



Poverty and violations of children's right to protection in low- and middle-income countries

A review of the evidence

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Abbreviations

ACPF	African Child Policy Forum
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CDF	Children’s Dignity Forum
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DFID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFRS	Institute for Regional Studies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
ISPCAN	International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
JLICA	Joint Learning Initiative on Children and AIDS
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
RAPCAN	Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
SAS	Small Arms Survey
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children Fund
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

1 Introduction

'Violence against children cuts across boundaries of geography, race, class, religion and culture. And no country is immune, whether rich or poor. Some children are particularly vulnerable because of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability or social status' (Pinheiro, 2006: XI).

'It must be clearly stated that poverty does not cause child abuse. It is our contention, however, that living in deep poverty is in itself a violation of rights, and it enormously increases the vulnerability of children to abuse and neglect' (Bower, 2003: 84).

Why do up to 1.5 billion children suffer physical violence every year? Why do up to 225¹ million children suffer sexual violence every year? Why are 14.2 million girls every year married off to start adult lives in adolescence or before?² Why are considerable numbers of young children left alone for long hours without competent adult supervision?³

Historically, in studies of violence against children in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, explanations emphasised the role of individual psychological factors. The pendulum swung in the 1960s to highlight structural forces contributing to the abuse and neglect of children, in particular poverty and unemployment. In more recent years, understanding of the factors underlying violations of children's right to protection has drawn on an ecological model that emphasises factors at several levels: individual, family, household, community and broader society (Frederick and Goddard, 2007). The international child protection community generally sees three broad sets of factors as underlying many child protection violations: sociocultural norms, weak protective structures and poverty or deprivation. However, within this community there are divergences of opinion concerning the extent to which poverty is a significant underlying or risk factor.

Interviews with child protection and poverty specialists and an electronic survey conducted for this research programme revealed a notable split. The majority considered poverty an important and often-neglected factor underpinning many child protection violations, but a significant number of respondents highlighted the fact that abuse, exploitation and neglect of children occurs across all socioeconomic groups, and thus felt economic deprivation played a more minor role. Perspectives varied considerably across different types of violation, with most respondents feeling that economic deprivation was a critical factor in early marriage, inadequate care and sexual exploitation, but relatively fewer convinced it was an important factor underpinning corporal punishment or sexual abuse. The electronic survey, like the majority of the literature examined for this review, focuses on children's vulnerability to protection violations, not whether poverty increases the risk of perpetrating abuse.⁴

Broadly, these perspectives concur with insights from the literature examined for this study. Despite increased recognition of the importance of effective joined-up child protection systems (e.g. World Vision, 2011; Wulczyn et al., 2010), state agencies charged with child protection in most low- and middle-income countries are severely underfunded (Everychild, 2010b; Holmes and Jones, 2009). At the same time, there is

¹ These statistics, produced for the *World Report on Violence against Children* (Pinheiro, 2006), have not been updated even though they now refer to the situation nearly a decade ago.

² The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates (UNFPA, 2012: 1) that, in the current decade, 14.2 million girls will be married before age 18 every year, and that, without preventative action, 15.1 million girls a year are at risk of marriage by age 18 between 2021 and 2030.

³ No aggregated estimates of children left without competent care are available.

⁴ It may be that, had we examined more criminological literature, we would have found more analysis of the background of perpetrators of different types of child protection violations. However, our searches found no literature of this type from low- or middle-income countries, other than the literature discussing the likelihood of young people engaging in acts of violence, discussed in Section 5.

a global move towards strengthening social protection – much of which has a partial focus on children in poverty, and thus is directing resources towards realising children’s survival and development rights. In this context, there is growing interest in exploring the potential and limitations of social protection, human development and other anti-poverty programmes to reduce violations of children’s protection rights – and of action to protect children’s rights to promote better anti-poverty and human development outcomes.

As a contribution to emerging practice and debate in this area, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Oak Foundation are undertaking a two-year programme of work to explore the potential for greater linkages between child protection and anti-poverty work in low- and middle-income countries.

This report – the first output of the programme – has two main objectives:

1. To examine how far and in what ways poverty contributes to violations of children’s rights to protection in four key areas – child marriage, sexual and physical violence against children and inadequate care of children – and thus to clarify the significance of poverty as an underlying or risk factor for these different violations of children’s protection rights; and
2. To assess the strength of evidence concerning the relationship between poverty and child marriage, sexual and physical violence against children and inadequate care of children, and thus to identify knowledge gaps.

It reviews evidence from low- and middle-income countries on the linkages between poverty and child marriage, sexual and physical violence against children and inadequate care of children.⁵ It also draws selectively on evidence from OECD countries in areas where the low- and middle-income country literature is sparse, or to highlight differences related to income and institutional capacity. It is intended as a detailed resource on the issues explored. Key findings are summarised in a short background note (Marcus, 2013).

Other components of this programme include an adapted systematic review of the extent to which child protection policies and programmes involve attention to anti-poverty issues, and the contribution of anti-poverty components to effective action on specific child protection issues (Marcus and Page, 2013); an electronic survey of practitioners and key informant interviews; and fieldwork exploring the relationship between poverty and violation of children’s protection rights in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Vietnam. The programme is also exploring the potential for and different ways of promoting greater synergies between

analysts and practitioners with anti-poverty and child protection foci.

Box 1 outlines key concepts and definitions used in this report.

⁵ These four areas were selected on the basis of Oak Foundation interest and ODI prior experience.

Box 1: Key concepts and definitions used in this study

Our use of most of the following terms is based on international standards or definitions. In some cases, (such as for sexual violence) we have extended the range of issues covered to include concerns frequently flagged by children.

Child protection violation: We employ this term to refer to any violations of children's rights to protection, although the specific focus of our study is on the following four areas:

1. Child marriage – marriage under the age of 18 (as per the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW))
2. Sexual violence – sexual acts perpetrated against children. Comprises:
 - Sexual abuse – use of a child for sexual gratification of an adult (World Health Organization (WHO) definition)
 - Sexual exploitation – use of children in prostitution or pornography and/ or for financial gain (including transactional sex)
 - Unwanted sexual contact with other children/adolescents
3. Physical violence – intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high risk of resulting in – harm for the child's health, survival, development or dignity (WHO definition)
4. Inadequate care – care that does not support children's healthy physical, emotional and cognitive development, or ensure their safety and protection from harm

Other frequently used terms in the child protection literature include:

Child abuse, which can involve physical, sexual or emotional mistreatment of children

Neglect – systematic or sustained failure to meet a child's needs when the resources to do so are available

Child maltreatment – abuse and neglect of children

Poverty - In this study, we use the term 'poverty' to refer principally to economic deprivation. We recognise that people's experience of poverty is often multidimensional and includes lack of access to services, insecurity, powerlessness and lack of voice. We examine these separately, as they have independent effects on the risk of child protection violations, and so that we can assess the relationship between economic deprivation and different child protection violations

1.1 Why are violations of children's protection rights such a cause for concern?

1.1.1 The numbers affected are huge

Box 2: The scale of the problem

An estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys experience sexual violence every year (Pinheiro, 2006).

Between 500 million and 1.5 billion children and young people experience physical violence every year (Pinheiro, 2006).

Every year 14.1 million teenage girls are married before their 18th birthday, (UNFPA, 2012), putting them at elevated risk of pregnancy-related mortality and illness and of domestic violence. UNFPA estimates that 50 million girls under 15 will be married in the decade 2011-2020

Sexual abuse, physical abuse and child marriage occur on a very large scale, as Box 2 indicates.⁶ To put these in numbers in context, more children:

- Experience sexual violence every year than are missing out on primary education (57 million in 2011) (UNESCO, 2013);
- Experience physical violence than are child labourers (215 million in 2008);
- Marry before they are 18 than lived with HIV/AIDS in 2010 (3.4 million).⁷

These are not, therefore, residual, small-scale problems that can be dealt with by specialist child protection staff alone. It is also likely that these numbers underestimate the scale of the problem. The sensitivity of these issues, and the fact that many of them are criminal offences, means they are highly likely to be under-reported. WHO data suggest the risk of fatal abuse is two to three times higher in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries, and considerably higher in more unequal societies (WHO and ISPCAN, 2006).⁸

There are significant negative individual and social consequences

Child marriage, physical and sexual violence and inadequate care of children have significant negative immediate and long-term consequences, including death, temporary injuries, permanent disabilities and mental and physical health problems. Girls bearing children when they are aged 10-14 are 5 times more likely to die in childbirth than those aged 20 or over; 15-19 year olds are twice as likely (Temin and Levine, 2010). Babies of teen mothers are twice as likely to die before the age of one as the child of a woman in her twenties (ICRW, 2007), resulting in a million infants of young mothers dying every year worldwide because of pregnancy and childbirth-related causes (ibid.) (see Section 3 for further detail). Children left unsupervised, or supervised by pre-teen siblings, are at elevated risk of accidents (see Section 6).

Studies conducted in OECD countries indicate that children exposed to violence in childhood have higher rates than those not exposed to violence of depression, smoking, obesity, high-risk sexual behaviour, unintended pregnancy and alcohol and drug use, compared. These in turn, can lead to some of the principal causes of death, disease and disability – such as heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), cancer and suicide (WHO and ISPCAN, 2006). WHO estimates cited in Pinheiro (2006) indicate that 4% and 8% of the global burden of depression, anxiety and alcohol abuse, 7% and 11% of suicide attempts and 21% and 33% of the global burden of post-traumatic stress disorder can be attributed to childhood sexual abuse (all figures for males and females, respectively). People who have suffered sexual or physical abuse in childhood are also more likely both to experience violence in adulthood and to perpetrate it (UNICEF, 2006a).

While it is in OECD countries that most studies have been conducted, there is growing (principally qualitative) evidence from low- and middle-income countries of the medium- and long-term impacts of different violations of children's protection rights. Experiencing both physical and sexual violence is associated with reduced school attainment and earlier school dropout, as the associated fear, anxiety and depression impair children's ability to concentrate and may mean they lose interest in their studies (Deb and Modak, 2010; Plan International, 2006; USAID, 2003). Together, these mental and physical health and educational effects are likely to be associated with an increased risk of future poverty. Children who have grown up in institutions are often ill equipped to integrate into wider society and find jobs, and thus are at greater risk of poverty (UNICEF, 2010a).

1.1.2 Economic costs

In addition to the immediate and long-term social costs, there are also significant economic costs to child protection violations, such as foregone human capital, reduced productivity and the costs of treating injuries. Analysis from the US estimates that child abuse and neglect cost \$103.8 billion per year in 2007 dollars, in

⁶ Aggregate data on children without adequate care were not available. UN Children Fund (UNICEF) data suggest that 8 million children with living relatives are in institutional care. While institutional care is a poor environment for young children's development, it should not be assumed that all such children are inadequately cared for – there is evidence discussed later in the paper that, for orphans aged six to twelve years in deprived, HIV/AIDS-affected communities, care in medium-sized residential institutions can result in as good or better developmental outcomes as that for orphans cared for in the community (Whetten et al., 2009).

⁷ http://www.childinfo.org/hiv_aids.html, accessed 21 September 2012.

⁸ This may reflect lower levels of reporting of abuse that does not result in fatalities.

terms of direct and indirect impacts on the victims and excluding the costs of action focused on perpetrators (Wang and Holton, 2007). Perezniето et al. (2010) estimate that, in 11 principally low- and middle-income countries for which data are available, but also including data from the US and the Eurozone, school violence costs \$6.2 billion per year in forgone social benefits, and costs India between 0.13% and 0.64% of GDP annually. Key social costs include children achieving a lower level of education, greater use of social safety nets and health costs.

1.2 Methodology and organisation of the report

This report is based on a review of approximately 500 papers and reports, and also draws on a set of key informant interviews with academics, activists, practitioners and donors conducted between April and July 2012, and on an electronic survey⁹ of researchers and practitioners conducted in June and July 2012. The papers were obtained through an adapted systematic review process, documented in Marcus and Page (2013), which sought materials both on the linkages between poverty and child marriage, physical and sexual violence against children and inadequate capacity to care for children in low- and middle-income countries, and on the extent of the anti-poverty focus in interventions intended to prevent or respond to these violations. This paper was originally intended as an input into the adapted systematic review of interventions.

However, the very large volume of literature found led to this review of the linkages between poverty and child protection violations and the adapted systematic review of interventions running concurrently. For reasons of time, only papers in English were considered. While the focus is on low- and middle-income countries, we draw also on selected overview literature from OECD countries that synthesises findings on the relationship between child protection violations and economic deprivation. Conclusions concerning relationships in low- and middle-income countries are, where relevant, set in this broader context.

Section 2.1 provides an overview of the literature examined and outlines how different bodies of literature have informed the conceptual framework for this study (Section 2.2). Sections 3-6 examine the relationship between poverty and child protection, sexual violence against children, physical violence against children and inadequate care of children. Focusing on each area in turn allows us to examine in detail how poverty interacts with other factors, which differ in important ways for each issue, and to assess the strength of evidence on each area. Section 7 summarises key conclusions and identifies knowledge gaps emerging from this review. Annex 1 outlines the different bodies of literature reviewed and the key insights from each in tabular form.

Each section contains a summary of key points, and key points are also summarised in the conclusions.

⁹ 268 people responded to this survey.

2 Overview of literature and conceptual framework

This section provides an overview of the literature examined and its strengths and limitations, and outlines the key insights from different bodies of literature that address child protection issues in different ways. It then guides the reader through a conceptual framework developed to analyse the processes and factors at different levels whereby poverty contributes to child protection violations.

2.1 Overview of the literature

There is an overall bias in the literature considered¹⁰ towards Anglophone African countries, for which there is substantial material across all four themes, and, to a lesser extent, South Asia. Relatively little literature was found relating to the Middle East and North Africa (with the partial exception of materials on early marriage) or to East Asia and the Pacific (with the exception of Vietnam, for which there is research on all four focal areas and materials on commercial sexual exploitation). Materials from Latin America and the Caribbean focused on physical and, to a lesser extent, sexual violence.

Overall, more of the literature reviewed has been conducted by policy- and practice-oriented organisations. However, there are specific areas where there are significant numbers of papers from peer-reviewed academic journals – in particular analysis of child protection violations faced by orphans and of issues related to inadequate care. Another set of literature is inspired by a child rights perspective and aims to expose and understand the reasons for the alarming scale of abuse children are suffering (e.g. ACPF, 2006a; Naker, 2005). This literature is more commonly, but certainly not exclusively, driven by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The literature on inadequate care of children is the most disparate of the four thematic areas. The materials we examined have been pieced together from studies on children left alone or with young sibling carers while adults are working, on children's risk of accidents, on factors underlying children's entry into residential care and on the wellbeing of orphans. This literature pinpoints the relationship between poverty and inadequate care of children relatively clearly.

Table 1 provides an overview of the literature found for this review.

Table 1: Nature of the literature reviewed

Theme	Main regions where literature was found	Main bodies/approaches driving research	Nature of evidence	Examples
Early marriage	South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa; some from Middle East and North Africa; a few papers from Latin America	Population Council, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)	Qualitative and quantitative; some analysis of political and institutional context	ICRW (2007; 2011) Erulkar et al. (2006) Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi (2002)

¹⁰ This review is based on English language sources only.

