2.8). For instance, children in Canada who had been exposed in the womb to a strong winter storm in 1998 later exhibited lower levels of cognitive development, language functioning and motor functioning than did children who had not been exposed. Antenatal exposure to a 2005 earthquake in Chile has been negatively associated with children’s future cognitive ability. Such exposure to stress can play a role in the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage by constraining development potential early in life.¹⁰⁰

Lifelong deprivations among children and adults can begin even before birth

BOX 2.7

Human security from a woman’s point of view

A survey conducted by the Human Development Report Office asked women of all ages and occupational backgrounds around the world, “What does human security mean to you?” Many women responded that they were concerned with physical and psychological violence.

“Human security is the right to move freely in your town without worrying about whether you will return home unharmed and unthreatened.”

—A female teacher from Brazil

“It is impossible to feel safe as a human being if our own existence is not recognized or respected, even if we have access to all sorts of opportunities.”

—A female economist from Mauritania

“Human security means being able to go about alone outside any time of the day or night and not fear any possible violence. It means that I should not consider my gender, religion or any other distinctive features when making a decision to spend time outdoors for fear of malicious intent.”

—A female development worker from Kazakhstan

“Human security for me is freedom from fear, fear of being looked down at because of being a woman and being assaulted and disrespected because of the same”

—A female student from India

“Human security is being able to sleep peacefully, not being afraid of getting home late at night because of violators, not driving with closed windows for fear that someone will grab my bag, going to the supermarket without being afraid of having my belongings stolen from the car, going to the Yaoundé market without hiding my money in my bra, and walking freely along Kennedy Avenue.”

—A woman from Cameroon

“Human security is the freedom to live your life free from hate crimes, sexism, racism and other kinds of oppression, freedom to express yourself and be active in society.”

—A female activist from Sweden

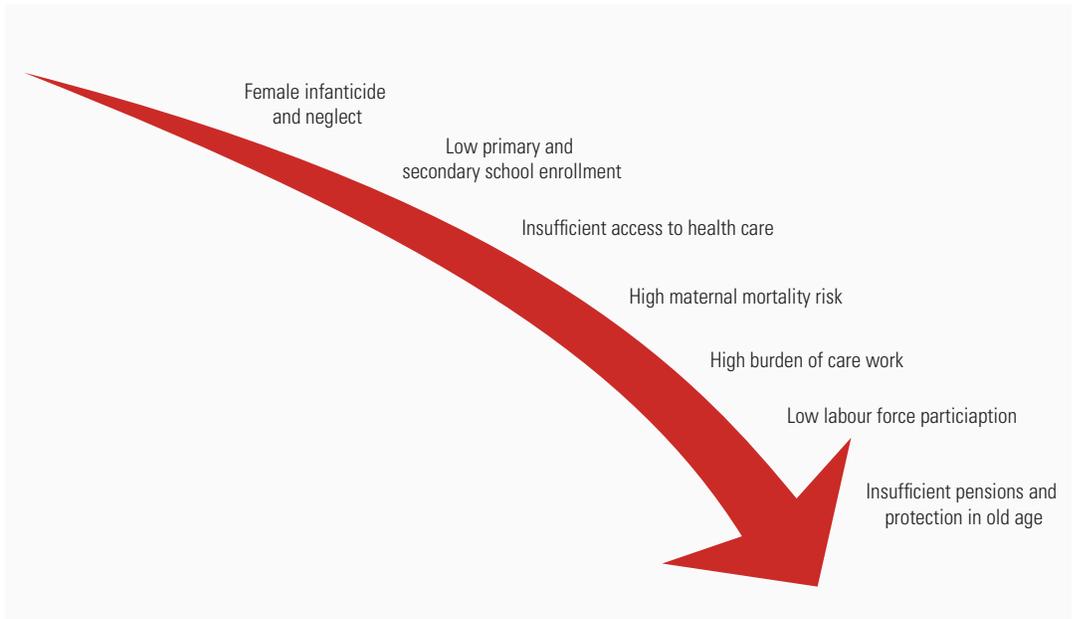
“Human security means freedom from abuse and violence, particularly child abuse, domestic violence, interpersonal violence and intimate partner violence. It is about the protection of children, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities and women from violence and crime.”

—A female researcher from Trinidad and Tobago

Source: Human Development Report Office.

FIGURE 2.8

Deprivations among women can accumulate throughout life



Source: Human Development Report Office.

BOX 2.8

Antenatal stress and intergenerational deprivation

Educational attainment is a central mechanism for perpetuating socioeconomic stratification across generations. Advantaged parents can afford more and better education for their children, which has many benefits in the labour market. There is also a direct transmission of economic advantage through inheritance and the use of job referral networks to favour children. These mechanisms affect later stages of the lifecycle, when children have reached school age or working age. But a growing body of research suggests that the intergenerational perpetuation of deprivation begins before birth and that the intergenerational transmission of advantage may already be advanced when children enter the education system.

