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Linda McClain
Boston University School of Law

Margaret F. Brining
Notre Dame Law School

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Margaret F. Brinig
Fritz Duda Family Chair in Law
Professor of Law, Notre Dame Law School

Linda C. McClain
Paul M. Siskind Research Scholar
Professor of Law, Boston University School of Law

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REVISITING MARY ANN GLENDON: ABORTION, DIVORCE, DEPENDENCY, AND RIGHTS TALK IN WESTERN LAW

MARGARET BRINIG
(University of Notre Dame)

LINDA MCCLAINE
(Boston University), USA

INTRODUCTION

In this essay, we revisit Mary Ann Glendon's comparative law study, Abortion and Divorce in Western Law (ADWL) (1) and her subsequent book, Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse (RT) (2). Glendon's comparative study actually included a third topic (also discussed in RT): "forms of dependency which are connected with pregnancy, marriage, and child raising". This topic of dependency has obvious relevance to consideration of intergenerational obligations and the interplay between family responsibility and societal responsibility for addressing dependency needs. A central claim Glendon made in both books and subsequent writing is that the U.S. legal tradition is "libertarian", views individuals as "lone rights bearers", and exalts the "right to be let alone," while European conceptions of the person are "dignitarian", envision the rights-bearer as situated in family and community relationships, and support a more communitarian and generous model of social provision and of social responsibility to address dependency. (3)

To some extent, these two allegedly distinct traditions have merged. Particularly in its emphasis on care for children, the United States has become less individualistic. The French tradition, especially since the passage of the 2004 divorce law (4) and the 2002 child custody provisions based

upon the rights of the child, has become more individualistic and less based upon common (or communal) understandings. (5)

In *ADWL*, published in 1987, Glendon argued that it was a propitious time to do comparative analysis because there had been dramatic change in America and in the West, but things seemed to have stabilized. Twenty-five years have passed and certain features of the U.S. regulatory framework have changed dramatically. These include major changes to social welfare law, the advent of state and federal laws and policies to promote marriage and responsible fatherhood and to deter divorce, and the increased regulation of abortion. In Europe, even countries with Catholic traditions have liberalized (or allowed) divorce and abortion as well as same-sex marriage (still in flux in the United States). Both marriage rates and divorce rates have declined in the U.S., though divorce rates are still increasing in France to the former high point in the U.S. of about half of all couples, and the birth rate in general has plummeted. Demographic reports mark the apparent decline of marriage and the rise in both regimes of alternative family forms. It seems a propitious time to look again at these topics and the relationships among them. French family and social welfare law feature prominently in both books, and so the setting of this ISFL conference in Lyon is also an apt spur for these reflections.

Our essay illuminates how gender is a salient feature of all three topics: abortion, divorce, and dependency. Abortion and divorce both feature as cultural symbols and sites of societal and legal conflict. Because women, not men, become pregnant, women make the abortion decision. In both the U.S. and France, women initiate the majority of divorces. Gender conflict can be a cause of both these decisions: women are more sensitive to unhappiness in marriage than men; (6) a woman’s perception that she does not want to rear a child with her partner is one reason for abortion. (7) Glendon has been a prominent critic of the law of abortion and divorce (including the no fault divorce revolution), arguing that both acts harm women (and children, whether born or unborn). However, in both instances, women generally feel relief, rather than regret, about their decisions. Why, we ask, are women willing to leave marriages even though they will likely be worse off economically? Although some argue that liberal abortion and divorce laws benefit men, who can evade responsibility, others argue they harm men, who regret

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(5) Loi du 26 mai, 2004 (divorce); Loi du 4 mar., 2002 (custody).
abortion and experience a decline in well-being post-divorce. Alternatively, some claim that because women alone make the decisions (with their physician), men should be released from their otherwise absolute duty to support their biological children. Further, they argue that making abortion a right and a decision that belongs only to one spouse makes marriage more fragile.