Sexual violence	Sub-Saharan Africa (though little from Central Africa)	Much research driven by HIV-related concerns; also by <i>UN Study on Violence</i>	Several large-scale surveys; also qualitative analysis of children's perspectives and institutional structures	UNICEF (2011) Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) Bower (2003) Ray and Iyer (2006)
Physical violence	Sub-Saharan Africa (corporal punishment, child soldiers); Latin America and Caribbean (gang/neighbourhood violence)	Many papers inspired by <i>UN Study on Violence</i> ; some analysis of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) data on corporal punishment	Several large-scale surveys; also qualitative analysis of cultural and institutional context; material on child soldiers mostly qualitative	UNICEF (2010b) UNICEF (2011) ACPF (2006a) Naker (2005)
Inadequate care	All low- and middle-income regions represented, though less from Middle East and North Africa than from other regions	No clear drivers/funders; more published academic literature in this thematic area; papers on orphans often from epidemiological background	Varies by focus: accidents/safety – mostly quantitative; absence of competent care – mixed methods; orphans – mixed with quantitative bias; street children – qualitative	Heymann (2006) Bilson and Cox (2007) Evans (2011) Ruiz-Casares (2010)

Contrary to our initial expectations, we found a considerable volume of quantitative literature based on representative national surveys. This indicates that there is a growing body of literature on the prevalence of various forms of physical and sexual violence against children.¹¹ Some of these studies combine analysis of the prevalence of these violations with exploration of children's and adults' perspectives, and discussion of the (weakness of) institutional structures intended to protect children. Examples include ACPF (2006a), Naker (2005) and UNICEF (2011).

Overall, the extent to which the literature reviewed examines the role of poverty in underpinning child protection violations varies considerably. On the whole, larger-scale factors underpinning poverty, such as inequality of economic opportunities, the effects of economic policy shocks and drivers such as environmental stresses, are relatively little discussed. There is much more in-depth analysis of household-level factors, such as unemployment (particularly in the literature from OECD and middle-income countries) and, in particular, the significance of HIV/AIDS. There is a huge literature on the effects of conflict on children, with which this review engages selectively (see Section 5); some of this illuminates the ways in which, in a context of poverty, conflict leads to particular child protection violations.

2.2 Bodies of literature examined

Protecting children from harm is a multi-sectoral enterprise, requiring action by health services, social workers, the criminal justice system and community-level structures, among other actors. Likewise, analysis of child protection violations draws on a wide range of disciplinary, theoretical and practice-based perspectives. Annex 1 identifies the main paradigms used to understand the relationship between poverty and abuse and neglect of children, key insights from and gaps in this literature and implications for action. It also examines insights from each body of literature on the four focal themes. Here, we present a brief overview of the key insights from the different bodies of literature surveyed that we have drawn on in developing our conceptual framework, and the limitations of each of these approaches.

2.2.1 Multidisciplinary violence studies

These studies (such as Pinheiro, 2006; Krug et al., 2002), which principally combine sociological and public health perspectives, and, to a lesser extent, draw on economic and anthropological traditions, make use of the ecological framework for understanding violence as elaborated by Broffebrenner (1979, cited in Krug et al., 2002). This brings together earlier analyses that emphasised the role of individual psychological and broader

¹¹ In some countries, conflict-affected areas are underrepresented in national studies. Socially excluded groups may also be underrepresented – typically those who are very mobile, and/or have incentives to avoid official-seeming surveys.

structural factors, and outlines factors affecting the risk of violence at individual, familial, community and societal levels. Our conceptual framework incorporates this analysis of risk factors at different levels into a broader model that probes in more detail the ways in which poverty contributes to child protection violations.

Some of these studies involve quantitative analysis of existing datasets, and provide insights into the significance of particular factors increasing the risk of specific violations (e.g. UNICEF, 2010b). Much of the OECD country literature on abuse and neglect of children falls into this category (e.g. Stith et al., 2009). We found an unexpectedly large number of studies based on primary research that examined different child protection violations; some provided insights into children's experiences (e.g. Clacherty et al., 2004; 2005a; 2005b; Naker, 2005) and the ways children attempt to protect themselves from violence or unwanted marriage (e.g. Conticini and Hulme, 2006; Erulkar and Ferede, 2009). Other studies examine underlying causal and risk factors; some also provide insights into the institutional structures that exist or, more frequently, do not exist or do not function well to protect children (e.g. ICRW, 2011); relatively few probe the political economy of action or inaction on child protection issues.¹² Overall, these studies provide a rich understanding of the relationships between poverty, social dynamics and child protection violations. We have drawn on the detailed, grounded evidence of the relationships between poverty and child protection violations, to ensure the conceptual framework captures key dimensions.

2.2.2 Economic analysis and economic shocks literature

A key insight from the literature on the social effects of economic shocks is on the pathways through which macro- and meso-level policies and shocks can affect child wellbeing. Although few papers in this tradition elaborate on protection issues in detail (with the partial exception of child labour), some analyses and overviews, such as Harper et al. (2012) and Marcus (2011), outline pathways by means of which particular protection rights may be affected. Key channels include effects on livelihoods and incomes; coping strategies that put children at risk of harm; effects on social cohesion of economic stress; and effects on the capacity of public services to provide services that contribute to child wellbeing and protection. The literature examined focuses principally on the 'livelihoods route' (Heltberg et al., 2011; Hossain et al., 2010); Castle and Diallo (2008) are unusual in relating the high levels of corporal punishment in West African schools to financial pressures on the education system dating back to the adjustment era, as well as to cultural values.

Of our four thematic foci, this set of literature best documents the effects of macro- and meso-level economic and environmental shocks on sexual exploitation of children; there is also some evidence of the effects of shocks such as crop failure leading to daughters being married off (e.g. Cook et al., nd). The literature on the social effects of economic crisis (e.g. Heltberg et al., 2011; Hossain et al., 2010) has increasingly started to consider impacts on child protection outcomes beyond child labour, and there is thus a small but growing body of evidence on the effects of crisis on sexual exploitation, early marriage and children being left without competent care. In contrast with evidence on child labour and human development outcomes (e.g. Cockburn et al., 2012; Mendoza and Rees, 2012), this evidence is based on qualitative studies; thus, evidence of the scale of these violations, and the extent to which economic shocks increase them, is weaker.

This literature, though small, is unusual among the bodies of literature examined in its attention to macro- and meso-level forces; most of the other literature examined incorporates analysis of poverty at the micro level, largely by disaggregating statistical or qualitative analysis by socioeconomic status as in national quantitative studies of physical and sexual violence against children (e.g. Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; UNICEF, 2011).

Some studies employ economic and/or econometric analysis to understand the dynamics of particular child protection violations. One key example is analyses of foeticide (e.g. Bhalotra and Cochrane, 2010). These have tended to highlight the role of factors such as son preference, low valuation of girls and the opportunity costs of women's time in child rearing, and indicate that these are more important factors than poverty or anticipated inability to pay costs associated with girls' marriages. Insights from studies such as these have informed our analysis of the different factors underlying particular child protection violations.

¹² One exception is the Columbia Group for Children in Adversity's (2011) analysis of the factors affecting use of the formal child protection system in Sierra Leone.

2.2.3 Public health and medical literature

There is a large medical and public health literature on aspects of child protection, much of which uses an ecological framework.¹³ Some of this focuses on particular forms of violence (e.g. physical abuse of children, sexual abuse, homicide). A discrete body of literature examines the relationship between poverty and the risk of childhood accidents, some of which provides insights on the role of inadequate care. Literature on child protection aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is largely sociological; however, the public health discussion of the effectiveness of different ways of tackling the epidemic provides insights into aspects of inadequate care of children related to parental sickness and orphanhood. Most of the public health literature examined draws on detailed quantified analysis of the relationship between poverty and protection violations (particularly for child marriage and physical violence), and as such highlights the role of specific risk factors; its focus tends to be at the micro level, and, while it often incorporates sociocultural factors, it tends to have relatively little discussion of the broader economic or institutional context. This literature also draws attention to the long-term physical, emotional and sometimes economic effects of violence. Our framework has drawn particularly on empirical insights concerning the importance of different factors in increasing and reducing the risk of specific child protection violations.

2.2.4 Child rights perspectives

Much literature on child protection is inspired by children's rights standards as embodied in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It draws on a range of disciplinary perspectives and analytical approaches. The child rights literature emphasises three main sets of factors underlying child protection violations: sociocultural norms, the failure of duty bearers (individuals and institutions charged with protecting children) and poverty as an exacerbating factor for specific violations. It draws on the principle of indivisibility of rights to emphasise that protection rights are as central to child wellbeing as the right to health, education or food, and to advocate for greater attention to these neglected rights. The emphasis on the universality of rights often leads to a partial emphasis on specific groups of children whose protection rights are being violated; a child rights orientation has also been important in stressing the linkages between different types of violations and how exposure to one – such as sexual violence – may increase the risk of others – such as early marriage. A particular insight from the child rights literature is the role different types of factors (economic, sociocultural, institutional) play in specific contexts. This literature is very varied, encompassing legally focused analysis of compliance with child protection laws, sociological analysis of the extent of rights fulfilment and advocacy-focused literature making the case for attention to particular violations of children's protection rights. A weakness with some of this literature can be a failure to address incommensurable views concerning the best ways to protect children, and sometimes-insufficient acknowledgement of the validity of different worldviews. The overall orientation of the current study draws on child rights principles about what constitutes child rights protections and how best to protect children.

2.2.5 Feminist perspectives and/ or gender analysis

A key early contribution of feminist-inspired literature has been to draw attention to intra-household dynamics, and how much abuse of children takes place within their families and households. Feminist analysis also provides insights into the role of violence in social constructions of masculinity and the (mainly) gendered power dynamics of sexual abuse. Another body of literature examines gendered time poverty, changing family forms and social norms of responsibility for care (e.g. Chant, 2008 Razavi et al., 2012). While much of this focuses on the implications for women, some analyses extend this to consider the implications for children (e.g. Heymann, 2006; Palriwala and Neetha, 2011), though this is rare. We draw on all these insights in our conceptual framework and analysis. Much empirical analysis disaggregates children's experiences by sex; this informs analysis of how gender affects children's risk of particular violations.

2.2.6 Anthropological analysis

The anthropological papers reviewed made a number of helpful contributions. A key insight is how sociocultural norms form the frame of reference within which people make decisions about their own or their children's futures, and ways of responding to poverty or other constraints. With their emphasis on the perspectives of the people concerned, these papers help understand disjunctures between protective laws and

¹³ For this review, we examined only medical literature that discussed the relationship between poverty and the specific child protection violation under consideration.

policies and children's lived experience of large-scale violations. An important strand of analysis focuses on how globally derived rights, norms and standards contradict or are seen as irrelevant in particular local contexts, often because they clash with local cultural norms (e.g. Boyden et al., 2012; Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011; Evans and Mayer, 2012).

2.2.7 Political economy and institutional analysis

Few of the studies reviewed political economy or institutional issues, but a number of important insights emerge from those that do. These highlight low resource allocations to public agencies mandated to promote child protection (e.g. Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011), reflecting the overall low prioritisation of child protection issues, or the perception that they are a small-scale problem affecting specific groups of disadvantaged children (Holmes and Jones, 2009; Jones, 2011). They provide some insights into how progressive laws or policies (such as those against child marriage, corporal punishment or sexual abuse of children at school) may be undermined at local level through corruption and/or because those charged with implementing and enforcing laws consider them out of step with local culture (e.g. ICRW, 2011; Leach et al., 2003; Plan International, 2006). A few papers also provide insights into the dynamics of political mobilisation for/against greater protection of children (e.g. Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011; UNICEF, 2010c).

2.2.8 Child protection systems literature

Historically, action to strengthen child protection systems has concentrated on building up legal and institutional structures. There has been increasing recognition in recent years of the extent to which poverty exacerbates the risk of certain protection violations. As a result, social policy sectors that reduce poverty and strengthen human development, such as social protection and the education and health systems, are increasingly seen as forming an important part of effective child protection systems (e.g. World Vision, 2011; Wulczyn et al., 2010). From the child protection systems literature, we have particularly drawn insights on the types of social and institutional structures that are important for preventing violations of children's protection rights, as an important piece of the policy and institutional 'jigsaw'. Some of this literature also stresses how a combination of overall public sector budget constraints and specific underfunding of child protection services render agencies charged with child protection ineffective or lead to the actions of public officials such as the police or courts further violating children's protection rights (e.g. Kashajja, 2011; Witter et al., 2004).

2.3 Summary conceptual framework

This section gives an overview of the conceptual framework used to analyse the relationship between poverty and child protection violations in our four focal areas. While there are differences between all four focal areas in the way poverty influences child protection violations, there are also a number of similarities. The framework is intended to capture broad factors and processes; in the discussion of each focal area, we drill down and discuss in more detail the operation of particular factors

2.3.1 Socio-cultural norms, practices and power relations

In any context, prevailing ideas about how children should be raised and what constitute acceptable, desirable or abusive practices set the frame of reference within which people – both poor and well off – make decisions concerning themselves, their children and/ or other children for whom they have responsibility. These norms, which embody asymmetrical power relations (e.g. between different generations or different age groups, or between poor and better-off people), thus influence how people steer a course through economic pressures, their hopes and aspirations for themselves or their children and the opportunities (or lack of) available to them. Sociocultural norms that condone violence against children, neglect or child marriage all increase children's risk of their rights to protection being violated. These norms interact with the pressures of poverty to further increase poor children's risk of certain rights violations.

Violations of protection rights involve the exercise of power in ways that lead to the abuse, exploitation or neglect of children. Children's relative powerlessness compared with adults – reflecting their physical strength and social position and, usually, their economic dependence – renders them particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse. Poor children are often doubly powerless – as children in relation to adults and as poor people in relation to employers, patrons or service providers – which can render them particularly

vulnerable to abuse. Power relationships based on generation, age and poverty are often compounded by those based on gender. These affect the options open to men and women in their livelihoods, social relationships and child rearing, expectations of children's futures and views on how children should be treated, with often substantial differences between boys and girls.

Norms concerning child rearing, ways of coping with or escaping from poverty and, in particular, where the boundaries lie between acceptable and abusive treatment of children vary considerably between and within cultures. International human rights-based definitions of abusive treatment of children often sit uneasily with local perspectives. For example, as Boyden et al. (2012) argue in relation to child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Ethiopia, human rights-based approaches emphasise the right to be protected from harm and to have a say in decisions that affect one's life, whereas traditional approaches emphasise collective wellbeing and social acceptance – a different form of protection. However, perspectives on what constitutes positive or acceptable treatment and what is abusive also vary within cultures.

For example, several studies of corporal punishment in low- and middle-income countries show that the majority of adults, both parents and teachers, believe strongly in its efficacy as a tool for correcting misbehaviour and improving academic performance. Indeed, many of the adults interviewed in these studies argued that it was more abusive of children to fail to teach them to comply with accepted standards of behaviour than to punish them physically (e.g. Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; Naker, 2005), and viewed only particularly severe corporal punishment as abusive. At the same time, even where there are strong cultural norms in favour of violent discipline, there are adults who disagree and refuse to use it (Clacherty et al., 2004; 2005a, 2005b; Naker, 2005). Children's perspectives are often more mixed, with some – typically younger children – supporting corporal punishment for defined offences; others, often adolescents, are more critical and argue for dialogue and explanation instead (e.g. ACPF, 2006a; Naker, 2005; Plan International, 2006).