Exposure to environmental stressors in the womb has been connected to poor birth outcomes such as lower birthweight and higher probability of preterm birth. It has also been connected to children's developmental outcomes such as motor skills, cognitive ability, emotional stability, attention deficit disorder and early educational achievement. Given that birth outcomes and early childhood development predict educational and economic attainment in adulthood, the higher

probability that poor people will be exposed to risks in the womb may constitute the first injustice and may play a central role in the persistence of disadvantage across generations.

Why does antenatal exposure have such persistent effects over the lifecycle? The antenatal period includes critical and sensitive developmental stages in which the effect of the environment on future capabilities is especially strong and potentially irreversible, regardless of subsequent interventions. During the antenatal period the central nervous system and the brain undergo a cascade of critical developmental processes that are particularly susceptible to the environment and that shape later abilities in a cumulative fashion. An antenatal shock can result in reduced language ability in the first years of life, which may affect the ability to read and to succeed in school overall.

Abundant research in the biological and behavioural sciences highlights the importance of investing in the well-being of populations in the early stages of life, starting at conception. An economic perspective suggests that investments in capabilities early in life are much more cost-effective than investments later on.

Source: Torche 2016.

Educational attainment is a central mechanism for perpetuating socioeconomic stratification across generations

Parents' educational attainment and earnings are strong predictors of children's educational attainment.¹⁰¹ A study in South Africa found that fathers with high educational attainment pass on three-fifths of their earnings advantage to sons.¹⁰² Daughters who inherit the low educational attainment of their parents are more disadvantaged as adults: They are 9 percent more likely to be in the bottom of the occupation distribution relative to the overall population.¹⁰³ In the United Kingdom people whose father had low educational attainment are 7.5 times more likely to have little education than are people with a highly educated father; in turn, people with low educational attainment are 11 times more likely to be deprived of material assets than are people with higher educational attainment.¹⁰⁴

As the 2015 Human Development Report stressed, increasing women's access to education and paid work may have effects on the choices of subsequent generations of girls. Girls are more likely to be employed and to earn more as adults if their mother was employed. In the United States the daughters of mothers who are employed earn 23 percent more than the daughters of mothers who do not work outside the home.¹⁰⁵ In Senegal the parents'

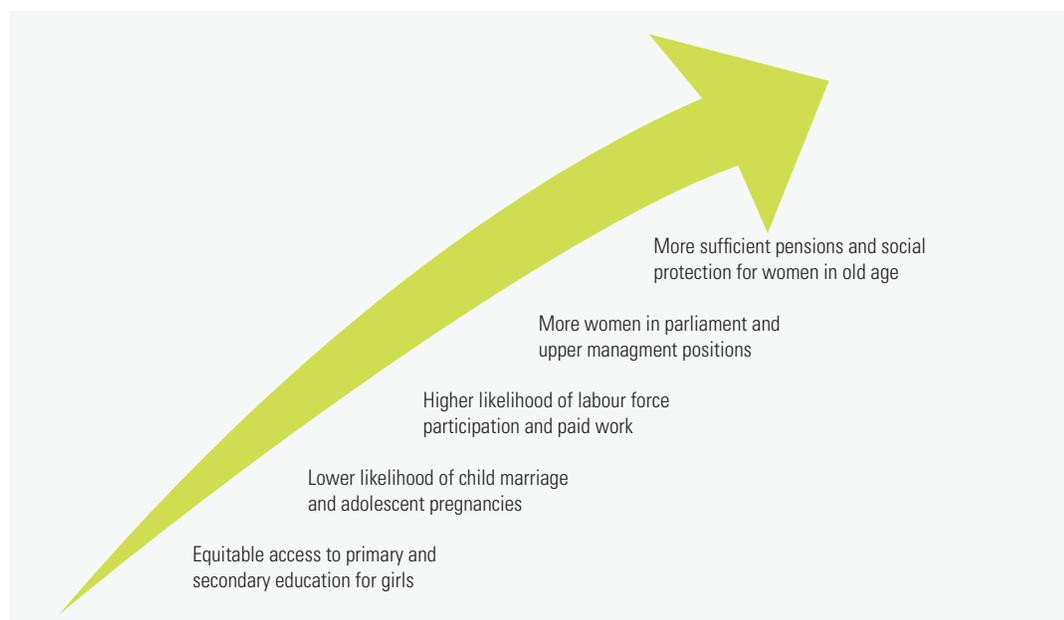
education is positively associated with the offspring's adult living standards, and maternal education has a much larger positive effect than does paternal education.¹⁰⁶ Interventions to overcome deprivations today need to be viewed as opportunities to prevent deprivations among future generations.

