

The Doha Colloquium

# Strengthening Marriage and Supporting Families

Global Scholars and Practitioners in Conversation



Malta 6-7 October 2009

## The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (FSD)

The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development was established on September 2005 by an organizing committee appointed by HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, Consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, State of Qatar.

The idea to set up the Institute came about as a result of an International Conference for the Family held in Doha in 2004, in commemoration with the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The UN International Year of the Family, under the patronage of HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned. The main outcome of the conference was the Doha Declaration which was a call for actions by many government representatives and members of civil society, to express their commitments to protect the family.

The Institute reflects the commitment of Her Highness to establish a global study centre that will provide the region and the world with academic research, interdisciplinary studies and policy initiatives to support the efforts of governments, international organizations, UN agencies and civil societies to develop and implement family development plans, policies and programs.

The organizational structure of FSD reflects the mission and objectives of FSD consistent the call for actions as stipulated under the Doha Declaration as follows:



### The Implementation and Social Outreach Division

- support regional and international programs to strengthen the family, consistent with the Doha Declaration
- develop and maintain cooperative working relationships with relevant NGOs
- develop and disseminate information about positive family values and promote strong family relationships through education, training and publications.
- organize regular family colloquia dealing with the crucial role of the family, the government and society in social and economic development

### The Family Policy Division

- develop close working relationship with local, regional and international policymakers to encourage the recognition and implementation of the norms and calls for action set out in the Doha Declaration
- organize periodic regional and international Doha Briefings for policymakers and diplomats on the norms and calls for action set out in the Doha Declaration.

### The Research Division

- develop and maintain regional and international networks of family scholars
- support on-going research projects consistent with the Doha Declaration
- convening and coordinating research-related Doha Colloquia and publishing the work products periodically under the title 'The Family in the New Millennium'.

## The Cana Movement

The Cana Movement is a lay non-governmental organization. For over fifty years, the Movement's main priority was to render its services to the Maltese family. Our services are addressed not only to help young people in their preparation for marriage but also to accompany families throughout their married life. The Cana Movement has three main specific programmes of activity:

The educational programme which enables young couples to discover and mature their commitment for marriage.

Marriage enhancement and marriage enrichment courses. A monthly publication 'Familjakana', which includes articles in Maltese and English, of special interest to all the members of the family particularly to couples is issued to reach this goal.

The therapeutic and supportive programme. This mainly consists of a counselling service offered by trained counsellors and professional psychologists. In addition to this, Cana also offers free legal service to those who need advice. This programme also includes the services of a number of support groups, namely: TIPS (Tiny infants parents support group), WAW (Wanting and Waiting), ABC (Association of breastfeeding mothers group), Multiple Birth Connection; Separated Persons support group and the Single Mothers support group.

Cana Movement is also involved in the organization of conferences regarding the family, both at a national and international level.

Through its various services Cana Movement tries to strengthen family links and show its concern, through practical help, to broken families and all those who knock at its door for help.



## The Centre for Family Studies

The Centre for Family Studies is a centre of excellence, set up in the academic year of 2008/9 at the University of Malta as an inter-faculty institution. The aims of the Centre are:

- to organise, encourage and promote research on all aspects of family life with particular reference to the Maltese cultural context;
- to offer certificate, degree and postgraduate courses including professional courses in the field of family studies;
- to organise and promote multidisciplinary workshops, seminars and conferences on family issues;
- to network and liaise with centres and organisations related to Family Studies, both local and overseas and to serve as a resource centre and
- to offer consultative services in the field of family related matters to institutions assisting families, governmental and non governmental agencies.



### Dato' Fatimah Saad

Nationality: Malaysian

Dato' Fatimah Saad, is currently working as the Director of Implementation and Social Outreach Division of the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development (DIIFSD), Qatar. Her work involves developing innovative evidenced- based family related programmes and activities for the public and service personnels such as social workers, health personnel and teachers.

The division's focus is to help promote strong and healthy families consistent with the call of actions as stipulated under the Doha Declaration. The Doha Declaration reaffirms that the family is the natural and fundamental group of society, as declared in article 16 (3) of the Universal Declaration of human Rights.