In some cases, norms that lead to child protection violations are shared by a subcultural group, rather than being more widely accepted. For example, several studies indicate that a proportion of male teachers in some low- and middle-income countries consider sexual access to girl students a perk of the job (Leach et al., 2003; Plan International, 2006), and as partial compensation for low wages and large class sizes. However, both boys and girls view teachers forming sexual relationships with students as unacceptable; most parents are similarly critical (Castle and Diallo, 2010; Plan International, 2006).

2.3.2 How poverty can increase risk of child protection violations

Understanding how poverty contributes to child protection violations means understanding the drivers of poverty, its manifestations and common response strategies in particular cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Frequently, studies of child rights violations treat poverty as a 'black box' (as, for example, Howard, 2012 shows in relation to anti-trafficking policy and adolescent migrant labour in Benin) and focus on other causal factors or on children's experiences and potential responses. Figure 1 highlights some macro and meso drivers of poverty that both directly and indirectly exacerbate the risk of violation of children's protection rights.

Drivers of poverty

Economic shocks (whether exogenous or policy-related, such as austerity policies), environmental or health shocks that undermine livelihoods or the impoverishment associated with conflict can lead to coping strategies that increase children's risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, early marriage and inadequate care (see below) as a means of bringing in additional income or reducing costs.

Policies that undermine basic services may also put children at greater risk of child protection violations. For example, some analysts see stress on teachers related to poor pay and class expansion, particularly in West Africa, as one reason for systemic corporal punishment and high rates of sexual abuse in schools (Sections 4 and 5; Castle and Diallo, 2010; Plan International, 2006). Austerity budgets often squeeze social services; in particular, the notoriously underfunded social welfare and child protection sectors are at risk, if not of outright cuts then of budget freezes that effectively reduce funding, particularly if inflation is also significant.

Poor governance can contribute to child protection violations through increasing poverty – for example, through corruption and siphoning-off of resources intended for public investment, or if police and judges are paid to turn a blind eye or to dismiss child protection cases if they come to court. It may also have more direct effects – for example, limited accountability to the community can often mean teachers act with impunity and receive no sanction for physical or sexual abuse of pupils (Sections 4 and 5).

Processes of social exclusion can render certain groups of children at particular risk of protection violations (Pinheiro, 2006), both directly and indirectly through their effects on poverty. For example, there is some evidence, particularly from South Asia, of teachers reflecting prevailing social prejudices and treating poor children and those from socially excluded ethnic or caste groups more harshly; similarly, police are often more likely to treat young people from disadvantaged areas as suspected criminals, arrest them and physically abuse them. Processes of social exclusion likewise make it harder for disadvantaged groups to obtain employment and often increase the risk of voicelessness. As such, they directly contribute to and exacerbate poverty (de Haan, 2011).

Conflict both increases the likelihood of poverty through its effects on livelihoods and can affect sociocultural norms. For example, in countries affected by conflict and militarisation, violence may be normalised, at least among certain sections of the community, increasing the risk that children will be subject to physical or sexual violence.

Dimensions of poverty that increase the risk of child protection violations

This study draws on a multidimensional definition of poverty. In this section, we highlight the ways in which different aspects of poverty may increase the risk of children’s protection rights being violated.

Insecure or inadequate livelihoods

Livelihoods that do not enable families to meet their basic needs increase the risk that families will seek to secure their wellbeing through alternative economic strategies, some of which may increase children’s risk of early marriage, sexual exploitation, physical violence or inadequate care. Some key routes through which this may occur include:

- **Strategies for raising income.** Several strategies for increasing household incomes put children at risk of their protection rights being violated. For example, engaging children in commercial sex work or transactional sex violates their right to freedom from sexual and economic exploitation (Section 4); children who work are at risk of economic exploitation, damage to their health and development and, in some cases, of physical and sexual abuse. If parents migrate for work or increase their working hours, or if adults who formerly cared for children start working, children may be at risk of poor-quality care and of physical and sexual abuse (Sections 4, 5 and 6). Adolescents themselves may decide to undertake sex work (Simkhada, 2008; van Blerk, 2008) or to migrate in order to relieve the burdens on their families and contribute to their own advancement (Hashim, 2006; Thorsen, 2012a, 2012b), in some cases raising the risk of physical or sexual violence at work or where they are living. There is evidence of girls being married off to bring bride price or other resources into the household (e.g. Bantebya et al, forthcoming); in addition to their right to consent to marriage when sufficiently mature to do so being violated, they are at risk of sexual violence and often also physical violence (Section 3).
- **Strategies for reducing demands on households.** Households under economic stress may try to reduce demands on them in a number of ways that affect children’s right to protection. These include sending children to live with relatives who take care of them and bring them up, or in residential institutions such as children’s homes or orphanages. While both of these can be positive environments for children under certain circumstances¹⁴ (Castle and Diallo, 2010; Whetten et al., 2009), there is some evidence that fostered children may be at greater risk of physical violence and discrimination compared with the household’s biological children (Castle and Diallo, 2010) and substantial evidence of physical and sexual violence and poor developmental outcomes in residential care (Pinheiro, 2006). In some of the poorest communities, marrying off a child can be seen as a way to ensure that at least she has enough to eat, as well as there being more to go round for the rest of the family (ACPF, 2006a). Anticipated economic pressures also contribute to female infanticide and foeticide where families fear not being able to afford girls’ future marriage costs (Harper et al., 2010).

-
- ***Indirect result of stresses on adults and adolescents and their psychological coping strategies.*** There is considerable qualitative evidence of linkages between adult drinking and home-based violence against children (Section 5). Stresses associated with poverty, urbanisation, changing social structures and declining family support can mean parents and carers respond violently to children's requests or misdemeanours and/or take out their frustrations on children. However, evidence on whether poor children are more likely to experience violent punishment is mixed (Section 5). We found no literature discussing the relationship between narcotic use and violence against children, though recent fieldwork by ODI in the Occupied Palestinian Territories suggests a link (Pereznieta, et. al. 2014). One other adult coping mechanism noted in some of the literature is emotional withdrawal, which can lead to children not receiving the love and care they need to thrive, and to adolescents seeking alternative sources of emotional support through peer groups. In some cases, this can lead to children and adolescents leaving their families to live on the street, or joining violent gangs (Maclure and Sotelo, 2004).

Powerlessness

Qualitative studies have shown that many poor people experience powerlessness as a defining feature of poverty (e.g. World Bank, 2000). As noted above, the double powerlessness of poor children – as children and as members of poor families with insecure livelihoods – can mean they are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. For example, it is largely (though not entirely) poorer children who are at risk of trafficking (Section 4); a landlord, patron or breadwinner abusing a child sexually may be able to buy silence or make it harder for a child to resist because their family is financially dependent on him (Bower, 2003). Teachers who abuse children sexually or physically may also exploit power differentials between themselves and poor community members to behave with impunity (Plan International, 2006).

Limited access to services and amenities

A lack of and/or poor-quality services can contribute to child protection violations in several ways. For example, girls who have to travel long distances to school, to fetch water or fuel or to use communal toilets may be at risk of sexual assault (Section 4). An absence of affordable day care for working parents may mean young children are left alone unsupervised (Section 6). Secondary education that is too expensive, distant or too low in quality may lead to adolescent girls dropping out and marrying in their teens (Section 3).

Limited access to information

Because of lower levels of education, more limited social capital and lower access to the media, poor people often have more limited access to information than their better-off counterparts. This can increase poorer children's risk of protection violations. For example, limited knowledge among young people and their parents of the kinds of work young people will be expected to perform at destination can mean they are less aware both of the risks of facilitated migration and of their rights, and are thus more vulnerable to trafficking (IOM, 2011); limited knowledge among parents of child development can lead to age-inappropriate expectations, while lack of awareness of positive discipline methods can lead to greater use of corporal punishment (Al-Hassan, 2009; Wint and Brown, 1988). Limited knowledge of the law and of institutions that may be able to help if children's rights are violated can undermine the protective potential of these structures, and children's and young people's capacity to assert their rights and defend themselves (Bandiera et al., 2012; Guga, 2010; Kashajja, 2011).

Time poverty

Low-paid work, inflexible working conditions and the need to work long hours to generate sufficient income for basic needs, combined with extensive domestic chores associated with the lack of amenities and labour-saving technology, can limit the time available for adults to care for children (Heymann, 2006). This is particularly the case for women, who frequently carry a double burden of both income-generating work and domestic responsibilities. Constrained adult time can lead to young children being left alone unsupervised while adults are working, and can limit parents' availability to guide and support their children. This in turn can increase their risk of physical and sexual violence (Sections 4,5 and 6).

Insecure living environments

Poor-quality housing can increase children's vulnerability to accidents, particularly where time pressures on adults mean children are being supervised by other children, or not at all (Section 6). Poor communities, particularly in urban areas, are often characterised by high levels of physical and sexual violence, thus

putting children at greater risk than their better-off counterparts of opportunistic physical or sexual assault, because they are ‘in the wrong place at the wrong time’, or caught in cross-fire (Lennon, 2011; Pinheiro, 2006). They are also at elevated risk of witnessing serious violence (Section 5), the consequences of which can include pervasive fear, injury and death. Indirectly, they can be affected through the effects of violent crime on social cohesion, on their mobility and on their opportunities to play in their communities, and through negative spirals whereby investment passes their neighbourhoods by, criminal violence and violent police responses fuel one another and violence is normalised.

Strained social cohesion

While many poor communities are strongly cohesive, economic stress can put strain on social ties between kin, neighbours and other community members. In poor urban neighbourhoods, strained social cohesion is associated with rising violence levels, which put children at risk both as victims and as witnesses to physical and sexual violence. It may also mean people are less willing to care for others’ children, and lead to an increased risk of children experiencing inadequate care.

2.3.3 Risk and protective factors

Within a given cultural and socioeconomic context, a range of individual and broader social factors can help protect children from violations of their rights, or may increase the risk of these rights being violated.

Child-specific factors

Age

Age has a critically important influence on the types of protection violations to which children are exposed. The risks associated with inadequate care change with age; they are arguably most serious for infants and preschool-age children, who are most dependent on care by adults or older children (Heymann, 2006), and thus most vulnerable to the effects of being left without competent care. They are also significant for primary school-age children, who are at considerable risk of fatal and non-fatal accidents (Linnan et al., 2007; Ruiz-Casares, 2009), with injury and fatality rates considerably higher in low-income groups (Section 7). Lack of supervision and guidance also increases adolescents’ risk of involvement in violent or other harmful behaviour (e.g. drug taking, risky sexual behaviour).

While there are reports of infants and preschool children suffering sexual abuse, the risk rises in middle childhood (particularly for working children), and again in adolescence, when the risk of both domestic sexual abuse and commercialised sexual exploitation increases. Again, while some child marriages are arranged at birth or in children’s infancy, the majority occur from early adolescence, with a surge around age 14 in many countries (Brown, 2012).

The types of physical violence to which children are most exposed vary with age. Infants and young children are most at risk at home of infanticide, and from age two to three, of corporal punishment; as children enter schools they are also frequently exposed to physical violence (corporal punishment and bullying by peers). Around age 14, the main locus of risk shifts from home and school to the wider community, with more violence perpetrated by peers and strangers, particularly for boys (WHO and ISPCAN, 2006).

Table 2 summarises age-related risks:

Table 2: Age-related child protection risks

Age	Main child protection risk
Infants under 2	Inadequate care and supervision with risk of accidents, insufficient food, stimulation or care when ill; physical violence (especially homicide) at home
Preschool-age children (3-5)	Inadequate care and supervision with risk of accidents, insufficient food, stimulation or care when ill; physical violence (corporal punishment) at home
Middle childhood (approximately 6-10)	Physical violence (corporal punishment) at home and at school; inadequate care and supervision; physical and sexual violence at work (where relevant); rising risk of home-based sexual abuse

Early adolescence (approximately 11-13)	Physical violence (corporal punishment) at home, school and work; sexual abuse and exploitation at home, school and work and in the community; rising risk of child marriage; lack of guidance and supervision
Mid adolescence (approximately 14-15)	Child marriage; sexual abuse and exploitation at home and school; transactional sex; continuing risk of corporal punishment at home and at school in some contexts, lessening in others; lack of guidance and supervision
Late adolescence (approximately 15-17)	Criminal violence – physical and sexual assault in the community with high risk of homicide for 15-17-year-old boys; child marriage; sexual exploitation at school, home or work; transactional sex; commercial sex work; trafficking for sexual or labour exploitation; continued corporal punishment at home and school in some contexts – this risk lessening elsewhere; lack of guidance, supervision and support in transition to adulthood.

Gender

Broadly, girls are more vulnerable than boys to sexual abuse and exploitation, although a significant number of boys also experience different forms of sexual violence (an estimated 150 million and 73 million, respectively). Girls are much more likely than boys to be married as children (boys constitute approximately 10-15% of children married before age 18 in high child marriage prevalence countries (UNICEF, 2009a). In a high proportion of child marriages, girls are considerably younger than their husbands,¹⁵ which can limit their ability to negotiate within relationships, and may also increase their vulnerability to physical violence (ICRW, 2007; UNICEF, 2005).

While both girls and boys are vulnerable to some forms of physical violence, such as home- and school-based corporal punishment, there is considerable evidence that boys experience more severe and more frequent punishment (Section 5). Boys are also considerably more vulnerable to homicide in adolescence – often by a factor of 2.5 or 3 compared with girls (Section 5). Girls are, however, at greater risk of infanticide and foeticide (Section 5).

Girls' risk of gender-based forms of violence and discrimination, such as sex-selective infanticide or foeticide, which are largely confined to cultural contexts with marked son preference, depends substantially on household composition and birth order. Girls with several older sisters are at much greater risk than first-born daughters (see Section 5).

Disability

There is some evidence to suggest disabled children are at increased risk of both physical and sexual abuse, reflecting systematic discrimination against and undervaluing of disabled children (Sections 4 and 5). No quantitative data could be found on the relationship between disability and child marriage or inadequate care in low- or middle-income countries, although qualitative studies emphasise that disability often increases children's risk of inadequate care (e.g. Naker, 2005).

Ethnicity

Unlike age, gender and disability, which influence children's risk of abuse at home and in wider society, the effects of ethnicity operate largely outside the home – in schools and the wider community. There is some evidence of children from marginalised ethnic groups being treated more harshly by teachers, police or others with responsibility for them (Pinheiro, 2006); in Central and Eastern Europe, an intersection between poverty and ethnic-based discrimination leads to a significant overrepresentation of Roma children in institutional care (Everychild, 2011).

Individual characteristics of adults with responsibility for children

There is a general consensus – disputed by a few studies – that people who have experienced violence (both physical and sexual) are more likely to commit violence. Studies of physical violence indicate that individual psychology is another important factor: individuals who are quick to anger are more prone to commit

¹⁵ Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole indicates that the mean age gap between partners is 10 years (Mathur et al., 2003, cited in Presler-Marshall and Jones, 2012; data from Nepal and rural Ecuador indicate a 6-year age difference (WHO, 2007 and Goicolea, 2009, both cited in Presler-Marshall and Jones, 2012).

violence (OECD, 2011); individuals who, for example, reject corporal punishment or think it unnecessary are much less likely to commit physical violence against children. Individual psychology also influences how different people cope with poverty, and the likelihood that they will resort to coping strategies such as alcohol use that increase the likelihood of violence.