Legislative efforts in the U.S. have long sought to deter abortion, although in recent years a key rationale is that the state should help women to preserve, rather than destroy, their relationship with their fetus and avoid a harmful decision. This is a decisive move away from what Glendon critiqued in RT as insulating the “lone rights bearer” from the community; critics of these laws argue that they deny women’s responsible moral agency. With respect to divorce, as we elaborate, although family law courts in the United States already have the discretion, under most state laws, to direct a couple to consider whether reconciliation is possible, as they do in France, a new generation of laws more firmly embraces often-mandatory divorce education and parental education that inform divorcing couples about alternatives to divorce, healthy marriage skills, and the consequences of divorce for children and also require parents to cooperate to design a parenting plan. This concept is encouraged in the French legislation of 2002 as well and reflects a shift from envisioning divorce as the end of a marriage to the restructuring of family relationships. These trends in U.S. law toward requiring careful consideration seem at odds with the notion of a family law that prizes adult liberty over responsibility and seem consonant with a more communitarian conception of social relationships. Indeed, we will argue that these laws seem to heed Glendon’s call to put children at the center of debates about the family and shift from family policy to family ecology, a term that stresses the impact of adult decisions on the broader society as well as the importance of societal support for families. (8) To the extent the French laws make co-parenting a right for the child, they might seem to move in this direction as well. However, children’s interests cannot affect the decision to divorce, but only the speed at which it may be accomplished. Meanwhile, the new acceptance and encouragement of post separation contracts in French law, as well as provision for compensation and property distribution even to “at fault” spouses, seems to move in the other direction, that is, away from the communitarian.

This essay also points out that abortion and divorce bear on the topics of dependency and the ISPL conference theme of intergenerational obligations and solidarities. On the whole, women fare economically worse than
men following divorce. Economic factors are a reason many women say they choose abortion. The role of a lack either of economic resources or of family support in women's abortion decisions suggests the need for greater attention to societal, or public, responsibility for dependency. Further, divorce and abortion rates both increase in times of economic crises, which strain intimate and family relationships. The impact of the U.S. recession on men has led to calls for a new model of manhood in which men assume more responsibility for dependency by sharing parenting responsibilities. How individuals and families cope with economic strain depends, in part, on understandings of the scope of public responsibility to support actual and social reproduction. Is the U.S. still far away from the European nations Glendon studied, such as France and Germany, on these matters?

Finally, our essay considers several issues that Glendon's otherwise prescient analyses did not address or anticipate: (1) the role of financial insecurity in deterring marriage and contributing to a growing “marriage gap” tied to a growing divide between rich and poor and the separation of marriage from parenthood; (2) the opening up of civil marriage, in some Western nations, non-western nations (such as South Africa), and, in several states within the United States, to same-sex couples and, parallel to this, the creation of new legal forms parallel to civil marriage (some open to opposite-sex couples), such as civil unions and domestic partnerships, providing same-sex couples all (or some, as with the PACs in France) the benefits and obligations of marriage, but not the name, “marriage”; and (3) elder care and prolonged parental care for young adults as increasingly visible issues of dependency and intergenerational solidarity.

Abortion Then and Now

In this section, we will explicate briefly the comparative analysis of abortion law that Glendon offered in ADWL and, subsequently, in RT, focusing on the U.S. and France. We will then take a look at the state of abortion law in those two countries in 2011. We will consider changes in the law and abortion rates, and the extent to which Glendon's earlier interpretation would predict or not predict such changes. We then consider the gender dimension of this issue, both as Glendon saw it and as it appears in contemporary battles over the regulation of abortion.

The gist of Glendon's account of U.S. abortion law in ADWL is that it is “extreme” when situated among the abortion regulation in twenty countries. She unfavorably contrasted America's “extreme and isolating version of individual liberty” (as endorsed in Roe) with Western European laws striking a
balance between women's liberty and their responsibilities as members of society who are carrying unborn life. She critiqued the Supreme Court for striking down various informed consent laws that tried to express society's respect for fetal life and to inform women of alternatives to terminating their pregnancies. Glendon argued that her point was not about how comparatively easy or hard it was in reality to get an abortion, but rather what kind of message a country's law about abortion sends. France, in ADWL, exemplifies the "middle way" between blanket prohibitions and express permission of elective abortion. Under the 1975 law, abortion was available up to the end of the 12th week of pregnancy to any women "whose condition places her in a situation of distress". The women was the "sole judge" of whether she is in distress. (3) This "distress" requirement communicates a "message", as does France's marriage law (which has modified its statement that "The husband is the head of the family" to one announcing equality of the spouses), "about how one should conduct one's life". (10) Glendon explains that women will not be sanctioned, under the law, for pretending to be in distress; rather, "the idea seems to be simply to try to make sure everyone knows that abortion is considered to be a serious matter". (11)