Interventions for women early in life can prevent deprivations later in the lifecycle (figure 2.9). When investments in life capabilities occur sooner rather than later, as through early childhood education and care, the prospects improve for education and work.¹⁰⁷ This is because capabilities at any stage in life are path dependent and reflect the challenges and opportunities encountered at earlier stages. Children who do not have access to early childhood education may not do as well in primary and secondary school. Young people who have an education but live in an area with a sluggish labour market may resort to informal work or remain unemployed, which can lead to an insufficient pension in old age. Older people may suffer illnesses and disabilities accumulated over years of strenuous physical labour and insufficient preventive health care. The barriers facing marginalized groups may emerge at various points throughout the lifecycle and lead to

Interventions to overcome deprivations today need to be viewed as opportunities to prevent deprivations among future generations

FIGURE 2.9

Interventions for women early in life can prevent deprivations later in the lifecycle



Source: Human Development Report Office.

Fulfilling basic needs is an essential part of expanding capabilities but is insufficient to enable people to reach their full potential

severe deprivations in old age. Early interventions can prevent subsequent limitations, along with interventions that help individuals recover from past deprivation.

What do people value in human development beyond the basics?

Fulfilling basic needs is an essential part of expanding capabilities but is insufficient to enable people to reach their full potential. This is especially so in a world characterized by new and often more precarious forms of work, escalating violence and mounting environmental crises. Many people are deprived of a sense of security that they will be able to retain tomorrow the gains they have made today. Many are deprived of voice and opportunities to participate in the collective valuation of policies and priorities. Others lack access to good-quality services and to information and communication technology. Practical universalism requires attention to these and other dimensions of human development in which people in both developed and developing countries remain deprived.

Development in some of these dimensions may not have appeared so urgent in the past simply because of the scale of the deprivation in basic needs. Parents of children who lack access to schooling may not worry about the quality of secondary education. Families that are trying to get by on less than \$1.90 a day may not prioritize the prevention of environmental crises. But as the types of deprivations captured in the HDI and MPI are reduced for individuals and societies, other deprivations become more prominent. People have more choices and freedoms, but there are still constraints that limit life potential.

Surveys based on subjective evaluations provide insights into the diversity of values across populations and suggest links between the surroundings and the development priorities of individuals. For example, the My World global survey being conducted by the United Nations in support of the 2030 Agenda assessed development issues that matter most to people.¹⁰⁸ More than 9 million responses have prioritized action issues from 16 options, ranging from securing a good education and ensuring political freedom to tackling climate change. The

top three priorities are good education, better health care and better job opportunities. A disaggregation of the survey data by development status, age, gender, citizenship and region shows more variation in the top priorities. There are thus differences in the aggregate priorities of individuals in countries at different levels of human development (figure 2.10). Good education is the top priority across all human development groups, and the top three priorities are similar in the low, medium and high human development countries. But an honest and responsive government and access to clean water and sanitation are among the top three priorities in very high human development countries, where better health care and better job opportunities are not even among the top five priorities.

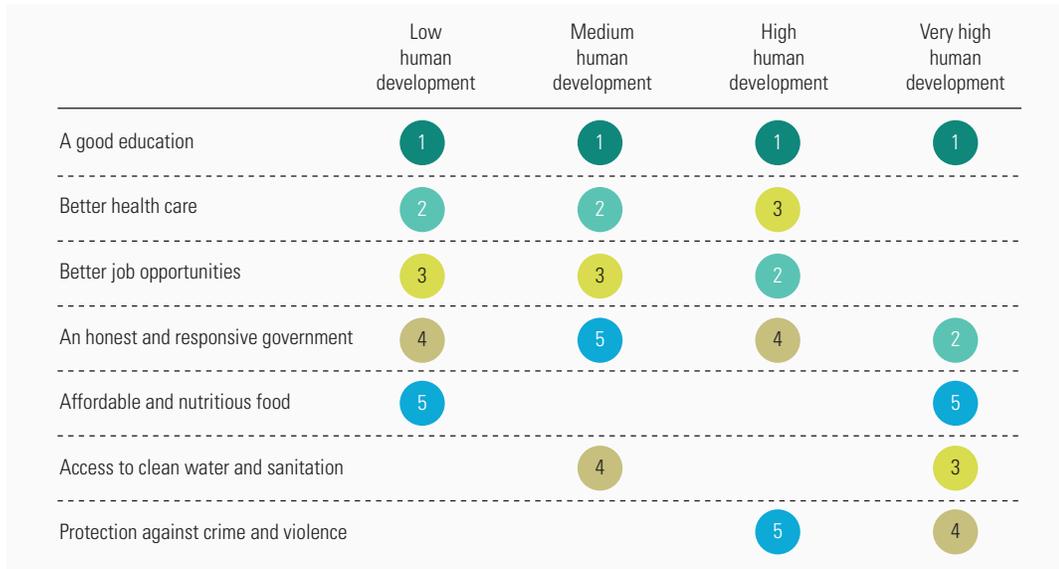
A survey by the Pew Research Center reinforces the context specificity of people's priorities and concerns. Some 83 percent of respondents in 34 developing countries considered crime to be the biggest problem in their country.¹⁰⁹ Corruption, lack of health care, poor schools and water pollution were also viewed as major problems. The percentage of respondents who listed crime as a concern was 93 percent in Tunisia, compared with only 31 percent in Poland, where 59 percent of respondents listed health care as a very big problem (which compares with only 17 percent in China).