Social and community support

Strong peer and community relationships appear to help protect children, and particularly adolescents, against protection violations. For example, drawing on a WHO and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) study in nine Caribbean countries, UNICEF (2006b) reports that having a good relationship with teachers, family connectedness and religiosity were key factors protecting young people against getting involved in violence. Building peer networks for practical advice and social support, and strong relationships with community leaders, can help child-headed households protect themselves against physical and sexual violence by relatives or other community members and property grabbing by relatives (Evans and Day, 2011; Ruiz-Casares, 2010).

Strong social cohesion can be protective, as, for example, if neighbours intervene if they feel a child is being ‘over-beaten’ (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004), or if they keep an eye out for young unsupervised children (Palriwala and Neetha, 2011). Stable, socially cohesive communities often exert social controls on behaviour that limit sexual assault, for example. However, where there is a high degree of acceptance of violence against children, strong social cohesion may mean abuse is condoned rather than challenged.

Children’s agency

As a growing body of literature argues, children and young people are not only victims of abuse, but also agents, who negotiate the situations in which they find themselves in pursuit of a better life, immediately or in the longer term. Depending on a child’s individual and social resources, this agency may be a source of protection – as, for example, if a girl runs away from an impending forced marriage and is taken in by a relative or organisation that treats her well. However, children facing violence or marriage are often exercising their agency in highly constrained circumstances; children’s social powerlessness combined with economic insecurity often means they have very few options, and may end up swapping one form of violence (home-based) for another (street-based). They are thus at risk of exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous individuals who exploit their poverty, and lack of shelter, and sometimes lack of social networks in the place to which they have escaped (Erulkar and Ferede, 2009; van Blerk, 2008).

Education

Although in some contexts children are exposed to high levels of physical and sexual violence at school, overall education reduces children’s risk of abuse through several routes. Children with more educated parents are less likely to live in poverty. They are thus at less risk of having to work and being exposed to workplace abuse, or of being left unattended while parents are working. They are also less likely to experience violence at home, or to be married while children.

Effective basic services

Affordable, accessible and good-quality basic services and amenities can play a vital role in protecting children from violence, child marriage or inadequate care. For example, provision of free or subsidised nursery places can mean young children are not left alone at home (Section 6); improved access to water and sanitation or street lighting in poor urban areas can reduce the risk of assault while children are fetching water or using communal toilets, or simply walking in their communities (Sections 4 and 5). They can also help reduce the impacts on children’s overall development and wellbeing of any violence that does occur.

Effective child protection systems

Child protection systems – both state organs such as the police, courts or social workers and community structures such as child protection committees – are often grossly underfinanced. As such, they often lack the capacity to enforce laws and monitor and prevent the abuse of children; representatives (such as police) may even commit abuses against children. However, where effective child protection systems exist, they are able

to sensitise communities to the risks adolescents face (e.g. those associated with migration or the health risk of child marriage). They are also able to prevent abuses occurring, for example preventing engagement ceremonies or marriages of children from taking place.

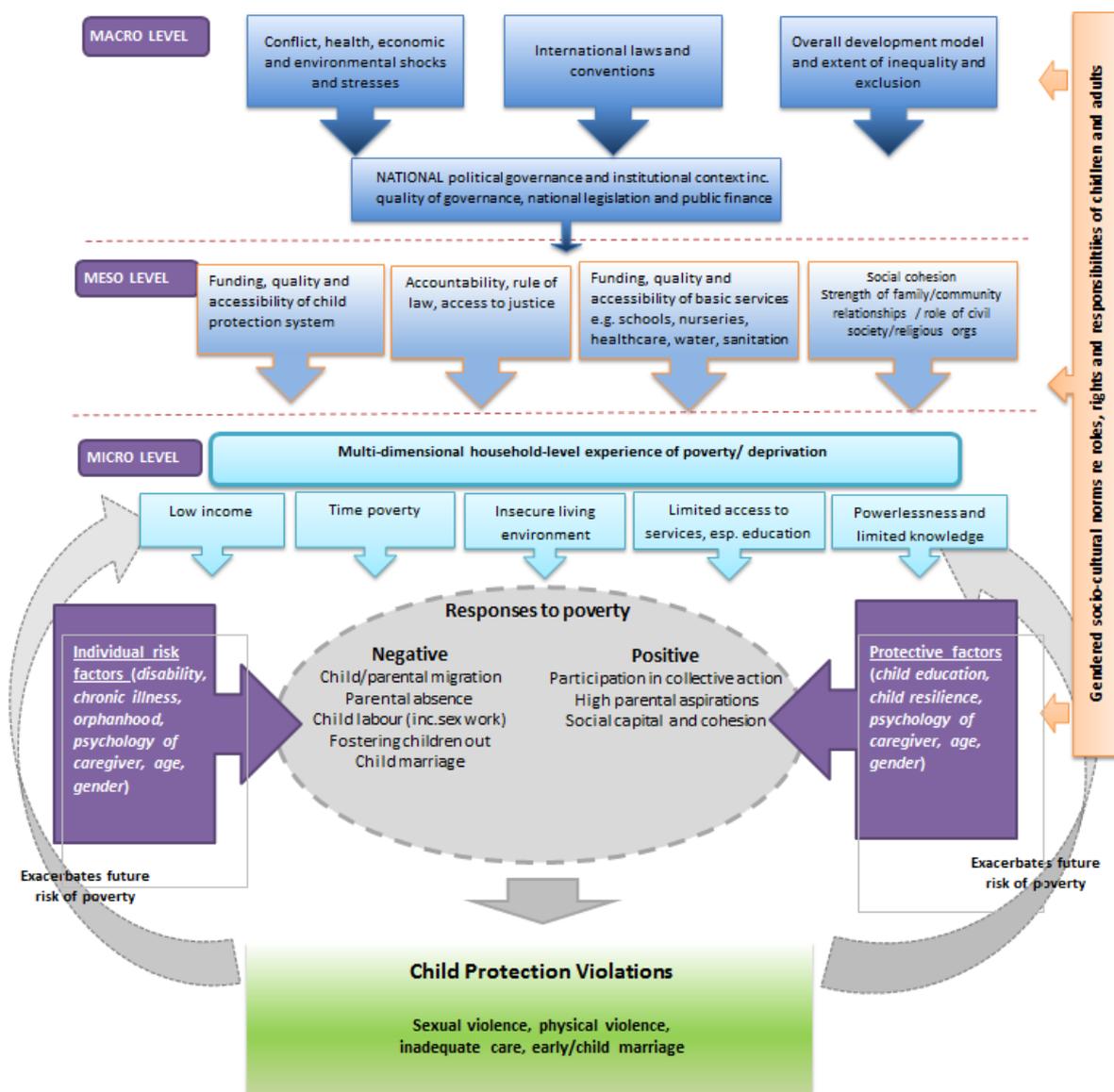
2.3.4 Role of interventions

Finally, the risk that children's protection rights may be violated is affected by the presence or absence of policies and programmes intended to reduce risk. These programmes operate at a variety of levels and address both underlying causes and exacerbating factors.

Figure 1 summarises this conceptual framework graphically. It shows that child protection violations occur in the absence of poverty as a result of social norms that condone such violations. It highlights factors underpinning poverty, the dimensions of poverty and the household and individual responses to it that contribute to increased risk of child protection violations. It identifies key risk and protective factors and highlights some of the key types of interventions that may reduce violation of children's protection rights.

In the next four sections, we use this framework to analyse the relationship between poverty and child marriage, sexual violence, physical violence and inadequate care. We do not, however, discuss the role of policies and programmes intended to reduce the risk of these protection violations: this is the subject of a separate report (Marcus and Page, 2013).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework diagram



3 Child marriage

Box 3: Headline statistics – child marriage

A total of 30% of girls in low- and middle-income countries marry by age 18 and 14% by age 15.

In the 10 countries with the highest child marriage rates, between 49% and 75% of girls are married by the time they are 18 (Hervish and Feldman, 2011).

In the next decade, 14.2 million girls under 18 will be married every year; this is equivalent to 39,000 girls

married each day (UNFPA, 2012).

If present trends continue, the numbers of girls married a year will rise to an average of 15.1 million between 2021 and 2030, equivalent to 142 million child marriages in 2011-2020 and 151 million in 2021-2030 (UNFPA, 2012).

A total of 50 million girls are at risk of being married before their 15th birthday in the decade up to 2020 (UNFPA, 2012).

In 2010, 46% of 20-24 year olds in South Asia, 41% in West and Central Africa, 34% in East and Central Africa and 29% in Latin America and the Caribbean had been married or were in a union by age 18 (UNFPA, 2012).

Between 2000 and 2011, 16% of 20-24-year-old women in the richest quintile were married by age 18 compared with 54% in the poorest quintile (UNFPA, 2012).

3.1 The problem: a violation of girls' human rights; a heightened risk of future poverty

'I hate early marriage. I was married at an early age and my in-laws forced me to sleep with my husband and he made me suffer all night. After that, whenever it gets dark, I get worried thinking that it will be like that. This is what I hate the most.' Amhara girl, age 11, married at age 5, first sex at age 9, cited in Erulkar (2012).

Child marriage – defined in international human rights law as marriage under age 18 – mainly affects girls. Globally, 56% of women aged 20-24 versus 14% of men the same age were married by age 20 (Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data from 2005 reported in Bruce and Chong, nd). From a human rights perspective, child marriage is a violation of the right to be free from forced marriage – to consent to marriage when sufficiently mature to do so. It involves obligatory sexual relations, often against the girls' will – at an age when sexual relations between an adult and a child would otherwise be a criminal offence. It can thus be understood as legitimising rape of children. It compromises enjoyment of the right to health and almost invariably conflicts with the right to an education. For these reasons, child marriage is a significant concern from a human rights perspective. Child marriage plays an important role in the intergenerational transmission of poverty, through early childbearing and through its effects on girls' education and labour force and social participation.

Child marriage is strongly associated with early childbearing, given social pressures on young women in many cultures to bear children soon after marriage. There is compelling evidence of the negative effects of early childbearing: girls aged 10-14 are 5 times as likely to die in childbirth as women aged 20-24; 15-19 year olds are twice as likely to die (Temin and Levine, 2010). High maternal mortality and morbidity rates are also associated with a higher risk of infant mortality: a child born to a teen mother is twice as likely to die before the age of one as the child of a woman in her twenties (ICRW, 2007), resulting in a million infants of young mothers dying every year worldwide as a result of pregnancy and childbirth-related causes (ibid.). If they survive, these infants tend to have higher rates of low birth weight, premature birth and infant mortality than those born to older mothers, and to be of subsequent poor nutrition (ibid.). Adolescent girls also account for between 2 and 4.4 million unsafe abortions per year, which puts them at increased risk of death or ill-health (WHO, 2011). Beyond the statistics these are human tragedies.

Child marriage is often linked to higher fertility, related to longer reproductive life – and large family size, which is in turn frequently associated with poverty¹⁶ – and to obstetric complications with lifelong effects, such as fistula, which can lead to social exclusion and impoverishment (WHO, 2011). It is also strongly associated with increased risk of STD infection. Particularly noteworthy is the risk of HIV/AIDS: studies

¹⁶ Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi (2002) cite a study by Dixon-Mueller indicating that girls married by age 19 have 2-4 times as many children as those married after 25.

from Kenya and Zambia have found that married adolescent girls aged 15-19 are 75% more likely to be HIV positive than their non-married, sexually active counterparts (Clark, 2004, cited in ICRW, 2007).

Married girls are frequently unable to continue their education or to engage in paid work – either because their husbands and in-laws consider it unacceptable or because their time is entirely taken up with domestic work and child care. For example, evidence from Nigeria suggests that only 2% of married adolescent girls attend school as compared with 69% of unmarried girls (Brown, 2012). Limited education independently affects girls’ economic prospects¹⁷ – and the survival prospects of their infants, in part because uneducated married girls often lack both knowledge and power to act in ways that promote good infant health. As Castle and Diallo (2010) show, young married girls often have no autonomy to make decisions concerning their own lives or their children’s wellbeing – and in polygynous societies are often dependent on co-wives’ decisions. In contexts where young brides join their husband’s family home, it is frequently mothers-in-law who make decisions concerning married girls’ and their children’s wellbeing (Amin and Huq, 2008). Age gaps between spouses are frequently higher among couples where the wife married as a child, as are education gaps (UNICEF, 2005). These often reinforce the subordinate position of married girls, who are perceived or perceive themselves as knowing less than their husbands and in-laws and are thus accorded very little autonomy. There is also evidence that child marriages are more likely to end in divorce or abandonment of the woman, again increasing her risk of poverty, particularly if her natal family is unwilling to ‘take her back’ (Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi, 2002).

Social norms concerning young married women’s behaviour often curtail their mobility and opportunities to form social capital (Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi, 2002). Young married girls are often at greater risk of domestic violence than older married women. For example, Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi (2002) cite a study from India where girls married under 19 were at double the risk of family violence as women over 25; UNICEF (2005) data indicate that 67% of women married under 18 as compared with 45% of those married over age 18 in India have experienced domestic violence. Girls married under 18 are also more likely than those married at 18 or over to believe men are justified in beating their wives under some circumstances, cementing their disempowerment (ibid.).

The case against child marriage is compelling. Although child marriage rates are slowly declining (ICRW, 2011; Lloyd, 2005; UNFPA, 2012; UNICEF, 2009a), why does it persist? How significant is poverty as a factor underpinning child marriage?

3.2 Understanding the relationship between poverty and child marriage – intertwined sociocultural norms and economic factors

As outlined in Section 2.2, the sociocultural context sets the framework in which people make decisions about how to manage poverty and promote their children’s best interests. For example, where there is a strong value on female chastity, child marriage can be seen as a way of protecting girls and their families from the shame of pregnancy outside marriage (ACPF, 2006a; Bruce, 2003) or elopement – shame that would affect their male relatives’ standing in their community (ICRW, 2011). The high levels of violence in both rural and urban areas and the perceived risk of sexual assault while girls are collecting fuel or water or travelling to school contribute to a perception that marriage in adolescence is the best way to protect girls from both sexual violence and damage to their reputations (Boyden et al., 2012; World Vision, 2011; 2013).

In the absence of effective public social protection systems, marriage is often perceived as the main guarantor of a girl’s future economic security. As one young married girl in Pakistan explained,

‘My mother decided my marriage because we were homeless. My father died, my mothers’ in-laws kicked her out of their home and her parents had died. My marriage helped my mother reduce her responsibilities’ (Plan UK, 2011:7).

¹⁷ Each year of secondary education adds an additional 10% to a girls’ future income, with returns from completing secondary education as high as 25% (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004; Schulz, 2002, both cited in Harper et al., 2010).

Such concerns are so strong that, even if education or economic opportunities are available, families – and in particular poor families – may view marriage as the optimal choice for adolescent girls (Bajracharya and Amin, 2010). Individual parental decisions are not taken in isolation: where a strong cultural preference for early marriage exists, even parents who value education or have no particular wish to marry their daughters off at a young age may come under sustained pressure from relatives and community members (Erulkar et al., 2006).