Glendon explains a 1979 amendment to the French law made the state responsible to take "an active part in promoting respect for life, not just a negative role by restricting abortions". She quotes: "The teaching of this principle and its consequences, the provision of information on the problems of life and of national and international demography, education towards responsibility, the acceptance of the child in society, and family-oriented policy are national obligations". To ensure that abortion did not function as a substitute for birth control, government "shall take all the measures necessary to promote information on birth control on as wide a scale as possible." (12)

Beyond the tenth week (now the 12th), French law allowed only "therapeutic" abortions, whereby two physicians needed to certify that the "continuation of the pregnancy is seriously endangering the woman's health or that there is a strong possibility that the unborn child is suffering from a particularly serious disease or condition considered incurable at the time of diagnosis". (13) Glendon goes on to observe that French law requires abortion to be performed in approved facilities and the state pays for 70 percent of the costs of nontherapeutic abortions and all the costs of therapeutic

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10 ADWL, 15.
11 Ibid., 17.
12 Ibid., 16.
13 Ibid., 17.
ones. (This governmental funding of abortion is dramatically different than
the direction U.S. abortion law took, where a legal right to terminate a preg-
nancy implied no governmental responsibility to facilitate the exercise of
that right.) The French laws do not permit forced abortion (14) nor forced
continuation of pregnancy. (15)

Strikingly, Glendon does observe the different tone and content of the
Akron, Ohio and ("to a lesser extent") Pennsylvania informed consent laws
struck down by the Supreme Court and the French information, noting the
first seems to be "more threatening or anxiety provoking, while France's
are clearly meant to be helpful to the woman while trying to preserve the
life of the fetus"). (16) Glendon observes further ways U.S. abortion law
stands apart: (1) a legal regime of "abortion on demand", unique among the
20 countries; (4) the absence of generous social benefits (by contrast, e.g.,
to Sweden), and an evident indifference to unborn life in U.S.; and (3) judi-
cial establishment of a right in a way that tramples upon states' ability to work
out middle way.

In 1992, Planned Parenthood v. Casey fundamentally altered the lands-
cape of state regulation of abortion by abandoning Roe's trimester fra-
amework and stating that the state has a "profound" interest in fetal life
throughout pregnancy. Similarly, by contrast to the earlier informed consent
opinions that Glendon criticized for insulating the pregnant woman from
any state message protective of fetal life or encouraging of alternatives to
abortion, Casey upheld state authority to adopt informed consent regula-
tions that sought to persuade women to choose pregnancy instead of abor-
tion so long as they did not impose an "undue burden" on her right. Casey
also laid the foundation for sustaining informed consent regulations
premised on the idea that, because abortion is a decision "fraught with con-
sequences," and women may suffer "devastating" consequences without full
complete information about the abortion process and fetal develop-
ment. Casey itself appeared to intertwine these two state interests - in
protecting fetal life and in furthering women's informed consent as part of
women's health - in a way allowing an informed consent law justified as
furthering women's health to also further the state's interest in fetal life by
encouraging alternatives to abortion. (17)

(14) Code de la santé publique art. L222-1.
(15) Loi n. 93-121 27/01/93.
(16) ADWL 19-20 (discussing City of Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health, Inc.,
462 U.S. 416 (1983); Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 467
U.S. 747 (1984)).
Since 1992, there has been a flurry of new state regulations of abortion. Some laws place outright restrictions on access to abortion; others create new requirements for access to the abortion procedure, such as more extensive informed consent laws. The much-discussed South Dakota task force issued a lengthy report expressing the conviction, based on narratives of women about their experiences with abortion, that no woman could truly consent to abortion because it went contrary to her nature to destroy her unborn child, a conviction Reva Siegel calls the “woman-protective anti-abortion argument.” (18) Informed consent laws (sometimes called “women’s right to know laws”), for example, require doctors to inform women about their constitutional “right” to a relationship with their unborn child, compel women to watch an ultrasound narrated by their physician, and require education about fetal development. These laws rest on a justification that women may lack complete information about the fetus and the consequences of abortion. They may also rest on the premise that no woman who truly understood fetal development would choose to end the life of a fetus because that would destroy her relationships with the fetus. They also can be justified as furthering the state’s interest in preserving fetal life, if the premise is that a woman who views an ultrasound will be less likely to go through with an abortion. Some of these laws have been enjoined by federal district courts as unconstitutional. (19) Even in the wake of this flurry of state regulation post-Casey, Glendon, surprisingly, continues to criticize U.S. law as extreme and out of line with the various compromise laws found in France and other Western European nations. (20) We say “surprisingly”, because, considering these laws within Glendon’s communitarian framework, they do not envision the woman’s decision making process as private and insulated. To the contrary, the state