Income can also shape people's priorities. Respondents in a nationwide opinion survey in Chile were asked what was most important to them in order to have a happy life. The answers of respondents in the highest and lowest income quintiles varied substantially. Respondents in the highest income quintile most often cited the achievement of life goals and targets, whereas respondents in the lowest income quintile cited a peaceful life without much disruption (figure 2.11). Leading a meaningful life and enjoying the good things in life were less of a priority among respondents in the lowest income quintile.

People's priorities and values appear to be context specific. In Algeria, where youth unemployment rates are high, a young woman may value employment most. Once integrated into the labour market and at the peak of her career, she may value free time the most. A

FIGURE 2.10

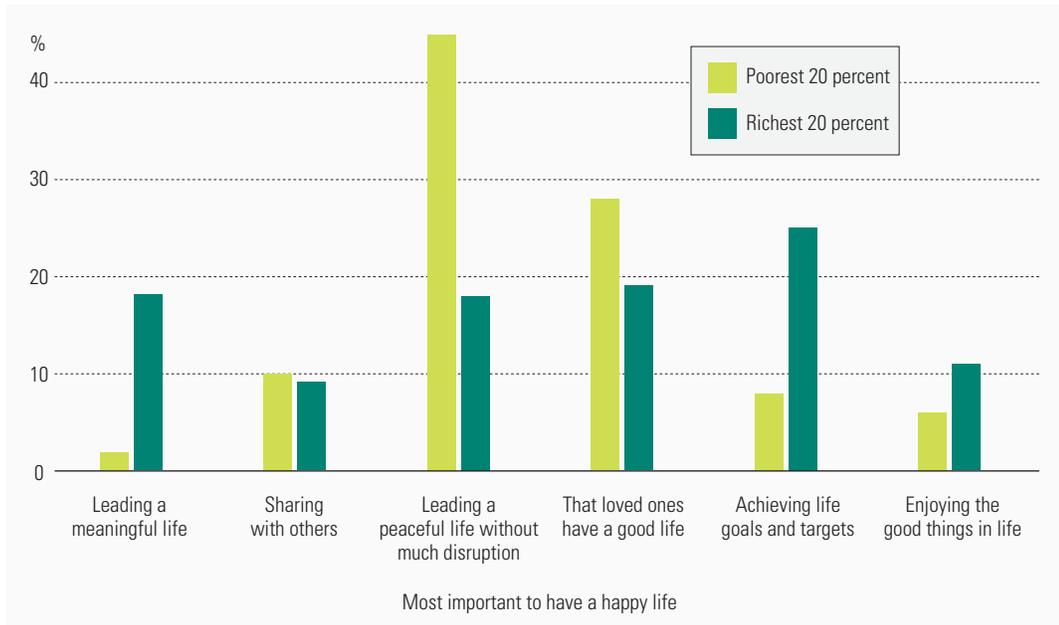
There are differences in the aggregate priorities of individuals in countries at different levels of human development



Source: Human Development Report Office estimates based on United Nations (2015b).

FIGURE 2.11

The priorities of Chileans vary by income



Source: UNDP 2012a.

healthy older man in Norway may value good interpersonal relationships with friends and family the most, despite having valued free time more when he was younger and working, like

his Algerian counterpart. Because values evolve and shift according to the context, the human development approach remains relevant even as basic needs are met.

Because values evolve and shift according to the context, the human development approach remains relevant even as basic needs are met

Whether intentional or unintentional, the exclusion from the opportunities of one group by another group is often the root of deprivation and disadvantage

Barriers to universalism

Deprivations can be eliminated. The progress since the first Human Development Report in 1990 demonstrates this. The global HDI value has increased 20 percent since then, from 0.597 to 0.717. The increase in the HDI value for the least developed countries is 46 percent.¹¹⁰

Progress has not come easily, but the path to progress may have been easier than the path to the goal of leaving no one behind. Individuals who are still deprived may be the most difficult to reach—geographically, politically, socially and economically. It is time to push to eradicate the remaining deprivations not only in access to health care, education and livelihoods, but also in other dimensions of well-being, such as security, freedom of participation in political life and access to advanced, high-quality services.

The realization of this vision will face challenges. Some barriers may require technical solutions—greater fiscal resources and development assistance, gains in technology and improved data resources for monitoring and evaluation (see chapter 3). These barriers can be addressed, albeit not easily, through changes in national policies (see chapter 4) and in international systems (see chapter 5).

Other barriers are deeply embedded in social and political relationships and identities. The context in which many individuals make choices is fraught with insecurity, glaring inequalities and competition for scarce resources. Discriminatory laws, exclusionary social norms, violence, imbalances in political participation and unequal distribution of opportunities all stand in the way of progress. Exclusion can be intentional or unintentional, but the results are the same—some people will be more deprived than others, and not all people will have an equal chance to realize their full potential. Men have more choices than women, rich people have more choices than poor people, citizens have more choices than migrants and some ethnicities have more choices than others.