In cultures where arranged marriages are common, girls may be given in marriage as a way of cementing social or economic relations between families, and in some parts of the world (e.g. Afghanistan) as ‘blood money’ – as part of reparations from the family of a killer to a victim (UNAMA and OHCHR, 2010). Where there is a strong cultural norm favouring FGM/C, having undergone FGM/C can lead to girls being perceived as ready for marriage (CDF and FORWARD, 2010; World Vision, 2013). Ironically, World Vision research in Somaliland suggests that the success of anti-FGM/C campaigns in reducing infibulation has, in some areas, increased pressure for early marriage, as less severe forms of FGM/C are believed to be less effective in controlling female sexuality. As a result, early marriage is increasingly favoured to avoid the shame of a daughter becoming pregnant outside marriage (World Vision, 2013).

In most cultures, children are expected to obey their elders, often unquestioningly, and females are subordinate to males; thus, there are strong cultural pressures on girls to respect their elders’ wishes and to accede to child marriages. Children’s dependence on adults also limits their prospects for independent survival if they go against parental wishes and, for example, try to run away. Once married, leaving one’s husband may carry strong social stigma, both for the girl and for her natal family, including her unmarried sisters. Fear that sisters’ marriage prospects may be damaged, or that family honour will be besmirched – or the prospect of having to repay bride price – can lead to pressures on girls to remain in their marriages, even when subject to violence, and girls who run away are frequently returned to their husband’s family and subjected to additional violence (Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi, 2002).

That said, many girls do run away from an impending or abusive marriage (Erulkar et al., 2006), some returning to their natal families, others, expecting or experiencing rejection, moving to live with another relative, or migrating to a city to start a new life. This can involve living on the streets; frequently, it leads to involvement in commercial or transactional sex as a means of survival (Erulkar et al., 2006; van Blerk, 2008). Some girls trapped in child marriages that they did not want, or marriages that have become abusive, commit suicide, or attempt to (UNAMA and OHCHR, 2010).

Some adolescent girls are keen to get married. This may reflect cultural norms and a desire for ‘adult’ status, particularly where girls’ peers are already married (Amin and Huq, 2008). It may also reflect the limited options open to young women, particularly those from poor families and with limited education. In this context, marriage is often perceived as representing the opportunity for a better life. Beegle and Krutikova (2007) indicate that some female orphans in Tanzania view marriage as an opportunity to reduce their heavy domestic workloads, and a way of avoiding HIV infection, although this may be a false hope, since married adolescents are generally much more sexually active and have higher rates of HIV infection than their unmarried peers (Bruce, 2003; see below). For girls facing abuse at home, marriage can seem a means of escaping violence (Evans and Mayer, 2012). As World Vision research in Somalia has found, where girls’ mobility is constrained by tradition or insecurity, marriage can mean girls are protected from fear of attack; married girls may also be able to migrate to cities where more work is available or conditions are less insecure (World Vision, 2013).¹⁸

Sociocultural preferences for child marriage should not be understood as fixed – the evidence from both practice and research indicates that they shift over time, reflecting changing norms concerning gender and the acceptability, desirability and/or necessity of education and paid work, and often reflecting sustained public education campaigns or community sensitisation activities that promote later marriage (Mackie and LeJeune, 2009; Pedersen et al., 2008).

¹⁸ This finding echoes findings from ODI and Oak field research in Ethiopia conducted for this programme, that being married was a prerequisite for girls to migrate, particularly in the Muslim communities studied.

There is clear quantitative and qualitative evidence of the relationship between child marriage and poverty – poorer girls marry younger (Amin and Huq, 2008; Bajracharya and Amin, 2010; Hervish and Feldman-Jacob, 2011; ICRW, 2007; 2008; World Bank, 2007).¹⁹ DHS and MICS data from 78 low- and middle-income countries for 2000-2011 indicate that 16% of 20-24-year-old women in the richest quintile were married by age 18 compared with 54% in the poorest quintile (UNFPA, 2012). However, where cultural norms strongly favour adolescent or child marriage, a significant proportion of girls even in the highest quintile marry before age 18. For example, recent MICS and DHS data show that, in Niger and Bangladesh, respectively 48% and 46% of 20-24-year-old women in the richest quintile were married by age 18 (as were 81% and 83% in the poorest quintile) (ibid.). Child marriage ‘hot spots’ are often countries with low levels of human development and high overall poverty rates (World Vision, 2013). Many are also ‘fragile’, affected by conflict or severe environmental stress, which increases levels of both poverty and insecurity. In such environments, child marriage can appear the best way to safeguard adolescent girls’ safety and futures (ibid.).

3.3 Pathways by which poverty leads to child marriage

Where there are strong cultural preferences for early marriage, and children can be married for instrumental reasons (e.g. to acquire bride price (Bantebya et al., forthcoming; CDF and FORWARD, 2010), child marriage becomes a potential means of coping with poverty. Child marriage can be a direct response to economic and/or environmental stress: marrying off a daughter can reduce the number of mouths a household has to feed (Ahmad, 2012; Plan UK, 2011). This is particularly the case in cultures where girls, once married, are seen as belonging to their in-laws and are not expected to provide their natal families with financial support. There is thus a financial disincentive to investing in girls’ education – or in conditions of extreme economic stress to keep a girl in the household (IRIN, 2003b), as in the longer term economic benefits will not accrue to her parents but to her in-laws (ICRW, 2011). There is some evidence from Bangladesh of girls being married off as a response to food price rises in 2008 (Matin et al., 2009). Namatovu and Espinosa (2011) document adolescent girls and boys being married off to much older spouses in the Copperbelt region of Zambia as a means of coping with the most recent economic crisis. The destitution associated with conflict can be an additional factor pushing families to marry off their daughters. For example, International Rescue Committee (IRC) research in Liberia cited in UNICEF (2005) found that girls aged 12 were being married off to reduce the number of mouths they had to feed.

In cultures where girls’ families pay a dowry, there is a strong incentive for poorer families to reduce costs by marrying girls off when they are younger, often to a younger, less educated bridegroom for whom less dowry is payable (Amin and Huq, 2008). An ICRW (2011) study in Rajasthan and Bihar (India) outlines how some families with several daughters (sisters or cousins) marry them all off in one ceremony in order to save on the costs of the wedding, a practice that may mean some girls are being married while they are still children. Some families with daughters of marriageable age also arrange marriage immediately after someone has died so the funeral feast can serve as the wedding feast and thus they save money (ICRW, 2011).

Marrying off a daughter can also be a way for poor households to obtain additional resources, such as through bride price (Castle and Diallo, 2010; ICRW, 2007); where husbands join their wives’ families on marriage, it can be a way to bring in more labour (Evans and Mayer, 2012). This can be a particularly strong incentive in periods of economic stress (Brown, 2012). However, where marriage of a daughter will reduce overall labour availability, labour shortages often delay entry into marriage, as Beegle et al. (2007) found in Tanzania. Occasionally, girls may be given in marriage as a means of paying back a debt (Cook et al., nd) or to secure the bride price to repay a debt (UNAMA and OHCHR, 2010).

Less educated girls are much more likely to be married as children. Bajracharya and Amin (2010) note that, while studies from Bangladesh have found girls dropping out school because grooms have been found for

¹⁹ Poorer boys also marry younger but the implications for their futures are not as hazardous; frequently, also, girls in their teens are married to men many years older.

them,²⁰ in most other countries, both in South Asia and in other parts of the world, girls tend to get married early because they are not at school rather than the other way round. Mahmud and Amin (2006), cited in Bajracharya and Amin (2010), further found in Bangladesh that poor girls dropped out or did not enrol in secondary school and then were seen as eligible for marriage. Baird et al. (2010) in Malawi found a similar dynamic), while richer girls marrying as children were pulled out of school to marry. Pedersen et al. (2008) note that, in Yemen, lack of availability of girls' schools limits girls' educational opportunities; parents then believe their adolescent daughters will be better off married than 'idle'.

3.4 Factors exacerbating risk

No evidence could be found that examined systematic intra-household differences in children's risk of marriage.

Evidence as to whether orphaned girls are more likely to marry early than non-orphans is inconclusive. Examining evidence from Tanzania, Beegle and Krutikova (2007) found that paternal orphanhood (loss of a father) was associated with earlier marriage for girls.²¹ While on average 58% of women are married by the age of 20, among paternal orphans this proportion increases to 75%. Girls from poorer households, girls from households whose primary source of income is farming and girls who were not in school when orphaned were particularly likely to be affected. However, Palermo and Peterman's (2009) multi-country study did not find evidence of higher rates of marriage among female orphans. They did, however, find higher rates of marriage, earlier sexual debut and earlier childbearing among the lowest wealth quintile as compared with the highest, again reinforcing the link between poverty and early entry into sexual and reproductive activity. No studies could be found that examined whether girls from single-parent households (by divorce or abandonment rather than death) were at greater risk of child marriage.

Westoff (2003), cited in ICRW (2007), suggests that living in a rural area was associated with a 1.5-year earlier age of marriage than living in an urban area. In its analysis of DHS data, ICRW (2007) found that region of residence was one of the most significant factors associated with child marriage in about half the countries studied; however, in the other half child marriage was spread throughout the country. Where child marriage is concentrated, this is likely to reflect a combination of sociocultural norms, sometimes specific to particular ethnic groups, and often to the higher incidence of poverty and lack of alternative opportunities for adolescent girls in particular regions.

3.5 Protective factors

3.5.1 Education

Education has arguably one of the strongest protective effects against child marriage, as it is perceived as being incompatible with marriage (Brown, 2012). For example, UNICEF (2005) found that, in Tanzania, girls who had completed secondary school were 92% less likely to be married before age 18 than those who had only primary education. There are also significant differences in birth rates between educated girls and those with primary or no education: Brown (2012) cites a study from India that indicates that girls with no education are four times as likely to give birth in their teens as those who have secondary education. For Ethiopia, the comparable figures are 29% for girls with no education, 10% for those with primary education and 3% for those with secondary education.

Reviewing existing studies, Lloyd (2005) concludes that most attribute the (slow) decline in marriage to increases in girls' education, although the data she presents indicate large variations between countries. She speculates that there may be a threshold over which increases in education have limited effect on marriage rates. This is consistent with a line of analysis that identifies 'tipping points', often in mid-adolescence, after

²⁰ Qualitative research carried out by ODI and partners in two districts in East-Central Uganda also found that girls dropping out of school to get married was a common occurrence (Bantebya et al., forthcoming).

²¹ It had no effect on marriage timing for young men.

which cultural pressures to get girls married become much stronger (Brown, 2012; ICRW, 2007). However, some secondary stipend programmes in South Asia have helped delay age at marriage into late adolescence, such as Pakistan's Punjab Female Stipend Programme (World Bank, 2011b) and Bangladesh's Secondary Stipend Programme (Amin and Sedgh, 1998), indicating that tipping points may also shift through policy intervention.

3.5.2 Economic independence

Evidence from South Asia suggests increased economic opportunities for young women are also associated with lower rates of child marriage. For example, research from Bangladesh shows girls who had migrated to work in the garment industry (a major sector employing young women) married significantly later than their peers who did not have such opportunities (Amin et al., 1998 cited in Bajracharya and Amin, 2010). A total of 31% of girls who had migrated to work in garment factories married by age 18 as compared with 71% of those who had not done so (Amin et al., 1998 cited in ICRW, 2007). The delay in marriage associated with garment work may reflect a number of factors: independent earnings that may increase young women's bargaining power; a sense of empowerment and greater sense of entitlement to make decisions about one's future; and the additional income reducing pressures on other girls in the household to marry early (ICRW, 2007).

However, this pattern may be specific to South Asia. Data from other countries provide limited support for this association. For example, in much of Latin America women's involvement in the labour force has increased substantially while there has been limited change in the average age of marriage; in Egypt there has been a significant rise in the age of marriage but this has not been accompanied by an increase in women working, reflecting structural unemployment problems (Lloyd, 2005).

3.5.3 Children's agency and resistance

The childhood studies literature and parts of the child rights literature have emphasised that children are not simply victims in need of protection but actively negotiate, strategies and resist violence and abuse, as far as they are able. Erulkar et al. (2006) document examples of girls who fled impending forced marriages, and often became domestic workers, rather than get married in early adolescence. How far girls are able to resist pressures or plans to get them married may vary by cultural context. Some of the strongest evidence of girls fleeing forced marriage is from Ethiopia, whereas studies from Yemen, South Asia and parts of West Africa indicate girls feel they have no alternatives (e.g. girls cited in Brown, 2012; Castle and Diallo, 2010).²²

3.5.4 Supportive family and community relationships

Qualitative studies (e.g. Erulkar et al., 2006) indicate that girls fleeing child marriages often turn to aunts or other family or community members they view as sympathetic and likely to be able to intercede on their behalf to prevent the marriage. It is notable how often in qualitative studies girls observe that, when their mothers disagree with the marriage, or the girls petition their mothers, the mothers are powerless to prevent it. This underlines the strongly patriarchal relationships in which child marriage often occurs.

Some qualitative evaluations of information/awareness-raising programmes point to the role of community leaders in helping sway opinion against child marriage. Evidence from Yemen, Egypt and Senegal suggests that religious leaders (such as imams) have sometimes been instrumental in changing norms and helping delegitimise child marriage as an accepted cultural practice or as a response to poverty (e.g. Mackie and LeJeune, 2009; Pedersen et al., 2008).

3.5.5 Effective child protection systems

Most studies have focused on the socioeconomic and cultural factors that underpin child marriage, with little discussion of the institutional context. The few reports found for this review that discuss related issues indicate that weak protective structures often exacerbate the risk. While most countries have laws against child marriage, law enforcement capacity is weak. This reflects both the underfunding of the criminal justice and legal systems and a lack of will to enforce the law. In this case, officials may be sympathetic to parents marrying off their children at a young age, or are sometimes paid to turn a blind eye (ICRW, 2011). In some

²² These differences may also reflect the samples and specific interests of particular researchers, with some emphasising girls' agency and others focusing on the constraints they face in exercising autonomy.

countries, laws against child marriage have been controversial; in Yemen, recent attempts to establish a minimum age of 18 were overturned by parliamentarians who viewed the proposed law as conflicting with Shari'ah law (Pedersen et al., 2008, UNICEF, 2010c).

Box 4: Summary insights on child marriage

There is strong quantitative evidence that poorer girls are more likely to be married as children.

However, in countries where child marriage is common, disparities between quintiles are much lower. This reflects strong cultural preferences favouring early marriage of girls in these contexts. Cultural norms are often exacerbated by poverty, as marrying a daughter off can bring income into a household and reduce current or anticipated future expenditure (e.g. dowry), and can be seen as a way to secure her future economically and keep her safe in violent or insecure communities. Girls may also see marriage positively as a route out of poverty or violence in their homes.

Overall, child marriage is associated with intergenerational poverty traps, as married girls rarely continue their education, and they and their children face significant health risks from early childbearing.

4 Sexual violence, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

Box 5: Headline statistics on sexual violence, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation

150 million girls and 73 million boys worldwide have experienced forced sexual contact (Krug et al., 2002).

An estimated 60 million girls and 29 million boys are sexually assaulted at or on the way to school each year (MSI, 2008).

A third of women aged 13-24 in Swaziland reported sexual abuse before age 18. A quarter of sexual violence took place at home, a third while travelling to/from school or in public space, 20% in other people's home and 13% at school (Reza et al., 2009).

A quarter of Malawian schoolchildren aged nine and older (male and female) reported being forced to have sex against their will (Burton, 2005).

Studies in East Asia and the Pacific report that between 14% and 30% of boys and girls have experienced forced sexual intercourse (UNICEF, 2012). In some countries, the percentages for boys and for girls are similar; in others the percentage of girls affected is much higher than that of boys.