She served the Malaysian government for 30 years before joining the Institute in late 2006. Her last post in Malaysia was as the Director General of the National Population and Family Development Board. Her responsibilities as the DG were mainly to plan, direct, organize and develop policies and programmes in three focus areas i.e. family development , population research and reproductive health.

She has an extensive experience during her tenure with the Board. Her work exposure over the years involved research, training, program development and resource, people and financial management. Among her greatest achievements, was to suggest and implement the development the family training module which is famously known as "Module Kasih' literally means Love Module, which is a comprehensive module for the family ranging from Preparation for Marriage, Parenting of Small Children, Parenting of Adolescents, Fathering and Adolescent Development, which was implemented throughout the country till today. She also initiated the process to develop the National Family Policy which is in its final stage of development and would be endorsed by the Malaysian government within this year.

She represented Malaysia at the UN Commission for Population and Development from 2000 to 2006. She had also actively participated as Malaysian representative at many high level meetings internationally and regionally in the capacity as paper presenters, chairperson, and rapporteurs.

In recognition of her illustrious service to the Malaysian government she was conferred the title of Dato', by the King of Malaysia in 2005.



## Dr Richard G. Wilkins J.D.

Managing Director of The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development at Education City, Doha, Qatar

Richard G. Wilkins, The Robert W. Barker Professor of Law at Brigham Young University (On Leave), is the Managing Director of The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development at Education City, Doha, Qatar. Established by Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser Al-Missned, Consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, the Institute sponsors and conducts interdisciplinary international research regarding family life and assists local, national and international actors with the development and implementation of policies that will strengthen the family as "the natural and fundamental group unit of society." Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16(3).

For the past 12 years, until its recent closure, Professor Wilkins was also Managing Director of the World Family Policy Center at the J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University, in Provo, Utah. He has written extensively on United States constitutional law, international law, family policy, federal jurisdiction and legal advocacy. He is a former Assistant to the Solicitor General, United States Department of Justice.

Professor Wilkins served as Chair of the NGO Working Committee for the 2004 Doha

International Conference for the Family. The Conference negotiated and adopted The Doha Declaration, which reaffirms the international community's commitments to the natural family. The Doha Declaration was noted by the UN General Assembly at its December 6, 2004, Special Session on the International Year of the Family.

Professor Wilkins has argued eight cases before the United States Supreme Court and has presented major papers at conferences in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North and South America, and Scandinavia. He has taught a course on international human rights in Beijing, China, and has made presentations to numerous UN bodies and commissions, including the UN General Assembly, the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on Human Settlements. He has testified before legislative panels in Australia, the European Union, Sweden and the United States and has assisted various governmental and non-governmental advisory committees on issues related to the proposed Constitution for the European Union. He has drafted several State constitutional provisions preserving marriage as the union of a man and a woman, including Utah's Proposition Three (adopted in 2004).

Professor Wilkins is married to Melany Moore Wilkins, who holds a Masters Degree in Social Work. They are the parents of four children and have six grandchildren.



## Dr Anna Maria Vella MD, MSc

Cana Movement  
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Anna Maria holds a senior medical post at the Substance Misuse Unit run by Sedqa and specializes in care for pregnant women with a substance misuse problems and women who are sex workers. She is a visiting lecturer at the University of Malta in various faculties teaching on Addiction. She graduated in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Perugia (Italy) and has a Masters degree in Public Health from the University of Malta and a Post Graduate Diploma in Women's Health from the University of Dublin. She is currently working towards a Masters in Bioethics at St Mary's University College, London.

For the past four years she has been President of Cana Movement Malta whose mission is to help couples prepare for marriage; to work with couples and families so that they grow in life, joy and stability and to stand by couples and individuals when they are facing difficulties in their marriage. She was a member of the National Family Commission for five years.

Anna Maria has been married for the past 23 years to Antoine, and has a 19 year old daughter Maria.