(19) See Planned Parenthood Minnesota v. Babbit, 660 F. Supp. 872 (D. Minn. 2000) (striking down a “relationship disclosure” requirement in informed consent law that physicians must inform pregnant women “that the pregnant woman has an existing relationship with that unborn human being and that the relationship enjoys protection under the United States Constitution and under the laws of South Dakota”). In 2011, the Eighth Circuit ruled that the District Court erred because a “reasonable reading” was that the law required informing a woman she was protected against being forced to have an abortion.

(20) See, for example, Prepared Statement of Mary Ann Glendon, Origins and Scope of Roe v. Wade: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on the Constitution of the Committee on the Judiciary House of Representatives. 104th Congress, Second Session, April 22, 1996, Serial No. 80. Glendon was also a signatory to The America We Seek: A Statement of Pro-Life Principle and Concern (May 1998), http://www.firstthings.com/article/2009/07, which critiques America as the “most permissive abortion regime among the world's democracies” and condemns Casey.
robustly confronts pregnant women with state messages about fetal life and a woman's relationship with the fetus. Moreover, if Glendon's earlier work worried that pregnant women did not get the help they needed from society and might be "let alone" with abortion as their only alternative, these laws often reflect a view that women must be saved from abortion decisions because such decisions are harmful. Legislators, as evidenced by these laws, fear that women are pressured, influenced, and coerced into abortion decisions.

In Glendon's earlier writing, the picture of the pregnant woman seemed to be that society should, in a communitarian spirit, do what it can to "shore up" the flagging maternal will. But she approvingly cited to the French law, which left it to the woman to declare she was in "distress' due to the pregnancy. There was some indication in ADWL that if a society was willing to do a certain amount for a pregnant woman, then she could reasonably be expected to act according to some responsibility to society. But Glendon never said outright that women simply acted against their nature if they chose abortion. To be sure, she has often stated (and joined public statements declaring) that abortion licenses irresponsibility by men and an uncaring society. (21)

Empirical studies of the reasons women give for their abortion decisions do not bear out the model of women coerced into or regretting their decisions. (22) They do support the proposition that economic, educational, and relationship issues, as well as a sense of not being ready for the responsibility of being a parent, are often the reasons that women decide not to continue pregnancies. Nearly forty percent constitute women who are already mothers and feel that they have completed their childbearing. What type of concrete policies could make a difference? Though U.S. and French laws are now quite similar, the public support and information provided in France would seem to promote less abortion than in the U.S. However, the actual numbers present a "paradox," (23) since French abortions continue to increase, while those in the U.S. continue to fall. [See Fig. 1, Comparative Abortion Rates] (24)

(21) For example, ET, 58-61, 64-66; The America We Seek.
(22) FINER, "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions".
By 1987, every state in the U.S. allowed divorce without proving fault, though only some truly ignored fault even in the division of property or alimony, and many of the financial aspects of marriage dissolution were resolved by separation agreements (contracts) between the divorcing parties. The “clean break” envisioned by divorced reformers and criticized by Glendon ignored the consequences of divorce for children.

In contrast, Glendon proposed that a sensible way to resolve the “war over the family” would be to move from a family policy to a family ecology, attentive to the dependence of families on a broader social system. Glendon also proposed a child-centered approach to family law and that, perhaps, the law could distinguish between child-rearing families, which were at the core of society’s concern over families, and other families. It might be
appropriate, for example, for the law to express more concern about divorce where there are minor children. (25)

The pendulum has definitely swung in the direction of the “child centered” or “Child first” family policy Glendon advocated in Rights Talk, perhaps not so much with economic consequences of divorce but certainly with post-divorce parenting. Some state have also moved toward the kind of two-tier system Glendon proposed, with the childbearing family being at the core of society’s concerns over the future of the family in both countries. Contemporary family law offers several examples: (1) governmental funding of “healthy marriage” and “responsible fatherhood” education, which includes the aim of reducing divorce; (2) encouraging or requiring divorce education and parental education for divorcing couples with children and having different procedural requirements for divorcing couples with children; (3) the shift toward shared parenting and away from a sole custody model, including the requirement that parents draft parenting plans; and (4) the conceptualization of the divorce process as a time for “restructuring” or renegotiating the family relationship rather than as a clean break. (26)