One third of South African girls under 15 who had experienced forced sex had been raped by school teachers (Jewkes et al., 2002).

The WHO Multi-country Study found that nearly one in five (20%) women in Lima, Peru, reported unwanted sexual touch or sex acts before 15 years of age, as did 18% in Cusco department, Peru, 12% in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and 9% in Pernambuco, Brazil (García Moreno et al., 2005, cited in Contreras et al., 2010).

Orphanhood, disability and conflict all increase children's risk of experiencing sexual violence.

4.1 The problem: a large-scale human rights abuse with long-term health and economic consequences

Even with all the caveats about the reliability of statistics on child protection violations outlined in Section 1, the statistics in Box 5 indicate that sexual violence against children – defined as any form of unwanted or unlawful sexual contact – is extremely widespread. Given pervasive underreporting of sexual violence, the real figures are likely to be considerably higher (Bower, 2003).²³ This should be a matter of serious concern to development practitioners and analysts, for a number of reasons.

Sexual violence is a human rights abuse: a violation of children's right to protection from all forms of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation (Article 34 of the UNCRC).²⁴

Sexual abuse exposes children to the risk of contracting STDs. For example, in a study in Zimbabwe, Birdthistle et al. (2010) found that 15-30% of penetrative sexual abuse was associated with STDs. They also

²³ Based on data supplied by the police, Bower (2003) estimates that up to 85% of child rapes in South Africa are unreported.

²⁴ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>, accessed 21 July 2012.

found a higher rate of HIV prevalence among girls attending a clinic for treatment following sexual abuse compared with the population as a whole. Sexually abused children are at heightened risk of contracting HIV because of the immaturity of their sexual organs and the greater risk of tearing (McKerrow, 2002, cited in Bower; 2003; Birdthistle et al., 2010). Adolescent girls face an increased risk of pregnancy with all the consequences of early childbearing discussed in Section 3 on child marriage.

Childhood sexual abuse is also associated with emotional problems, such as depression and anxiety, that can carry on into later life (Birdthistle et al., 2010; Reza et al., 2009) and affect social relationships and economic productivity. Studies of gender-based violence in schools indicate that fear of sexual violence – by teachers and peers – is often an important factor discouraging adolescent girls from continuing their education (Jones et al., 2008; Plan International, 2006; USAID, 2003). (Boys are less at risk of sexual violence at school, although some studies indicate that boys may be sexually harassed by their peers or older girls in school (e.g. Burton, 2005)). Even where children are determined to continue in school, sexual abuse can lead to difficulties in concentrating and poorer academic performance (WHO and ISPCAN, 2006). As such, it increases their risk of future poverty.

In cultures where female virginity is highly prized, sexual violence against children can be highly stigmatised – it can ruin a girl’s marriage chances – and can be viewed as a stain on family honour, leading in the most extreme cases to the killing of the girl victim (Frederick, 2010). Boys, equally, may be seen as weak, effeminate or homosexual if they have been unable to repel unwanted sexual advances, and may be stigmatised accordingly. Affected children may be socially excluded, and this social rejection can be a factor propelling both girls and boys into risky activities such as living on the street or commercial sex work (ibid.) where they are at heightened risk of both physical violence and serious illnesses, such as HIV/AIDS.

4.2 Conceptualising the relationships between poverty, social norms, power relations and sexual violence

4.2.1 Social norms and power relations

Sexual violence – whether by adults or by children’s peers – reflects an abuse of power, whether that is the abuse of power by an older, stronger peer or an adult by forcing themselves on a child against their will, or the abuse of trust that an adult will look after a child responsibly. As discussed in Section 2 (conceptual framework), children from poor families are often doubly powerless – both as children and as poor people, whose families often depend on patronage relationships for survival. This dependence can increase children’s vulnerability to sexual abuse or exploitation and may reduce the likelihood that parents will seek redress. Perpetrators can often effectively ‘buy’ victims’ silence, or children and mothers fear the economic consequences of reporting abuse by a breadwinner and losing a critical source of livelihoods (Bower, 2003; Okello-Wengi, 2005).

Perspectives on what constitutes abusive or exploitative sexual contact vary considerably, based on the age and physical and emotional maturity of the child and whether or not they are perceived to have consented. Generally, the younger the victim, the larger the age gap, and sexual contact that does not involve any economic gain for the victim is seen as more likely to be abusive. Economic gain is often understood as consent, even if the terms of the exchange are severely skewed and the child’s economic gain is extremely limited. This represents a less inclusive definition of sexual violence as compared with a human rights-inspired definition, which would include commercial sexual exploitation of children and transactional sex between a child and an adult.

Definitions that emphasise large age gaps and the abuse of adult power avoid categorising consensual sex between adolescents as abusive or exploitative. However, it is equally important to recognise the high levels of sexual violence committed by peers, which many studies indicate are a key problem for certain groups of children, such as adolescent school girls and street children.

Despite a significant variation in norms about sexual behaviour between social contexts, sexual contact that is understood as abuse or exploitation of children is widely condemned as immoral and unacceptable (e.g. ACPF, 2006b; Save the Children Mozambique, 2007); frequently, so too is adolescent involvement in

commercial sex work and transactional sex, although perspectives on the latter vary considerably, and it is often the girl or woman who is seen as behaving immorally or inappropriately, rather than, or as well as, her client or ‘sugar daddy’ (Save the Children Mozambique, 2007; van Blerk, 2011).

In addition to significant variation between social contexts, there are also substantial variations in norms about sexual behaviour and differences in perspective within particular sociocultural contexts. Sometimes the dominant culture excuses or even condones sexual violence in particular circumstances. For example, in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the belief that sex with a virgin can cure HIV/AIDS is used to justify sexual abuse of young girls (Bower, 2003; Government of Malawi, 2005; Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) report from their study of violence against children in Guyana that women and girls are widely seen as provoking sexual assault through their dress or behaviour. Social norms excusing sexual violence such as these can be compounded by media representations of violent sexuality (Bower, 2003).

Even where sexual violence is generally abhorred, particular subcultures sometimes justify sexual abuse of children. For example, as a number of recent studies from Sub-Saharan Africa have demonstrated, male teachers frequently view sexual access to girls as a perk of the job (Leach et al., 2003; Plan International, 2006), even as in-kind compensation for low wages and/or difficult working conditions, such as very large class sizes (Castle and Diallo, 2010; Jones and Espey, 2008). The construction of masculinity in groups such as gangs or militias that typically involve substantial physical violence sometimes glorifies sexual violence, putting both girls and boys and girls at risk (Frederick, 2010; Maclure and Sotelo, 2004; Moser and van Bronckhorst, 1999).

Norms excusing sexual violence may be publicly or tacitly shared by representatives of public institutions charged with protecting children. Thus, children in custody are frequently subject to sexual assault (Pineiro, 2006); school authorities frequently ignore sexual abuse by teachers (Jones et al., 2008; Plan International, 2006). However, these norms are notably not shared by the most powerless people – child victims themselves. The cultural acceptability for some groups does not lessen the impact for the children concerned.

4.2.2 Relationship with poverty

It is common in policy discourse on sexual violence to distinguish between sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is often argued that sexual abuse – particularly within the home and family – cuts across all classes (e.g. Frederick, 2010), and that it principally reflects gendered and generational power imbalances and the opportunism of certain individuals. This is borne out by some empirical studies, which do not find statistically significant differences in experience of sexual abuse between socioeconomic groups. Examples include Cabral and Speek-Warnery’s (2004) study of violence against children in Guyana, Deb and Modak’s (2011) study in Tripura (India) and UNICEF (2011).

In recent years, growing attention has been paid to sexual abuse in schools, particularly that by teachers (Castle and Diallo, 2010; Jones and Espey, 2008). Most studies focus on one or more African countries (e.g. Leach et al., 2003; Plan International, 2006). Sexual abuse by teachers is principally seen as an abuse of power that can affect students regardless of economic background. Teachers may, however, exploit students’ powerlessness, threaten to fail a student, give her low marks or subject her to ridicule in the classroom or arbitrary corporal punishment unless she has sex with him (Castle and Diallo, 2010; Jones and Espey, 2008; Plan International, 2006). Where education is seen as a way out of poverty, some teachers exploit students’ need for good marks to progress in school and secure a good job by demanding sexual favours; as such, they are exploiting the vulnerability of young people, particularly those from poor backgrounds. There is no systematic empirical evidence that suggests poorer girls are more at risk. While abusive behaviour of this kind is fuelled primarily by subcultural norms concerning sexual relations with students as a perk of the job, and a lack of accountability that provides no effective sanction against abuse, it may also be fuelled by teachers’ low wages, which can increase the sense of entitlement to side benefits, such as sexual favours (MSI, 2008).

By contrast, sexual exploitation of children, including commercial sexual exploitation, transactional sex with children and use of children in pornography, is seen to be more strongly linked to poverty and social exclusion, which are viewed as key factors increasing the ‘supply’ of children who may be sexually exploited. As Frederick (2010) argues,

'While no child is exempt from the risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, some groups of children are more vulnerable than others. These include children with physical and mental disabilities, children from ethnic minorities and marginalized populations, children living and working on the street, children in conflict with the law, child refugees, children separated from their families, children in places of conflict and natural disasters, sexual minorities, children living in slums and the children of sex workers' (p.5).

Because of the sensitivity of the issue, data on childhood sexual abuse disaggregated by socioeconomic group are extremely rare. However, the qualitative studies examined for this report indicate that poverty may increase vulnerability to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in several ways. Given that in practice the boundary between sexual abuse and sexual exploitation may be fuzzy (for example, abusers may well offer bribes or gifts as an inducement to comply with their demands (Amnesty International, 2009; Frederick, 2010)), in this section we discuss both together as different manifestations of sexual violence, except where a clear distinction can be made.

4.2.3 Conflict, poverty and sexual violence against children

Conflict and post-conflict situations are associated with greater sexual violence. This is partly because of the normalisation of physical and sexual violence, where social controls on violent behaviour have broken down and girls may be abducted and raped with impunity. Victims frequently fear for their lives if they do not comply (Frederick, 2010; HRW, 2012). Unfortunately peacekeepers are often as implicated as warring parties in sexual violence against women and girls (Jones and Espey, 2008).

Conflict is widely recognised as exacerbating poverty. This may drive greater numbers of children and adolescents into sex work or transactional sexual relationships in order to cope (UNHCR and Save the Children UK, 2002); it means many children are denied the potentially protective effects of education (UNESCO, 2011).

The institutional structures set up to deal with the effects of conflict are frequently open to abuses of power that may increase children's risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. For example, there is evidence from refugee camps in West Africa of people in positions of power exploiting refugees' poverty and demanding sex with a particular girl or woman, without which she will not receive her entitlements to food or other goods (UNHCR and Save the Children UK, 2002). The poverty of refugees and lack of other economic options, coupled with relatively well-paid relief workers, often create a thriving trade in commercial sex work, often involving adolescent girls (ibid.).

We focus on the following pathways by which poverty can increase the risk of sexual violence against children: selling sex as a livelihood strategy; and increases in the precariousness and insecurity of children's lives and their greater vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation.

4.3 Pathways by which poverty may increase the risk of sexual violence

4.3.1 As a livelihood strategy: transactional sex and commercial sex work

'Poverty is a very big problem because we can't afford to buy books, pens and clothes. So sometimes you end up sleeping with a man so you can get the small money to solve these small needs' (14-year old girl, Rwanda, cited in Betancourt et al., 2012:1507).

Transactional sex

Transactional sex (sex given in return for money, goods or services) usually with older men or women may be a means of survival, a way of enhancing one's economic opportunities or a way to obtain status (Luke and Kurz, 2002; McCranna et al., 2006; MSI, 2008). Studies that have attempted to quantify the prevalence of transactional sex indicate that it is common. DHS data from Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s cited by Luke and Kurz (2002) suggest that between 11% and 38% of unmarried 15-19-year-old girls had recently received money or gifts in exchange for sex. However, some studies find much higher prevalence – for example,

Nyanzi et al. (2000), in Luke and Kurz (2002), cite a study of Ugandan secondary school girls (aged 12-20) that found that 85% had ever received money or gifts in exchange for gifts. One study from urban Mozambique that examined the prevalence of transactional sex in different socioeconomic groups found that 65% of working-class secondary school girls but only 6% of middle-class secondary school girls had received material support from their current partners (Machel, 2001, cited in Luke and Kurz, 2002). In a similar vein, Luke and Kurz cite a number of studies from Sub-Saharan Africa that indicate that material gain is a key reason for girls aged 14 and over engaging in sexual relationships.

As Leach et al. (2003) point out, prevailing patterns of gender inequality frequently limit girls' and young women's economic options, so that, while some boys may find casual paid work alongside school (portering, farming, cleaning cars etc.), girls are much less likely to find paid work. This places them in a vulnerable and dependent position, which makes transactional sex one of the few economic options available to them. Furthermore, older men's preferences for adolescent girls, based on their perceived physical attractiveness and their lower likelihood of having HIV/AIDS, increase the value of adolescent girls' sexually as an economic asset (Luke and Kurz, 2002). Girls themselves may seek out such relationships, or they may be pressured into doing so by parents who want them to bring resources into the household (ibid.).

In their review of transactional sexual relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa, Luke and Kurz (2002) cite a number of studies that show how older girls and young women frequently seek out relationships with men who can provide the money they need for school fees and supplies, or who can help them secure work or advance professionally. Management Systems International (MSI) notes (MSI, 2008) that men such as bus drivers may also exploit girls sexually by offering them free bus rides in exchange for sex. Younger girls often obtain very much less from such relationships: Luke and Kurz cite examples from qualitative studies of 10-11 year olds lured into providing sex in exchange for peanuts, coke or chips. As Kaufman and Stavrou (2002) point out in a review of the literature from Sub-Saharan Africa, same-age adolescent relationship frequently include gift giving, and both boys and girls may seek out multiple partners to maximise resources. These relationships and gift exchanges are strategically negotiated, and generally not seen as abusive by the young people concerned.

Since children, even in better-off households, are relatively powerless and often without independent access to resources, there is some evidence that bribes or gifts can induce them to engage in sexual activity (Frederick, 2010; McCranna et al., 2006). For example, 11% of girls and 9% of boys in McCranna et al.'s study of Tanzanian college students (a relatively advantaged group) had engaged in sex while children for material gain. In some contexts, sexual exploitation of children can be linked to inequalities rather than extreme poverty *per se*, with, for example, adolescent boys, their parents and peers in Sri Lanka viewing 'going with foreigners' (sex tourists) as a way of obtaining extra income in a context even if families are not desperately poor (Frederick, 2010).

Perspectives on transactional sex vary considerably. On the one hand, transactional sex with adults is very common in some social contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa, and not considered necessarily abusive or exploitative. However, it may attract some moral censure from adults, and at least some young people argue that it is inherently exploitative because adolescents are unable to fully comprehend the potential consequences and risks involved (Save the Children Mozambique, 2007). Luke and Kurz (2002) show that, while transactional relationships are consensual, they may lead to rape or to physical violence if girls are seen as not keeping their side of the bargain, for example withholding sex after expensive gifts have been made. Furthermore, girls have very little power to negotiate condom use in such relationships, putting them at significant risk of HIV/AIDS and other STDs.