Progress towards universal human development requires a deep awareness and understanding of the drivers and dynamics of these groups' exclusion. The drivers and the dynamics inevitably vary across countries and regions. Universalism in practice is possible, but key

barriers and types of exclusion must be overcome (see infographic 2.1 at the beginning of the chapter).

Intolerance and exclusion and the related mechanisms

Whether intentional or unintentional, one group excluding another group from opportunities is often the root of deprivation and disadvantage. Membership in a group fulfils a basic desire to belong to a family, a community, a religion or a race. Individuals have multiple group affiliations at any one time and belong to different groups throughout life. Groups allow individuals to identify with others based on a shared characteristic or interest, but they also permit exclusion.

Group inequalities reflect divisions that are socially constructed and sustained because they establish a basis for unequal access to valued outcomes and scarce resources. Once inequalities are established, the organizational focus becomes how to maintain the distinctions and ensure group loyalty and solidarity so that those who benefit from membership in the group are able to maintain their advantageous positions. At the same time the dimensions and mechanisms of exclusion are dynamic, as are the characteristics that groups use as a basis for exclusion. An ethnic minority group may penetrate the political space that has been occupied by the majority—a success from the perspective of equity in political participation—but the members of the ethnic minority who occupy the space may then use class divisions to exclude others in the same ethnic minority from participating in policy decisions. It is thus important to recognize that group identity and barriers of exclusion tend to shift under strategies to protect advantages.

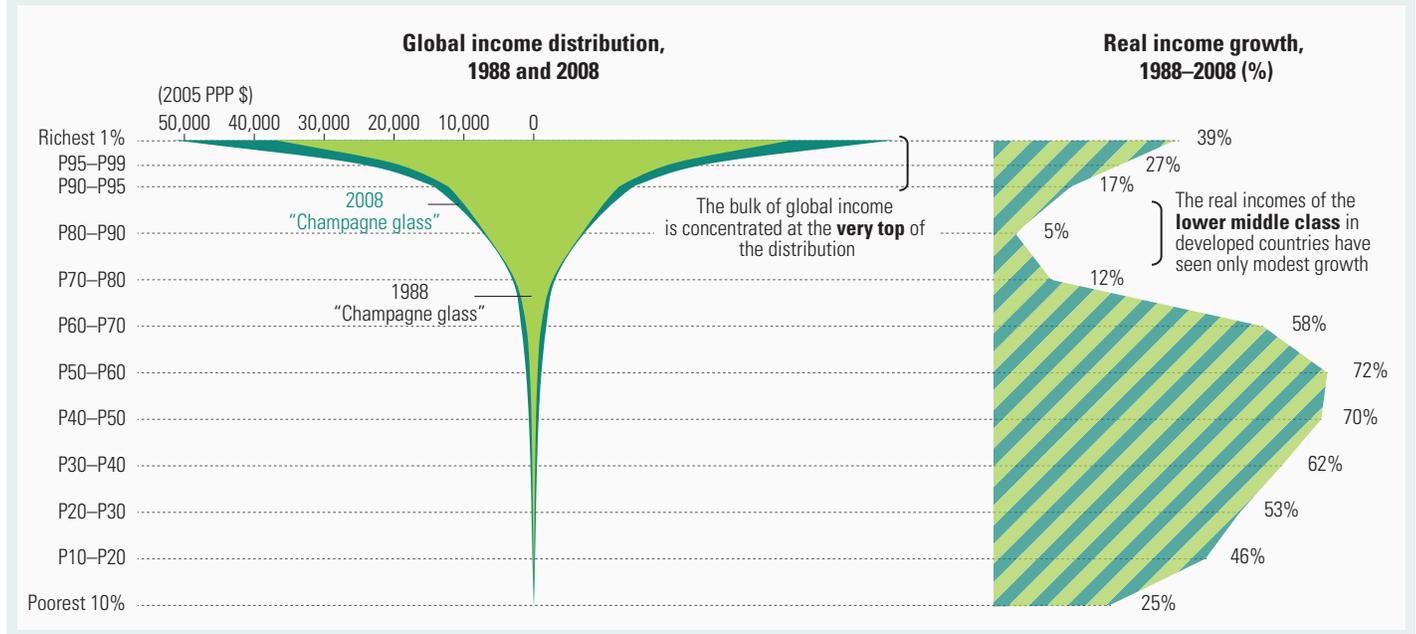
Many dynamics have a bearing on group formation and protection strategies. Today, trends in global income distribution present challenges to collective agreements and cooperation across countries and population segments. Voters in the lower middle class in developed countries are frustrated with the lower than average growth in their living standards relative to elites (box 2.9). The frustration is coupled with an awareness of high income growth in emerging economies such as China and India,