## Dr Angela Abela PhD

Centre for Family Studies, University of Malta  
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Angela Abela is the Director of the Centre for Family Studies at the University of Malta, where she is also Course Director of the Professional Masters Programme in Clinical, Counselling and Educational psychology. Angela is also a clinical psychologist and a UKCP registered family therapist and supervisor. As Past President of the Maltese Psychological Association, she has played a pioneering role in the setting up of the psychology profession in Malta. She is a former chairperson of the National Family Commission and a consultant in the area of children and families for government and the Social Affairs Committee in Parliament. She is also a supervisor for professionals working in public social agencies in the area of children and families. On an international level, she has worked extensively as an expert of the Council of Europe in the area of parenting children at risk of social exclusion, and in supporting children and families living in poverty. Currently she is a consultant for the Children's Rights on Social Services project of the Council of Europe and on a new project for traumatised children in Georgia. She holds a PhD from the Tavistock Clinic and the University of London and a Masters degree in Clinical psychology from the Universite de La Sorbonne Paris V. She has published in the area of children and families and supervision practice and is an associate editor on *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry* published by Sage.

## Professor Karen Bogenschneider

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### Strengthening families: Why family policy is important and what role policymakers and professionals can play



How important is public policy in strengthening families and supporting the functions families perform for their members and society? Should families be a focus of public policy? Would policymaking benefit from a family perspective that examines (a) what the consequences are of policies for family well-being, and (b) when families are used as a means to accomplish other policy ends. A rationale will be presented that supports the establishment of family policy as a field of inquiry and a separate subfield of social policy. For example, recent evidence suggests that families are a fundamental foundation for producing the productive workers a sound economy demands and the caring, committed citizens that a strong democracy requires. Family policy will be discussed as an efficient investment of public resources, an effective means of promoting positive child and youth development, and a normative ideal held by policymakers and the public that has the potential to foster political consensus and build common ground. Based on interviews of research-minded policymakers and policy-minded researchers, several pragmatic strategies will be discussed for how policymakers and professionals can build evidence-based policies that strengthen and support families.

**Karen Bogenschneider** is a Rothermel Bascom Professor of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Family Policy Specialist at University of Wisconsin-Extension. Since its inception in 1993, Professor Bogenschneider has served as director of the Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars—a series of presentations, briefing reports, discussion sessions, and newsletters for state policymakers. Since 1999, she has served as Executive Director of the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars, which is currently providing technical assistance to 28 sites across the country conducting or planning to conduct Family Impact Seminars in their state capitals. Dr. Bogenschneider's book, *Family Policy Matters: How Policymaking Affects Families and What Professionals Can Do*, is in its second edition. Another book coauthored with Tom Corbett – *Evidence-Based Policymaking: Insights from Policy-Minded Researchers and Research-Minded Policymakers* – will be released next spring. Her invited decade review on family policy will appear next fall in the *Journal of Marriage and Family*. She has published in academic journals like *Child Development* and in applied journals like *Family Relations*. In 2003, Dr. Bogenschneider received a named professorship. In 2008 she received an award from the Board of Human Sciences of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges Engagement Award for exceptional creativity and scholarship in the development, application and evaluation of outreach, extension, and public service programs.

## Professor Paul Amato

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### Children and divorce: similarities and differences between the United States and Europe



Although the United States has the highest divorce rate of any Western nation, divorce rates have been increasing in almost all European countries. In this review, I compare the effects of divorce on children in the United States and Europe. The review focuses on various forms of child well-being, explanations for the links between divorce and child well-being, and factors that moderate the associations between divorce and child well-being. Although the research literature reveals some differences, a great deal of similarity in the consequences of divorce appears to exist across countries. Nevertheless, future research that directly compares the United States with specific European nations would add greatly to our understanding of this topic.

**Paul Amato** is the Arnold and Bette Hoffman Professor of Family Sociology and Demography at Pennsylvania State University. He has published over 100 journal articles and five books. He received the Reuben Hill Award from the National Council on Family Relations in 1993, 1999, 2001, and 2008 for the best research article on the family; the Stanley Cohen Distinguished Research Award from the American Association of Family and Conciliation Courts in 2002; the Distinguished Career Award from the Family Section of the American Sociological Association in 2006, and the Ernest Burgess lifetime achievement award from the National Council on Family Relations in 2008.