Transactional sexual exploitation is not confined to adult-child relationships: several studies suggest it is common among students (e.g. MSI, 2008; Pinheiro, 2006; Kaufman and Stavrou, 2002). However, studies cited in Luke and Kurz (2002) indicate that adolescent girls expect relatively little materially from same-age boyfriends, and engage in these relationships for different motivations, such as love or social acceptance.

Commercial sex work

Many studies (e.g. Simkhada, 2008; van Blerk, 2008) show commercial sex work by children and adolescents to be driven principally by poverty.²⁵ In Simkhada's study of trafficking from Nepal, 86% of the young women trafficked to India were illiterate and 86% were 18 or under. Sometimes, children's (usually girls') entry into sex work is forced, and they are 'sold' into it in return for a loan for their families, which they have to repay. Often this involves deception, with the promise of a hotel job or a job as a domestic servant, and trafficking within a country or to another country. A study by the Government of Malawi (2007) notes that, in some parts of the country, daughters may be given as collateral against a loan of livestock and are expected to perform household labour; if the loan is not repaid, the lender may use the girl as a sexual partner. In other circumstances, their families may place them in sex work, as a recent documentary examining the *devadasi* system in impoverished communities in Karnataka, India, showed.²⁶

Sometimes, it is girls' own choice, a choice made with 'resignation' (Simkhada, 2008) in a context where no other economic opportunities are available, or the returns are limited compared with sex work (van Blerk, 2008). Frederick (2010) suggests that, for boys in particular, a combination of poverty and prior sexual, emotional or physical abuse at home may be a factor driving them into commercial sex work. Van Blerk (2008) shows that some Ethiopian adolescents become sex workers after fleeing impending child marriages.

There is some evidence of children and adolescents' increased involvement in commercial sex work or transactional sex as a response to economic crisis. Drawing on fieldwork in Kenya, Hossain et al. (2010) found increasing concerns about women, men and children resorting to sex work as a response to economic downturn, and inflation, particularly of food prices. Hossain et al. (2009) also found evidence of children in Kenya trading sex for snacks, and reports of boys being sold to traders for sex in exchange for food. Samuels et al. (2011) document a perception in parts of Nigeria that children are increasingly engaging in transactional sex as a means of coping with economic crisis. Heltberg et al.'s (2011) study of the social impacts of crisis in 17 low- and middle-income countries also observes an increase in sex work among young women and girls in Zambia and Thailand. Kuehnast (2003) documents young women (some of whom were under 18) in Kyrgyzstan turning to sex work in the aftermath of the economic collapse associated with the break up of the former Soviet Union.

Children of sex workers are often at particular risk of sexual abuse by clients, brothel owners, guards, police and criminal gangs controlling prostitution, as their mothers have little power to protect them, and of recruitment into commercial sex work at a young age (Frederick, 2010).

Frederick (2010) points out that, in South Asia, a relatively small proportion of the commercial exploitation of boys takes place in brothels; most contacts occur at bus stands, railway stations and streets, and sexual activities take place in parks, hotel rooms and other locations. While most of the boys concerned are from poor backgrounds, he also documents a growing phenomenon of middle-class school-going adolescent boys providing sexual services to men and women through internet- and mobile phone-based contacts to earn some independent income.

Trafficking

Trafficked children may experience sexual violence either because they are directly trafficked into the sex industry or because they are at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation in the workplace. For example, girls trafficked into domestic labour are at particular risk of sexual abuse (HRW, 2003). Children escaping from workplaces to which they have been trafficked may also end up in sex work (ibid.) or living on the street and engaging in 'survival sex' (Frederick, 2010).

²⁵ There are exceptions. Frederick (2010) reports an emerging phenomenon of middle-class adolescent boys providing sexual services principally to housewives and students as a means of obtaining an independent income.

²⁶ *Sex, Death and the Gods*, screened on BBC 4, 2 March 2011. This is a different form of the *devadasi* system from the traditional and better-known form where girls were dedicated to temples and then sexually abused by priests.

The links between poverty and trafficking for sexual exploitation vary from region to region.²⁷ In Central Asia, trafficking of children for labour and sexual exploitation appears to occur almost exclusively among poorer and socially excluded children (UNICEF, 2009a), since it is only poorer groups that are targeted by traffickers and that are susceptible to the financial incentives offered. Similarly, research on trafficking of girls and young women from Nepal to India for sex work indicates that poverty is a key underlying factor and that economic inducements are a key factor for many (as for over half the trafficked girls and young women in Silverman et al.'s 2007 study). Similarly, studies of trafficking of children in West Africa clearly show that poverty and lack of economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas, are push factors (HRW, 2003; Thorsen, 2012a, b).

By contrast, UNICEF (2009b) comments that, in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, 'it is typically the combination of poverty along with other layers of vulnerability that places a child at risk. In some countries, victims of trafficking are not from situations of severe poverty and are even termed the "grassroots elite"' (p.27). Similarly, Dottridge (2004) reports a study from Burkina Faso that found that it was not the poorest or least educated children who were most likely to migrate (and some of whom would be trafficked), but those who already had some initial resources. In particular, they or their families had enough financial resources to make initial outlays (such as for transport or upfront payments to brokers) and social connections – principally to other children and young people who had migrated, or who had returned from working elsewhere (Hashim, 2006). In all cases, however, perceived better economic opportunities at the destination and the prospect of improving one's situation are significant motivating factors (UNICEF, 2009c).

Other push factors include social exclusion, such as discrimination against orphans and/or children of parents with HIV/AIDS (HRW, 2003), and physical violence and sexual abuse, affecting both married and unmarried girls/young women (Simkhada, 2008; Silverman et al., 2007), as well as marital breakdown. These reflect the lack of viable economic and social alternatives for young women to live independently having left an abusive domestic situation or if abandoned by their husband; this is particularly severe for girls with low levels of education, who both studies found were most susceptible to economic inducements. At the same time, traffickers exploit the vulnerability of children and young adults (Dottridge, 2004) and the existence of markets for children in the sex industry or other sectors, such as carpet making, begging or agriculture. The prior existence of established traditions of labour migration creates opportunities for traffickers to act as 'facilitators'; in regions such as West Africa, this is further facilitated by the ubiquity of the practice of child fostering – sending children to live with relatives for part of their upbringing (HRW, 2003).

4.3.2 Through greater precariousness in life, environment and workplace

Exposure to sexual violence at work

Workplace sexual abuse and exploitation of children is principally experienced by children from poor families, since they are more likely to be working outside the home. Frederick (2010) suggests that, in South Asia, it is children in occupations hidden from public view, such as brick kiln workers, bonded labourers and domestic workers, who are most susceptible to sexual abuse and exploitation. Audu et al. (2009) found in Maiduguri, Nigeria, that 78% of the working girls interviewed had been sexually assaulted – younger girls and those who worked longer hours more so. Those engaged in hawking were particularly vulnerable, as compared with shop helpers and domestic workers, and the majority had been assaulted by either a customer or an employer. In another study from Nigeria, Ebigbo (2003) found that 50% of girls aged 8-15 engaged in hawking had been sexually exploited, as compared with 9% of non-hawking girls.

Many other studies confirm the vulnerability of child domestic workers (mostly girls) to sexual abuse by employers and their family members, as well as severe physical abuse (e.g. HRW, 2005; Ray and Iyer, 2006). For example, in Save the Children's study of child domestic workers in West Bengal, between 20% and 32% had been sexually abused (depending on the type of abuse (Ray and Iyer, 2006). Most studies of abuse of child domestic workers do not involve a control group, and it is therefore unclear how far they are at

²⁷ Although trafficking is often equated with trafficking for sexual exploitation, trafficking for other forms of work and begging are also common (Dottridge, 2004). This review focuses on trafficking for sexual exploitation, given the programme's interest in sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

greater risk of abuse. One exception, which involved a control group, Erulkar and Ferede (2009), found child domestics in Ethiopia no more likely to be sexually assaulted than other girls, but they were significantly more likely to have had sex before age 15 and for their first sexual experience to have been unconsensual.

Qualitative studies provide significant contextual detail about child domestic workers' vulnerability to sexual abuse. The isolation of their work, within the privacy of the employing family, their dependence on their employer for food and shelter, the fact that their sleeping quarters are often located away from the rest of the family and the fact that if they complain about the abuse they may face physical violence and/or be thrown out – all these render them at increased risk of sexual abuse by members of their employers' family.

In the words of a young domestic servant from Haiti,

'There was a big man, the brother of the woman's first husband. He slept in a room built in the yard, beside the kitchen where I used to sleep, surrounded by charcoal, rubbish and rats. One evening, he knocked at the door of the kitchen and asked me to prepare some food for him. I had to get up and light the fire. At that moment he asked me to suck his penis, and he told me that he would give me a nice doll. My heart pounded as I really wanted a doll that I often saw on my way to the market. I did it, but the doll never came. I so really wanted that doll that I did it with others [...] but the doll never came' (cited in Amnesty International, 2009:1).

Lack of security in children's homes, schools and communities

Poverty increases the likelihood of children living in insecure homes and violent communities and of children being left unattended for long periods of time (see Section 6). Poor children are much more likely than their better-off counterparts to be living in overcrowded conditions, and sharing sleeping space (beds, floors) with adults and older children, exposing them to adult sexual relations (Okello-Wengi, 2005), to abuse from adults (both related and unrelated who may be in the household that night) and/or from older children in the household (RAPCAN, 1997). The poorest families may be dependent on the goodwill of landlords or relatives for shelter, and fear being turned out with nowhere to go if they confront an abuser.²⁸

Poor children are much more likely than better-off children to lack basic amenities in their homes such as toilets or running water, and to have to travel some distance to obtain water or fuel, rendering them vulnerable to sexual assault, particularly if they are on their own (Burton, 2005). They are more likely to be living in violent slum areas, without adequate lighting and that may be home to gangs, which engage in both physical violence and rape.²⁹

An estimated 60 million girls and 29 million boys are sexually assaulted at or on the way to school each year (Mlamleli et al., 2001; Salter and Schechtman, 2007, both cited in MSI, 2008). Fear of sexual violence at or en route to school is an important factor discouraging girls from attending school and parents from sending them, especially where they have a long, unaccompanied journey (Jones and Espey, 2008). This is particularly likely to deter poorer girls in both rural and urban areas; well-off girls, particularly in urban areas, are often accompanied to school by adults. In conflict-affected settings, the risk of sexual assault is heightened by the presence of military personnel and/or militias, who may well have a track record of sexual violence (Save the Children Alliance 2005, in Jones and Espey, 2008), and by a climate of fear and impunity where rape is rarely punished (UNESCO, 2011). However, it is notable how frequently fears of sexual violence emerge as a barrier to girls' education, even in areas that have not been affected by conflict in the recent past (e.g. World Bank, 2005; Woldehanna, 2009, cited in Jones and Espey, 2008).

Burton (2005) found in Malawi that over half the sexual violence experienced by school children aged under 13 took place in or around the school environment; for children aged over 13, sexual violence at home was more significant. Abuse by teachers has already been discussed above. However, some studies find that sexual abuse by other students – usually older boys, sometimes older girls – is more common than teacher sexual abuse (Burton, 2005; Leach et al., 2003). While connections between poverty and propensity to

²⁸ *Sex, Death and the Gods*, BBC 4, 2 March 2011.

²⁹ This point is graphically illustrated in the Dispatches Documentary, *The Lost Girls of South Africa*: www.lostgirlssa.org

commit sexual abuse are not documented, MSI (2008) cites some qualitative evidence of Malawian school boys who had committed violence (physical and sexual) out of frustration about not having enough to eat.

Strategies for avoiding sexual violence: a potential risk spiral

Children are not utterly powerless in the face of sexual violence: many try to escape abuse by running away from an abusive home or employer and living on the street (Conticini and Hulme, 2006), or migrating independently and/or with the help of a broker, who may be a trafficker (Frederick, 2010; Orme and Seipel, 2007; UNICEF, 2009a). Ironically, strategies such as moving to the streets can put children at risk of further sexual and physical violence (Conticini and Hulme, 2006; Thomas de Benitez, 2007). For example, Tadele (2009) found that 25% of sexual abuse of Ethiopian street boys was carried out by peers.

As Frederick (2010) explains,

'While open to the predations of local gangs, police, shopkeepers and community members, children on the street have limited adult protection – indeed, often their "protection" is provided by older peers or gangs, who exact sexual favours in exchange for protection from theft, beating or rape by others. Studies indicate that children living on the street routinely engage in both consensual and non-consensual sexual activities within their communities. Similar to the situation in institutions, weaker or younger children are often obliged to be sexual partners to dominant children' (p.13).

State and NGO solutions, such as putting abused children in residential care, often mean they are equally exposed to abuse by either staff or other children (Pinheiro, 2006).

4.4 Factors exacerbating and reducing risk

4.4.1 Gender

Reflecting entrenched gender inequalities, girls are at greater risk of sexual abuse and exploitation than boys. However, growing evidence on sexual abuse of boys indicates it is also a significant problem. Abuse of boys may also be underreported compared with that of girls, since it contradicts prevailing images of boys as stronger and better able to protect themselves (Frederick, 2010). As noted earlier, in some parts of the world there is a significant demand for boys in commercial sex work; this should not be seen as affecting only girls.

Naker (2005) found in Uganda a third of girls and 13% of boys had experienced sexual abuse. Tadele's (2009) study of sexual abuse of street children found in Ethiopia 29% of street children had been sexually abused and 40% of abused children were boys. A WHO/PAHO study of school-going youth (10-18 years) in Latin America and the Caribbean found only a marginal difference in the percentage of boys and girls reporting sexual abuse (9.1% vs. 10.5%) while in another study in the region sexual abuse of boys was more common at younger ages (age 5-9) than that of girls (UNICEF, 2006b). Some studies of sexual violence in schools document sexual abuse of boys (Burton, 2005; Leach et al., 2003). In this case, the perpetrators are usually peers (older girls and occasionally boys), and this is often linked to more systematic bullying.

Frederick (2010) suggests that, in South Asia, gender differences in vulnerability are related to the different environments where abuse may occur: girls are more at risk of sexual abuse at home, boys in public spaces (streets, parks, stations etc.). This reflects boys' greater mobility, and also greater likelihood of working outside the home and/or living in public urban spaces (e.g. on the street). However, in workplaces with both boys and girls, girls appear to be at greater risk of sexual abuse. Despite greater policy attention to abuse of girl domestic workers, Ray and Iyer's (2006) study of child domestic workers in West Bengal, India, also found significant levels of sexual abuse of boys – depending on the type of abuse (intercourse/sodomy, having their genitals touched, being forced to touch others' genitals), between 5% and 17% of boy domestic workers had suffered sexual abuse.

Some studies, such as several from Nepal reviewed by Frederick (2010), indicate significant abuse of boys by women (20-40% of the abuse of boys in the studies reviewed, mostly concerning street-living boys, had been perpetrated by women). McCranna et al. (2006) also report abuse of boys by women in Tanzania, as do Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) in Guyana. However, the data on this are simply reported, with limited

discussion of the social and cultural dynamics that underpin such abuse. Some of this abuse appears to be transactional, representing a way for boys to access resources; some may be simple abuse of adult power.