From the champagne glass to the elephant curve

The 1992 Human Development Report showed that global income distribution followed a champagne glass pattern, where the bulk of income is concentrated at the top of the distribution, and the global income distribution in 1998 and 2008 reflected that pattern (see left panel of figure). One might conclude that the people who are not at the top of the distribution have a collective interest in redistributing resources. But there seems to be a different lived experience across the stem of the glass. The rate of change in the real income between

1988 and 2008 follows an elephant curve (see right panel of figure).¹ The percentage change in real income favoured those who were in the bottom half and the top decile of the global income distribution, whereas the real income of the lower middle class in developed countries—grew only modestly. For example, in Germany the real income of the poorest 50 percent grew 0–7 percent, in the United States the poorest 50 percent saw real income growth of slightly over 20 percent and in Japan the poorest 10 percent saw real income decline.

Income gains from 1998 to 2008 have not been even across income deciles



Note
 1. Milanović 2016.
 Source: Human Development Report Office estimates based on Milanović (2016) and UNDP (1992).

which may become a source of resentment against trade with and migration from developing countries.

The pace of change is rapid and unpredictable, and many people are struggling to find their way. With globalization and greater human mobility, come changes in demographic structures, languages and cultural diversity. From a human development perspective, diversity should be celebrated as a powerful ingredient of human creativity. But there are also risks that social cohesion, mutual respect and tolerance of differences can be strained or break down altogether, resulting in xenophobia, nationalism, discrimination and violence. There can be a lack of recognition or appreciation for different beliefs and views, norms

and cultures, and lifestyles. Historically, people have navigated periods of widespread change and unpredictability, but these periods are often characterized by immense suffering and conflict. Strict and extreme beliefs and views—whether religious or political—breed intolerance and prevent flexibility and adjustability to change. It is therefore crucial to identify and reverse patterns of intolerance during such times, whether discriminatory laws, exclusionary social norms or violence and coercion and to instead respond to emerging global challenges through mutual respect and collaboration. Discrimination, exclusion and intolerance run counter to universalism—the centrepiece of human development and the cornerstone of the world we want.

Legal and political institutions can be used and abused to perpetuate group divisions

Discriminatory laws

Legal and political institutions can be used and abused to perpetuate group divisions. An extreme case relates to the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community in the 73 countries and five territories where same-sex sexual acts are illegal, including 13 where such acts are punishable by death.¹¹¹ Only 10 countries grant lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people equal constitutional rights.¹¹² Laws are discriminatory in other cases because they prevent certain groups from accessing services or opportunities, such as when host countries legally bar refugees from working. State policies can be discriminatory as well—such as denying citizenship or the right to vote or run for political office. National borders thus become legal instruments that can reinforce inequalities between the citizens of different countries. Within-country inequalities are wide, but the laws and practices in countries of birth can also determine life chances and opportunities.

In some cases women do not have the same legal rights as men. Women's opportunities are impeded by law in 155 out of 173 countries with data. In 100 countries women are prevented from engaging in some professions because of their gender. In 32 countries the procedures that women face to obtain a passport differ from those that men face. In 18 countries women need their husband's approval to take a job. And in 46 countries laws do not protect women from domestic violence.¹¹³ Women also face discrimination if their opportunities and choices are restricted because appropriate protective laws have not been enacted—for example, when paid maternity leave is not mandated or when discriminatory hiring practices are tolerated.

As the 2015 Human Development Report highlighted, far more women would become active in the labour market and have better wages and positions of influence if regulations were in place to reduce workplace harassment against women, ensure equal wages and hiring practices and provide care options for children and older people.¹¹⁴ Discriminatory laws and the lack of legislation restrict women's freedoms and impede their full participation in public life as equal members of society. These outcomes are linked to the fact that women are often excluded

from the political spaces where policies and legislation are agreed. Globally women hold only 22 percent of the seats in parliament, 26 percent of the seats on the highest courts and 18 percent of ministerial positions.

Regulations and the nature of institutions can also indirectly limit the access poor people have to services and resources. For example, banks that require minimum deposits limit access to financial services for poor people. Around 2 billion people worldwide are still unbanked—lacking accounts at banks, other financial institutions or mobile money service providers.¹¹⁵ Similarly, the absence of birth registrations and lack of identity cards can prevent poor people from gaining access to many public services.

Social norms

Social norms are implicitly established rules of behaviour. Some may be helpful in promoting harmonious coexistence, but others may be discriminatory, prejudicial and exclusive.