## Agenda

### Tuesday, 6 October

- 08:30 Registration
- 09:00 Welcome address by Dr Anna Maria Vella  
President of Cana Movement
- Introduction by Dr Richard Wilkins  
Managing Director of The Doha  
International Institute for Family Studies  
and Development
- Inaugural speech by HE Dr George Abela  
President of the Republic of Malta
- 09:30 Key note speech by Prof Karen  
Bogenschneider  
**Strengthening families: why family  
policy is important and what role  
policymakers and professionals  
can play**
- 10:30 Coffee break
- 11:00 Prof Paul Amato  
**Children and divorce: similarities and  
differences between the United States  
and Europe**
- 11:45 Dr Justine van Lawick  
**Systemic work with escalations  
and violence in families**
- 12:30 Ms Marie-Cecile Renoux  
**Helping families living in a  
precarious condition. Combating  
poverty amongst these children  
and their families**
- 13:15 Lunch break
- 14:15 Prof Layaci Anser  
**Divorce in Gulf societies: a major  
challenge to family and marriage**
- 15:00 Prof Frank Fincham  
**Is there a role for prayer in  
strengthening marriage and  
families?**
- 15:45 Coffee break
- 16:15 Reactions from the floor and an open  
discussion about the interventions  
of the day
- 17:00 Close of first day by Hon Mr Edwin  
Vassallo Chairperson of Standing  
Committee  
on Social Affairs

### Wednesday, 7 October

- 09:00 Introduction by Dr Angela Abela  
Director of the Centre for Family  
Studies, University of Malta
- Address by Hon Mr John Dalli  
Minister for the Family
- 09:30 Key note speech by Prof Jan Walker  
**Marriage, parenting, protecting  
children's best interests and the  
role of the state**
- 10:30 Coffee break
- 11:00 Prof Michael E. Lamb  
**Fathers, mothers and child  
development**
- 11:45 Dr Monica Whitty  
**How adolescents and children are  
using the internet and the impact  
it has on the relationship with  
their parents. Policy proposals**
- 12:15 Prof Maria Letizia Tanturri  
**Why are we having fewer  
babies? Understanding and  
responding to European low  
fertility**
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:45 Dr Ruth Farrugia  
**State responsibility in  
strengthening families**
- 15:30 Coffee break
- 16:00 Reactions from the floor  
and an open discussion about  
the interventions of the day
- 16:45 Closure of the Colloquium by  
Rev Dr Joseph Mizzi  
Director of Cana Movement
- 17:00 Close of the Colloquium by Hon Dr  
Louis Galea. Speaker of the House  
of Representatives.

## Dr Justine van Lawick

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### Systemic work with escalations and violence in families

This presentation will address a systemic view on domestic violence.

Couple and Family dynamics are in the centre of this perspective. Different dynamics are connected to family violence: first a dynamic of power and control where one wants to control the other person and second a dynamic of loss of control where conflicts walk out of hand. The first is more intentional, the second is not. Different interventions are needed with the different dynamics.

Film clips and case material will illustrate this systemic work.

The presentation will end with policy proposals.



**Justine van Lawick** is clinical psychologist, family therapist and director of training in the Lorentzhuis, centre for systemic therapy, training and consultation in Haarlem, the Netherlands. Her areas of interest focus on addressing violent behaviour in families with compassion for all involved family members and without blaming. Another area of interest is working with marginalised families. Justine published many articles and a book.

## Marie Cécile Renoux

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### Helping families living in a precarious condition. Combating poverty amongst these children and their families

Very often, extreme poverty has serious consequences on family life, notably the separation of children from their parents. The parents themselves often display endless courage in supporting their children and do not want to give them up. But the great efforts required to keep a family united in the face of poverty can also sap the energy and hopes of these people.

In France, 110,000 children live in placements outside the family home as a result of judiciary measures. Very often such children and their families are not followed up adequately and the separation frequently causes trauma for the children as well as for the parents. Though in certain situations it is inevitable, it could be avoided in a large number of cases.

How can we do things differently? Far too often, – particularly in situations of extreme poverty – in the name of “protecting the child”, these children are deprived of vital contact with their parents in spite of the fact that the right to this contact is recognised by the International Convention of Children’s Rights.

The movement ATD Quart Monde undertakes projects which aim to support families with very few means. Our mistakes, our successes and our reflections with the families and professionals involved have allowed us to understand which methods can best help us to support them in the efforts they undertake to stay united.