We see several parallels in the U.S. to trends in the law of abortion. First, in each context, the government attempts to persuade against a decision – to have an abortion or to get a divorce. In the divorce context, one parallel to the abortion issue comes in the role of the state in trying to encourage married couples not to divorce, that the best outcome for children is preserving most marriages, and in trying to persuade couples who choose to marry of the commitment necessary for a successful marriage. Second, there is a concern for the consequences of the choice. In the abortion context, the state seeks to protect prenatal life, with the fetus in some states regarded as a “child” whose relationship with a mother is being destroyed, though the statutes often talk about the mother’s relationship. States seek to reduce the rate of divorce on the premise that the best family form for children is the intact, marital family or a healthy, low conflict marriage. Indeed, the emphasis on preserving marriage sharply rejects a psychological premise of an earlier decade, that it is better for children – and adults – if unhappy partners divorce. Instead, the new policy counters that, from the point of view of child outcomes, it is better

for a child if parents who are in an unhappy, but low-conflict, relationship stay together.

There is also a gender dimension in both contexts: as discussed above, Glendon often writes about pregnant women as isolated in their privacy, with society bestowing on them abortion rights, rather than the help they need. In the context of divorce, Glendon characterized the toll that divorce takes in terms of a decline in child well-being and post-divorce poverty of women as the victims. Because divorce law prizes adult liberty over familial obligation, the gains in terms of adult happiness – as people express declining support for the proposition that an unhappy married couple should stay together for the sake of the children – come, she contends, at considerable cost. (27) In our introduction, we noted further gender dimensions, asking why women initiate divorce more often than men, despite the greater economic impact of divorce upon them. In part, this is because women are more sensitive to marriage quality than men; in part, this is because women frequently want and get child custody. (28)

Despite these movements, there has not been a complete divorce counterrevolution, with a repudiation of no-fault divorce. The majority of states continue to have mixed regimes offering fault based grounds and no fault grounds. Recently, New York, the one state that was a holdout, in terms of not permitting no fault divorce (unless a couple lived apart for a year pursuant to a separation agreement), added a no fault ground to its divorce law. (29) In France, no-fault grounds were added to mutual consent divorce in 2004, but still require longer separation periods than most U.S. states. (30) In France, divorce rates continue to rise, while in the U.S., they continue to decline. (See Fig. 2).

"Rights Talk," Dependency and Solidarity

In Rights Talk, Glendon faulted the inattention to "the missing dimension of sociality" in U.S. rights talk, stressing inattention to the family. (31) She argued that at the time of the Founding, families featured in political thought as vital "seedbeds of virtue." Because this role was taken for granted, the Founding documents make no explicit mention of families. She used ecological imagery to call attention to the problem that a healthy democracy depends upon a healthy social ecology, but that the overemphasis upon rights and individual liberty to the neglect of responsibility and obligation and community endangered that ecology.

(31) RT, 115.
Glendon focused on the negative impact of a host of economic and social changes shaping family behavior on the practical problems of dependency—of meeting children's needs and ensuring their well-being through caregiving. (32) She notes that "many of the changes that have adversely affected the caretaking and socializing capacities of families are associated with developments that few would care to call in question: improvements in the educational and economic position of women; the material benefits that a second family income provides; the ease with which one can terminate an unhappy marriage; and greater individual freedom generally—to realize one's own dreams, hopes, and ambitions, to overcome adversity, and to make a fresh start" (33). But the bottom line is that "Whatever can be said, for good or ill, about current patterns of family behavior, they are not optimal—economically or emotionally—for children." (34) Glendon points to reports about adolescent health as well as to reports about an alarming lack of civil knowledge among young people. (35) In terms of specific policy recommendations, Glendon focuses on helping parents meet their dual roles as providers and careers. (36)

In this passage, Glendon nods toward the emerging model of the egalitarian family (two carers/two careers), by urging support of such a family form. This is quite consistent both with evolving public opinion and with many prescriptions for how to support families in a manner consistent with the changing roles of women. (37) At the same time, Glendon also urged support for families in which adults specialize in caregiving and breadwinning. This suggests a conviction that women's historical role as caregivers in the family is important and deserves continuing social support. In other words, not every family needs to fit into the dual career/dual earner template, and law and policy should recognize the vulnerability and dependency of women who invest more primarily in family labor. (38)

**THREE ISSUES GLENDON DID NOT ANTICIPATE**

We conclude by very briefly addressing three issues that Glendon did not foresee or anticipate in her earlier work.