For example, prejudice and social perceptions often lead to unequal outcomes among different groups in job markets, which reduces livelihood opportunities for minorities. In employment recruitment in the United States White job applicants are often systematically selected over African American and Latino job applicants, even when the minorities have equal or higher qualifications. African Americans are often rejected solely on the basis of their names (which employers glean from resumes) and receive only half as many job offers as White candidates. Despite Nepal's laws against untouchability, individuals considered of lower caste continue to be excluded from certain jobs and services, and Dalits earn considerably less than non-Dalits. Discriminatory treatment of persons with disabilities is widespread and has implications for their livelihoods. In Mauritius, Panama, Peru, the Russian Federation and the United States the employment gap between persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities is more than 40 percentage points.¹¹⁶

In many countries social norms reduce choice and opportunities for women and girls. As the 2015 Human Development Report highlighted, norms and traditions that distribute the bulk of unpaid work in the home to women

limit women’s participation in the labour market and can prevent girls from attending school.¹¹⁷ Women are typically responsible for more than three-quarters of unpaid care work in the household.¹¹⁸ The presence of women as customers in cafés or restaurants may also be discouraged by social norms, and in some cases it is taboo for women to travel in public without being accompanied by a man.¹¹⁹ Practices such as female genital mutilation and cutting, performed on 200 million girls and women alive today, are also linked to social norms and put girls at extreme and unnecessary health risk.¹²⁰

Social norms in marriage can reduce opportunities and reinforce inequalities. Child marriage is a fundamental violation of human rights, yet it continues because of customs and other normative factors.¹²¹ In South Asia 46 percent of girls become child brides, and many marry before age 15 (figure 2.12). Early marriage limits a girl’s future development because it increases the likelihood of early pregnancy, social isolation and leaving school early.

There is also evidence that the choices people make in marriage reinforce socioeconomic hierarchies and ethnic divisions because people tend to marry within their own socioeconomic or ethnic group. A study in the United

Kingdom found that 56 percent of the current generation of women have married a partner in the same social class, a rising trend.¹²² Some 11 percent of the increase in inequality in developed countries since the 1980s is due to people’s choice to marry at a similar socioeconomic level—doctors marrying lawyers, for instance.¹²³ Marriage also perpetuates social norms and traditions linked to ethnic groups. The preference in Mauritius for marrying within the same ethnic group overrides even class-based considerations.¹²⁴

Violence

Perhaps the most direct and radical mechanism of exclusion is violence. Coercive tools enable one group to force its vision of society on another and to protect its access to resources, outcomes and the power to make decisions. Motivations include consolidating political power, safeguarding the well-being of elites, controlling the distribution of resources, seizing territory and resources and favouring ideologies based on the supremacy of one identity and set of values.¹²⁵

Exclusion breeds violence. One study drawing on global data since 1945 found that a 30 percent increase in the size of the politically excluded population boosted the chance of civil war by 25 percent.¹²⁶ Another study found that countries with higher inequality among ethnic groups have lower incomes overall and a more uneven distribution of services and infrastructure and are more prone to conflict and violence.¹²⁷

Intolerance of others—legal, social or coercive—is antithetical to human development and to universalism. Intolerance, exclusion and inequality are nonetheless common and are on the rise in some cases. Overcoming these barriers will require finding ways to link collective interests to equity and justice (see chapter 3).

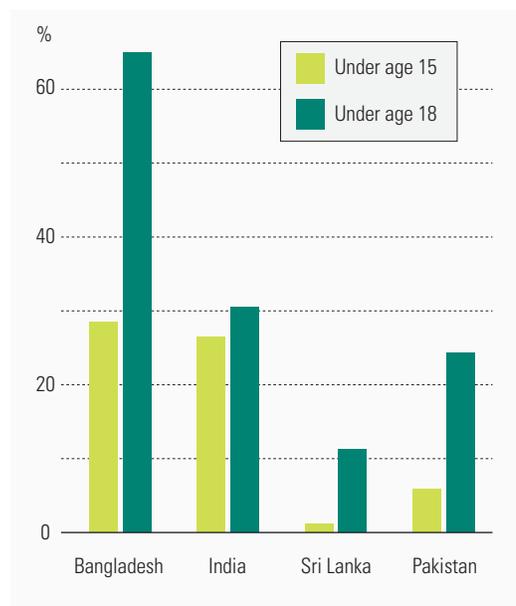
Elite capture of institutions

Some thrive in a global labour market owing to their advanced skills and education. They retire comfortably with private pension funds and savings. They send their children to the best schools for advanced tertiary education. They

Intolerance of others—legal, social or coercive—is antithetical to human development and to universalism

FIGURE 2.12

In South Asia many girls marry before age 18—some before age 15



Source: Banu 2016.

Extreme inequality and the concentration of capabilities and opportunities among a narrow elite are part of a vicious circle

live in the safest communities. And they have the means to influence the political process in their favour.

There are links among income inequality, inequalities in education and health care and inequalities in political participation and influence. The top 1 percent of the wealth distribution holds 46 percent of the world's wealth.¹²⁸ Much of the income gain in recent decades has been at the top: 44 percent of the income earned between 1988 and 2008 went to only 5 percent of the population.¹²⁹ Such income inequalities influence inequalities in other dimensions of well-being.

Extreme inequality and the concentration of capabilities and opportunities among a narrow elite are part of a vicious circle. As inequalities become wider, marginalized and excluded groups face growing deficiencies in opportunities to expand and apply their capabilities and to influence the institutions and policies that determine the subsequent distribution. Positive opportunities for political participation and influence are central to breaking the vicious circle.