**Marie-Cécile Renoux** is the delegate of ATD Quart Monde to the European Union. A permanent volunteer with ATD Quart Monde since 1977, she has been involved in several actions supporting families in situations of extreme poverty in France. From 1999 to 2004, she was the delegate of family-related questions within ATD Quart Monde. As part of this role, she was a member of a committee of experts in the European Council.

## Professor Layachi Anser

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### Divorce in Gulf societies: a major challenge to family and marriage



Arab Gulf societies are changing very fast and facing many challenges related to their economic development and social transformation. The pace of structural change is so important and wide ranging. The family, marriage and kinship relations are among the areas most affected by such structural change. This paper addresses one of the major problems facing family and marriage in Gulf societies in the era of globalization, which is divorce. The traditional extended family built on tribal values and alliances has been a cornerstone in the social structure for centuries. It represented a strong social bond achieving cohesiveness and solidarity in marital life. But that situation is slowly giving way to new forms based on modern and market oriented values. Following the oil boom and subsequent social changes in family laws, status of women, the expansion of education and wage employment, family bonds and marriage are coming under growing pressure and facing many challenges. Divorce is one of the greatest problems facing family in Gulf societies. Although divorce is not a new phenomenon it has recently reached alarming proportions. The paper argues that rapid economic development, changing social and cultural relations and value systems and the contradictory effects of globalization represent some of the main factors affecting family and marriage life leading to a big surge in divorce rates in Arab Gulf countries. The consequences of divorce on family and society are diverse and devastating, especially for women and children. The paper also explores the various major consequences and victims of divorce as well as putting forward some policy recommendations to tackle this problem.

**Layachi Anser** is professor of Sociology at leading Middle Eastern universities. He has for the last 20 years taught and carried sociological research on various issues relating to economic development and social change in the Middle East and North Africa. His work centered particularly on the rise of civil society, the status of women, family and marriage. He published more than 09 books among them; *Managing Competencies: leadership and communication* 2005, *Towards a Critical Sociology*. (1999), 2003., *Sociology of Democracy and Rebellion in Algeria* 1999. *Muslims and Muslim Families in Europe*, (forthcoming). He also published a great number of journal articles and research papers, the latest are: "The Weak Circle: Violence Against Children" 2005, "The Silent Ordeal: Beaten wives in Arab Society" 2006, "Matrimonial Strategies: Social Reproduction and Integration in Algeria" 2007, "The Prospects for Change in Arab Family: from patriarchy to partnership" 2008, *The Changing Status of Qatari Women* (Forthcoming). He presently leads a research team working on the participation of Qatari women in public life, and is actively involved in the field of consultancy with a number of government and public agencies on issues related to the status of women, marital relations and family life.

## Professor Frank D. Fincham

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### Is there a role for prayer in strengthening marriage and families?



Prayer is a ubiquitous human activity found throughout the world. Despite its prevalence and professed influence in people's lives, however, prayer has received remarkably little research attention. This presentation reports data from both basic and applied research that demonstrates the impact of prayer in close relationships, including its impact on relationship satisfaction, forgiveness and infidelity. Potential mechanisms that might mediate effects are also identified. It then presents a goal theoretic model of how prayer influences interpersonal behavior and describes its application to preventive intervention designed to strengthen marriage. Several potential pitfalls of such application are outlined. Finally, given the separation of church and state in many countries, the implications for social policy are considered.

**Frank Fincham**, Ph.D. obtained a doctoral degree in social psychology while a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University. He then completed postdoctoral training in clinical psychology at Stony Brook University before assuming a position as assistant professor at University of Illinois where he ultimately became professor and Director of Clinical Training. He was SUNY Distinguished Professor at University at Buffalo before assuming his current position as Eminent Scholar at Florida State University where he now serves as Director of its Family Institute.

The author of over 180 publications his research has been widely recognized by numerous awards, including the Berscheid-Hatfield Award for "sustained, substantial, and distinguished contributions to the field of personal relationships" from the International Network on Personal Relationships, and the President's Award for "Distinguished contributions to psychological knowledge" from the British Psychological Society. A Fellow of five different professional societies, Fincham has been listed among the top 25 psychologists in world in terms of impact (defined as number of citations per paper).