(32) Ibid., 127.
(33) Ibid.
(34) Ibid.
(35) Ibid., 127-28.
(36) Ibid., 135.
(37) Pew Research Center (in conjunction with Time magazine), "The decline of marriage and rise of new families" (November 2010). In its efforts around workplace flexibility, for example, the Obama Administration speaks of this and other work/family issues as "not just" women's issues.
B. The Marriage Gap, Marriage Inequality, and Separating Marriage fromParenthood

One issue that has become more evident and pressing in the current difficult economy is the role of financial insecurity in deterring marriage and contributing to a growing "marriage gap" tied to a growing divide between rich and poor and the separation of parenthood from marriage. (39) What, we ask, might Glendon say about this problem? What kind of public responsibility might she advocate to address its sources? This trend is more pronounced in France than in the U.S. (See Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Births Outside Marriage

Glendon did express concern in Rights Talk about the vulnerability of single mothers and about the implications for child well-being of an increased incidence of single parent families. (40) The concern is echoed

(39) Pew Research Center, "The decline of marriage".
(40) R7, 136.
in a recent report by the Pew Research Center that found strong public concern over the demographic trend of “more single women having children on their own.” (41)

C. The Rise of New Legal Forms for Same-Sex (and Sometimes Opposite-Sex) Couples

A related development, only in its infancy at the time of Glendon’s influential books, is the successful efforts of gay men and lesbians to secure the right to marry in some Western nations, non-western nations (such as South Africa), and in several states within the United States. A related development is the creation of new legal forms parallel to civil marriage, such as, in the a growing number of states in the U.S., civil unions and domestic partnerships, providing same-sex couples all (or nearly all) the benefits and obligations of marriage, but not the name, “marriage”. Because these new forms provide adult partners not only the same rights and responsibilities of married spouses, but also the same parental rights and responsibilities as marriage bestows on spouses, especially in terms of paternity and adoption, this is of obvious relevance to questions of intergenerational solidarity. We also observe that, alongside these legal developments is a retrenching in most states within the United States to codify in state law and often, in state constitutions, the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman and, in some instances, to bar the creation of any new legal forms, such as civil unions and domestic partnerships. An intriguing issue warranting further study is the impact of the opening up of these new legal forms (in some states in the U.S.) to opposite-sex couples – and not only same-sex couples excluded from marriage – on marriage and marriage rates. For example, France preceeded the United States in allowing opposite-sex couples access to a form (the PACS) (42) intended to address the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage and providing some, but not all the benefits and obligations of marriage. Evidently, the PACS is becoming more popular than marriage. See Fig. 4. (43)

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(43) K. Kottas, “Marriage and cohabitation in West Germany and France” Sozialwissenschaftlichen Kalkulat der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultat Rostock (2011), p. 144 and Fig. 7.11.
Figure 4. Types and Outcomes of French Union Formation

However, while on the increase to the point of being a majority living situation in France, cohabitation remains a less stable environment for children than does marriage. Even with adequate financial protection coming from private (the noncustodial parent) or public support, children must increasingly cope with the breakup of their parents' relationships, the less stable situation of subsequent relationships and sometimes a bewildering array of other important adults in their lives.

D. Elder Care, Prolonged Adolescence, and Intergenerational Obligations/Solidarity

Finally, a third issue is "elder care" and the prolonged dependency of young people as issues of intergenerational solidarity. In RT, Glendon expressed concern that a society and legal culture preoccupied with rights,
at the expense of responsibility, might fail to cultivate in its members a concern for the vulnerable and dependent. Women and children were her prime examples. As populations age, in countries like the U.S. and France, significant law and policy questions arise. There is a gender dimension to this issue: as more and more adults face responsibility for caring for their aging parents, women, more than men, shoulder these responsibilities. Indeed, the term "sandwich generation" captures the situation of adults who may simultaneously have responsibility to meet the dependency needs of their children and their parents. A related intergenerational issue of increasing visibility is that of parental responsibility for adult children -- the so-called "boomerang generation" -- for whom the parent may take on economic support and provide a home in the face of a challenging economy. Shifting patterns in the life of young adults spark discussion of whether the 20s is becoming another phase of adolescence. This seems to be a particularly large issue in Europe. This, in turn, shapes patterns of family formation, as young people marry and become parents at later ages.