The interests of the middle class may also sometimes lead to policy decisions that perpetuate deprivations and the exclusion of poorer groups. Antipoverty programmes have been opposed in some countries because they do not benefit the middle class, an important political constituency.¹³⁰ One result is that redistribution programmes can have limited coverage among the poorest population and exhibit substantial leakage to the middle class and elites. Some programmes tie eligibility for transfers to employment in the formal sector in order to gain the support of the middle class.¹³¹ In Tanzania distributing vouchers for agricultural inputs disproportionately benefited the households of village officials, who received 60 percent of the vouchers.¹³² These approaches increase political support, but miss those who are most in need of support.

Conditional cash transfers have generated impressive reductions in poverty, but their reach has extended beyond poor people. In some cases this has been to ensure that people who are near poverty and people who are vulnerable have access to funds, but there is also leakage to those with less need. The share of nonpoor beneficiaries of conditional cash

transfers increased from 46 percent in 2004 to 65 percent in 2010 in Ecuador and from 40 percent in 2002 to 61 percent in 2010 in Mexico.¹³³

Elite capture of the benefits of development and the institutions—markets, states and civil society—that guide the distribution of opportunities can widen and perpetuate divisions in capabilities in highly unequal societies.¹³⁴ The extreme concentration of capabilities and opportunities at the top can erode democratic governance and reduce pluralism in decision-making. Equity and justice take a back seat to rules that perpetuate divides.

Weak bargaining power

Excluded groups are in a weak position to instigate the transformation of institutions because of the extent of inequality and elite capture. They lack agency and voice and have little political leverage to influence policy outcomes and legislation through traditional means. Over the past three decades, various measures have shown a decline in rights of free association and collective bargaining (figure 2.13).¹³⁵ The increasingly flexible and part-time nature of work reduces the ability of traditional worker organizations, such as trade unions, to counter elite interests.

Other, sometimes dangerous and debilitating means of participating become more attractive in highly unequal societies. There has been a steady increase in local and global protests in recent years, including demonstrations and rallies, campaigns of social and political movements and unorganized crowd actions such as riots (843 worldwide between 2006 and 2013).¹³⁶ This suggests that people do not feel sufficiently empowered by established political processes and are choosing to voice their concerns in alternative ways.

Groups may be organizing and participating in peaceful marches and rallies, but they are also using civil disobedience to magnify their voices by blocking roads and occupying city streets and public spaces. They are using technology to leak government and corporate data. The global circulation of the Panama Papers drew attention to grievances against offshore tax havens and hidden wealth accumulation among the world's political and corporate leaders.

FIGURE 2.13

Over the past three decades there has been a decline in rights of free association and collective bargaining



Note: Data are for 73 countries.
Source: Human Development Report Office estimates based on Marx, Soares and Van Acker (2015).

Narrow self-identities

Economic, ecological and technological systems extend across national borders. Decisions in one nation or region can affect individuals on the opposite side of the world. Trade policies in Europe can affect agricultural livelihoods in Latin America. Carbon emissions in Asia can generate climate vulnerabilities in Africa. Financial policies in the United States can shift global capital flows. Universal human development and ensuring opportunities for all thus require a united global effort to reduce inequalities and empower marginalized groups.

At a time when global action and collaboration are imperative, self-identities are narrowing. Social and political movements linked to identity, whether nationalist or ethnonationalist, seem to be increasing in frequency and strength. Identity politics are on the rise. Data from 1816 to 2001 show a peak in 2001 when almost 90 percent of the conflicts in the world

were being fought by nationalists seeking to establish separate nation-states or between ethnicities over ethnic balances of power within existing states.¹³⁷ The Brexit is one of the most recent examples of a retreat to nationalism among individuals who are feeling alienated in a changing world. This shift towards support for nationalism might have been foreseen.

Breaking down barriers

Divisions and exclusions, while often deep, are not static. Shocks, disasters, crises, political shifts, the spread of technologies, the globalization of information, business and social networks—all open space for new alignments and the redistribution of political and material resources across groups. This is why we need to understand emerging trends that can unite, empower and motivate people to push for change and the potential collective interests of groups that may stand to gain influence and leverage. The 2030 Agenda is momentous in that it focuses on the universal reduction of deprivations. If this intergovernmental agreement can be harnessed to truly shift institutions onto a path that promotes justice, equity and sustainability, remaining deprivations and inequalities can be overcome.

The human development approach has always advocated for the expansion of capabilities and freedoms to the fullest for all people regardless of gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other group identity. But translating universalism from principle to practice will have to rely on more than mapping the groups that have been bypassed in the human development journey and identifying the barriers to ensure that human development reaches everyone. It will also require refocusing on some elements of the human development analytical approach that have so far been insufficiently considered, such as voice and participation, identity and diversity, inclusion and social justice. Chapter 3 is devoted to such analysis.

Divisions and exclusions, while often deep, are not static