## Emeritus Professor Janet Walker

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### Marriage, parenting, protecting children's best interests and the role of the state



The ever-increasing diversity in family forms has provoked continuing concerns in England about the seeming instability of family life and about poor outcomes for children. The last decade has seen an unprecedented policy interest in improving the life chances of children and young people by eradicating child poverty, raising the standard of education, and ensuring that children are healthy, safe, able to enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and achieve economic well-being in adulthood. The British Government has recognised that most families will experience a range of challenges and transitions at different times and life-stages and that many might need help to cope with these, particularly if family breakdown is to be minimised. Some critics have argued that the focus on providing wide and varied support is symptomatic of a nanny-state and unnecessary interference in the autonomy and privacy of family life. Others argue that it is the duty of the state to facilitate family well-being and to ensure the protection of children.

This paper will examine the changing expectations of parenting and the role of the State in strengthening family life and protecting children's best interests. It will argue that a greater understanding of the stresses and strains facing parents should enable policies to be developed which focus less on indicating how people should live their lives and sanctioning parents when they fail to meet their obligations, and

more on improving communication between family members and enhancing the quality of relationships. Given that children thrive best in families characterised by consistent care and that such care is closely associated with stable and harmonious relationships between parents, this is an important issue. This paper will review the research evidence and suggest ways in which more operationalised support might protect the best interests of children and adults.

**Janet Walker** is Emeritus Professor of Family Policy and Strategic Research Adviser in the Institute of Health and Society at Newcastle University. During her career she has practised as a probation officer, family therapist and family mediator. She has led multi-disciplinary teams in over 50 studies in the fields of marriage and divorce, parenting, youth justice, family communication and domestic violence. Currently, Janet is leading three studies for the British Government relating to: helping adults maintain strong couple relationships; new approaches to supporting children with additional needs; and new ways of working with children in state care.

Janet has been an expert adviser to the Council of Europe and is currently Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Family and Parenting Institute, London; Deputy Chair of the Government's Social Security Advisory Committee; and a Board member of the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, Calgary.

## Professor Michael E. Lamb

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### Fathers, mothers and child development



Over the last few decades, researchers and policy makers have become increasingly aware of the ways in which differences and inequalities among communities and schools affect children's development and adjustment. This recognition should not lead us to discount the continued formative importance of experiences within the family, however. Indeed, as I will show in this presentation, there is substantial evidence that parent-child relationships shape the development of fundamental aspects of emotional, social, and personality from the earliest months of life and that parents have the greatest impact on developmental trajectories, whether assessed in childhood or adulthood. Furthermore, the quality of the relationships between the two parents, like the quality of their relationships with other significant figures in their lives, also have substantial long term effects on children. Because my goal is broad, I will not dwell on the results of particular studies, but will provide a synthesis of the available literature, drawing on many

important contributions to the Fifth edition of The role of the father in child development (edited by Michael Lamb, to be published by Wiley in 2010).

**Michael E. Lamb**, Head of the Department on Social and Developmental Psychology at the University of Cambridge, has studied mother-, father-, and carer-child relationships and their impact on children's adjustment in diverse family constellations as well as techniques for interviewing alleged victims of child abuse, and his work on the application of research findings to contemporary social issues has been recognized widely. He has received honorary degrees from the Universities of Goteborg (Sweden) and East Anglia, as well as the James McKeen Cattell Award from the Association for Psychological Science for Lifetime Contributions to Applied Psychological Research. He has published widely in professional journals and his most recent books are *Child sexual abuse: Disclosure, delay and denial* (Erlbaum/Taylor & Francis, 2007), *Tell me what happened: Structured investigative interviews of child victims and witnesses* (Wiley, 2008), and *The role of the father in child development* (5th Ed., Wiley, in press).

## Dr Monica Whitty

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### How Adolescents and Children are using the internet and the impact it has on the relationship with their parents. Policy proposals

This paper examines how children and adolescents use the Internet for educational purposes and play. Drawing from a psychological perspective, it focuses on the uses and problems that accompany their internet usage. Issues to do with private and public space will also be addressed. Often what is public online is perceived as private and this can lead to problematic usage. Moreover, the paper examines the types of access parents and educators have to adolescents' and children's internet usage. It also considers how much they ought to have. The findings from the Byron review conducted in the UK will be discussed in relation to future policy proposals.

**Monica Whitty** is Reader in Psychology in the Division of Psychology at Nottingham Trent University, UK. She is the programme leader of the first MSc Cyberpsychology in the UK. She is the first author of 'Cyberspace Romance: The Psychology of Online Relationships' (2006, Palgrave) with Adrian Carr, and 'Truth, Lies and Trust on the Internet' (2009, Routledge) with Adam Joinson. She has published widely on the following topics: online dating, cyber-relationships, internet infidelity, online identity, possible selves, misrepresentation of self online, cyberstalking, cyberethics, internet surveillance in the workplace, and online gaming.

## Dr Maria Letizia Tanturri

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### Why are we having fewer babies? Understanding and responding to European low fertility

The European Union is characterised by low fertility, postponement of motherhood and an increase in childlessness among the younger generations. All EU Member States have now Total Fertility Rates below 2.1 children per woman, the level needed for the replacement of generations. Surveys on fertility preferences however show that the desired fertility is higher than the actual fertility. Therefore, why are European families having few babies?

The aim of the paper is to show the main factors determining fertility behaviour in Europe, by reviewing the abundant existing literature. Diverse theoretical and empirical frameworks have had difficulty explaining these unprecedented low levels of fertility. Both value changes (e.g. preference for quality of children rather than for quantity, aspirations of ascendant social mobility, female emancipation, secularization) and economic transformations (e.g. uncertainty in working conditions, increased women's labour market participation) have a role in determining low fertility. But low and late fertility is the result of a plurality of factors that young couples have to struggle with today. More recently, attention has turned from classic explanations to gender equity as the essential link to understand low fertility. Increases in women's labour market participation did not prompt a rise in men's domestic duties in most countries, and thus it results in a dual heavy burden for women. Empirical studies shows that where women are

not overloaded by domestic duties and where men are collaborative, couples are more likely to have another child. Institutions and policies within countries may facilitate or constrain the realization of fertility desires. There are extensive differences between the EU countries in the rights, lengths and subsidies of parental leave, in childcare facilities or in possibilities of reducing working hours (for mothers and fathers).

A discussion on possible policy measures to support individual fertility choices and a few examples of good practices will be provided.

**Maria Letizia Tanturri** is a researcher in Demography at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Pavia, Department of Statistics and Applied Economics "L. Lenti". Since 2009 is elected member of the Scientific Committee of the Italian Association for Population Studies (AISP), demographic section of the Italian Statistical Society (SIS). Her research interests fall broadly into the areas of low fertility and its socio-economic determinants, with special regards to the relationship between gender role-set, time use and reproductive behaviour. She participates into several international research projects on gender and demographic change (e.g. MAGGIE: Major Aging and Gender Issues in Europe, Galileo project on: Child cost in terms of time across the life-cycle in Italy and France). He has published widely in professional journals.

# Dr Ruth Farrugia

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## State responsibility in strengthening families

Family Law is frequently considered a misnomer for how can the law ever hope to regulate the very personal relationships between individuals linked by a wide ranging assortment of ties. In practice, however, the law seeks to provide a clear set of rules listing the responsibilities and rights which operate within the family. It does this because it has a vested interest in keeping families together. Every state should be committed to the well being of each individual under its jurisdiction but it also strives to ensure that it is not called upon to supplement or supplant duties, particularly in the realm of maintenance and support.

There is still considerable debate about the definition of the term “family” and in this context, it is pertinent to question whether the state is the appropriate authority to determine apposite criteria. Does the state itself find consensus as to who constitutes a family? What exactly does “strong” mean in relation to families? At times families are identified as good, intact or happy but does this mean that they are strong? Why should states have an interest in making strong families stronger? What are the benefits for the state itself, for the families and the individual members of each family, and for society? What are the repercussions for a family deemed not “strong”?

This paper looks at the responsibility of the state in strengthening families. It asks whether the state has a legal responsibility to promote

strong(er) families for while it certainly has an interest and possibly a moral responsibility, can one extend the argument to say the responsibility is also enforceable at law? This paper will argue that while states are clearly recognized as having an interest in maintaining a family unit that does not impinge on the public purse, other [more profound ethical, philosophical and policy] considerations may lead to the attribution of justiciable responsibility.

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