Among adolescents, girls are generally more vulnerable to abuse than boys, as they are often physically less able to resist unwanted sexual advances. Norms of masculinity in adolescent boys' peer groups sometimes condone sexual violence against girls, and to a lesser extent boys. However, boys may face increased risk of sexual abuse in cultures that have barriers against having sex with females outside of marriage, strongly protect the virginity of unmarried women and/or accept sex with boys because they cannot become pregnant (Frederick, 2010).³⁰

Some studies also discuss the abuse of boys by older men. For example, some wealthy and powerful men – landowners, military commanders and businessmen – in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan have traditionally kept unrelated pre-adolescent boys as a status symbol, on the understanding that the boys will provide sexual services in return for their keep (Frederick, 2010). However, the numbers concerned are likely to be small in comparison with more commonplace sexual abuse of 'ordinary' boys by 'ordinary' men, which Frederick's review identified as relatively common and unstigmatised throughout South Asia.

4.4.2 Age

Adolescents are at greatest risk of commercial and transactional sexual exploitation (Luke and Kurz, 2002; van Blerk, 2008). Children of all ages are vulnerable to sexual abuse within the family (Frederick, 2010). In a review of sexual abuse of boys in South Asia, Frederick (2010) suggests that 6-12-year-old boys may be more vulnerable than girls, partly because their greater mobility may expose them to potential abusers and partly because boys are generally considered able to protect themselves and so generally are offered less family protection. However, other South Asian data suggest higher vulnerability among girls of all ages (Rozan, 2010).

4.4.3 Disability

Jones et al.'s (2012) meta analysis of data on disability and sexual abuse found that children with disabilities were 2.9 times more likely to be sexually abused than children without disabilities; for children with a mental or intellectual disability, the risk of sexual abuse was 4.6 times greater. In a similar vein, evidence comes from South Africa that children with physical disabilities are three to four times more likely to be sexually abused than able-bodied children (Save the Children UK, 2011). This may partially reflect a belief that sex with a disabled child will rid the perpetrator of a disease (Lansdown, 2002). In Guyana, Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) also found disabled children at heightened risk of sexual violence.

The Africa Child Policy Forum (ACPF) study of violence against disabled children (ACPF, 2010) found that 54% had been forced to have intercourse, 37% had been spoken to in a sexual way and 36% had had their private parts touched. They also found that similar numbers of disabled girls and boys had experienced one or two incidents of sexual violence but that girls were much more likely to have experienced sexual violence ten or more times. Over two-thirds of this violence occurred in adolescence (from age 14 to 17).

4.4.4 Geographical location

This review found only limited and contradictory evidence concerning how where children live affects their vulnerability to sexual violence. Burton (2005) finds in Malawi that rural children are at greater risk of sexual violence from their peers than urban children, and that travel to school is one of the riskiest times. This may reflect the longer distances rural children travel to school and the greater opportunities for assault. ACPF (2006a) similarly found in Ethiopia that rural children were at greater risk of rape and trafficking than urban children, and urban children were at greater risk of sexual harassment or touching. By contrast, in South Africa, Hallman (2006, cited in Bruce and Chong, nd) found that poor urban girls aged 14-19 were more likely than their rural counterparts to have exchanged sex for gifts or money (9% vs. 0%), and to report that their first sexual experience was non-consensual (56% vs. 37%).

³⁰ Frederick also suggests the social (though not necessarily the psychological) consequences of abuse are often less devastating for boys – there is less risk that they may be seen as 'damaged', unmarried etc. Their futures depend more on securing employment than on marriage, and as such there may be less at stake for them than there is for girls.

4.4.5 Presence or absence of protective relationships

Studies that have focused on children's experiences of sexual violence make clear that assaults often occur when children are alone – for example when their mothers are out working (Ballet et al., 2011), or they are fetching water or firewood (Pinheiro, 2006), en route to/from the shops or going to a communal toilet (Lennon, 2011).³¹ Several studies of child heads of households document their difficulties in protecting themselves and their younger siblings from sexual predation and the dilemmas they face (e.g. Eigen Kipp et al., 2010; Ruiz-Casares, 2010). For example, in deciding whether to stay with other relatives for safety, they may risk losing their homes or possessions from other relatives who are intent on grabbing the property they see as theirs (because it belonged to their deceased relatives) (Evans and Day, 2011; Cook et al., nd).

Frederick (2010) finds in Sri Lanka that many child welfare professionals feel that high rates of female emigration have reduced familial protection from sexual abuse for both boys and girls. In South Africa, Madu and Peltzer (2000) similarly find parental migration associated with higher rates of sexual abuse – they suggest that children are left alone or with inadequate supervision and at greater risk of abuse. However, Asis' (2006) study in the Philippines found no relationship between maternal migration and sexual abuse of children – possibly reflecting particularly strong family relationships in the Philippines.

In South Africa, Madu and Peltzer (2000) also found that the presence of a stepparent in the household was associated with higher levels of abuse, as stepparents are not bound by the same taboos as birth parents; Naker (2005) and Okello-Wengi (2005) report similar findings from Uganda and Botswana, respectively. Similarly, Conticini and Hulme (2006) report from Bangladesh that girls whose mothers are remarried are at particular risk of sexual abuse by stepfathers.

Several studies suggest orphans and children living apart from their natal family may also be at greater risk of sexual violence. Reviewing evidence from several African countries, Palermo and Peterman (2009) found orphans were at risk of earlier sexual debut, potentially indicating greater risk of sexual abuse or exploitation. Also reviewing several studies, Thurman et al. (2006) also found orphans more likely than non-orphans to engage in transactional sex. However, over half the adolescent girls in their survey said their sexual debut was unwilling, indicating high levels of coercion among all poor adolescents girls, not just orphans. Birdthistle et al. (2010) found orphans in Zimbabwe were at greater risk of childhood sexual abuse than non-orphans.

Cluver et al. (2011a) found in South Africa that both AIDS orphanhood and caring for a family member sick with HIV/AIDS were associated with increased transactional sex and an increased risk of physical abuse. Compared with girls not affected by HIV, food insecurity or abuse, those affected by all three were 57% more likely to engage in transactional sex. This may reflect the poverty and social exclusion faced by children from households with HIV-positive members.

Situations where children, particularly, but not exclusively, girls, are informally fostered, or stay with relatives also raise their risk of sexual abuse (Castle and Diallo, 2010). However, not all studies find significant differences: in a large quantitative study of South African adolescents, Cluver et al. (2011b) found orphaned girls were not more likely than non-orphans to experience sexual abuse.

There is also some limited evidence of the protective effect of friends. For example, Erulkar and Ferede (2009) cite emerging evidence from South Africa that girls and women who are isolated and marginalised may be more susceptible to sexual abuse. Girls and women reporting few or no friends were six times as likely to have experienced forced sexual encounters as those reporting 'many friends'.

4.4.6 Education

Education can be a route out of poverty. It can empower people so they are better able to protect themselves – against family violence or trafficking, for example (Simkhada, 2008) – and more able to demand justice if they or a family member have been abused. In some contexts, it can help protect adolescents against sexual abuse. In Guyana, for example, Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) found girls who were not at school were exposed to higher levels of sexual violence than those who attended regularly. In part, this reflected the

³¹ See, for example, the case studies in *The Lost Girls of South Africa*, <http://lostgirlssa.org/>

activities non-school attending girls were involved in, such as domestic and agricultural work, where the risk of sexual assault was high.

At the same time, education can expose people to higher levels of sexual and physical violence in school itself. The extent to which education is protective or increases the risk of sexual violence depends on the extent to which sexual violence is accepted or actively countered in schools.

Table 3 summarises the main findings from this section concerning the relationship between poverty and children’s risk of sexual violence.

Table 3: Summary – relationship between sexual violence and poverty in low- and middle-income countries

Form of sexual violence	Significance of poverty	Comments
Transactional sex	xxx	Considerable evidence that poverty increases incidence; recent increases related to economic shocks in some countries; some evidence that orphans are at greater risk
Commercial sex work	xxx	Ditto
Trafficking for sexual exploitation	xx-xxx	Mixed evidence: children at risk often not the poorest but also not well off; significance of poverty as a risk factor varies regionally
Sexual abuse	x	Limited relationship; some qualitative evidence that poverty may increase risk (through increased likelihood of workplace abuse, increased bed sharing etc.); increased vulnerability to abuse if unsupervised (e.g. while parents/carers working)
Sexual harassment	xx	As for sexual abuse: poorer children may face wider range of situations where harassment can occur: in community, on public transport etc.
Sexual assaults including rape	xx	As for sexual abuse and harassment: poorer children more likely to face assault in poorly lit urban areas, while using communal toilets etc.

Note: xxx – very significant; xx – moderately significant/some evidence of increased risk; x – limited relationship.

5 Physical violence against children

Box 6: Headline statistics – physical violence against children

An estimated 500 million to 1.5 billion children suffer physical violence every year (Pinheiro, 2006).

Half the children aged 2-14 in a UNICEF study based on MICS data in 33 countries had experienced physical punishment (UNICEF, 2010b).

In Naker's (2005) study in Uganda, 98.3% of children had experienced physical violence (caning, slapping, pinching, burning or tying up). A total of 31% said they experienced physical violence at least once a week and 15% experienced it every day. Over 80% had been caned and one in six had been deliberately burnt as a punishment.

In the ACPF's (2006) in Ethiopia, 74% of children had been beaten with a stick and 63% with a belt. A teacher or other school official had hit 80% on the head at school. A total of 72% of adults in the study admitted to withholding food as a form of punishment, and 63% to forcing children to inhale the smoke of burning chilli peppers.

In a study in Guyana, 87% of children had experienced physical punishment at least once and 81% had been beaten with electrical wire, cane, belt or whip (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004).

In a survey in Peru in 2001, 41% of parents admitted to hitting their children to discipline them; in provinces with high levels of poverty or social exclusion, the percentage was considerably higher: up to 73% (Escobal et al., 2003).

In 2002, 52,904 children died from homicide, 42% of them age 15-17 and 75% of them boys (Pinheiro, 2006). For every youth homicide there are an estimated 20-40 non-fatal firearm injuries (Krug et al., 2002).

Over 95% of homicides in 15-17 year olds occur in low- and middle-income countries, where the homicide rate for boys aged 15-17 years is 9.8 per 100,000 population compared with 3.2 in high-income countries. Girls in high-income countries have a homicide rate of 1.5 per 100,000 population vs. in low and middle-income countries (Pinheiro, 2006).

A total of 50-75% of murders of children under 10 are committed by family members, as are 20% of those of 10-14 year olds, but only 5% of murders of 15-19 year olds (Pinheiro, 2006).

5.1 Violence against children: the significance of the problem

As the statistics in Box 6 show, physical violence against children is a problem on a huge scale: if even Pinheiro's (2006) conservative estimate of 500 million children a year experiencing physical violence is correct, considerably more children are subject to violence than are engaged in child labour (212 million) or are missing out on primary education (67 million). Physical violence against children takes many forms, including corporal punishment at home, at school and in the community, bullying by peers or adults, infanticide, foeticide and violence by armed gangs, militias or armies, the effects of which can range from instilling fear to deliberate or unintended injuries and death. Children may also perpetrate physical violence, for example through bullying of peers and younger children, in gangs or as child soldiers. In some contexts, children (particularly adolescent girls) face additional forms of violence, such as honour killing and intimate partner violence; in some communities, children may face physical punishment from unrelated adults who

perceive them to be misbehaving (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; Naker, 2005). The analysis focuses on corporal punishment,³² infanticide and children affected by or involved in conflict- and gang-related violence, as it is on these areas that there is the most evidence analysing the extent to which they are related to poverty.

Physical violence can have significant effects on children's physical and mental health. Violence can cause temporary or permanent bodily injury. For example, the ACPF's (2010) study of violence against disabled children found that over half the children who had been beaten had broken bones, had had their teeth knocked out or their skin burst or had been bruised; 21% required medical attention and 2% were permanently disabled. It can be fatal. In 2002, WHO estimated that approximately 50,000 children worldwide a year were victims of homicide – much of it at the hands of parents, teachers and community members (Krug et al., 2002). NGOs have documented cases of children beaten to death by teachers and/or parents, for example in Kenya (cited in ACPF, 2006b) and Egypt (UNICEF, 2010d).

Experiencing violence causes emotional distress such as pervasive fear, unhappiness, humiliation, low self-esteem and hopelessness (ACPF, 2010). Some children report feeling suicidal (Clacherty et al., 2004; Naker, 2005); others harbour the desire for revenge. Prolonged and extensive emotional distress can jeopardise children's brain development, reducing cognitive capacity (UNICEF, 2010b). It can affect children's memory retention and lead to lack of interest in their studies, with a result that violence contributes to low educational achievement and to children dropping out of school (ACPF, 2006a).

Studies from Nepal, Pakistan and Lebanon all confirm that corporal punishment by teachers is an important reason why children drop out of school (Perezniето et al., 2010; Pinheiro, 2006). Data from Brazil cited in Perezniето et al. (2010) indicate that 31% of children felt bullied or mistreated³³ at school; of these, 57% felt it had affected their studies – 5% had stopped learning altogether, 26% suffered losses of concentration and 27% lost interest in their studies. Data from the UK's National Child Development Survey suggests children who were bullied at school had lower earnings at ages 23 and 33 than those who were not (Brown and Taylor, 2008, cited in Perezniето et al., 2010).

Experiencing or witnessing violence in childhood can contribute to cycles of violence, both immediately, where children who experienced violence act violently towards other (often younger) children, and in the longer term. Children who have experienced violence (such as corporal punishment) or have witnessed domestic violence (typically adult male violence against their mothers) are more likely to commit violence in adulthood: to beat their own children or intimate partner (Dawes et al., 2004; UNICEF, 2006a), and to get involved in community violence, such as gangs.

Exposure to violence can also have immediate effects. Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) cite a study from Kingston, Jamaica, which found that 33% were afraid of someone in their community or yard, 50% knew someone who had been shot, 39% knew someone who had been stabbed or cut and 23% knew someone who had been raped. Fear of violence also affected children's choice of route to school and made them unwilling to participate in community activities. Physical violence is often a key reason why children run away from home and end up living on the street, where they are exposed to further physical and sexual violence.

5.2 Conceptualising the relationships between poverty and physical violence against children

Broadly, sociocultural norms that condone, glorify or reject physical violence (whether this is corporal punishment of children or blasting one's enemies with powerful guns) provide the framework and the boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable violent behaviour. Drawing on cross-cultural analyses, such as Ferrari (2002) and Rodriguez and Sutherland, (1999), Dawes et al. (2004) suggest that physical violence against children occurs less frequently in cultures where children are valued more positively and tolerance for their misbehaviour is greater. They suggest, drawing on Scheper-Hughes (1984), that, in contemporary societies, children are generally economically burdensome (particularly under age seven or so) and that, in

³² While a number of studies have documented the extent of emotional violence against children (e.g. Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; Clacherty et al., 2004; 2005a; 2005b; Leach et al., 2003; Naker, 2005; UNICEF, 2010b), and the fact that this often perpetrated at the same time as physical violence, through humiliating punishment or by bullies, analysing emotional abuse of children was outside the terms of reference of this review.

³³ Mistreated is not defined here.

conditions of economic stress, the risks of violence to children increase. In a similar vein, Thomas de Benitez (2009) argues that ‘societies that view children as the property of their parents are ill-equipped to protect children from abuse, while those that emphasize children’s rights are likely to experience much lower levels of child abuse’ (p.51). She suggests, drawing on Jack (2001) and Newell (2000), that societies where physical punishment of children is rare or prohibited tend to have significantly lower rates of child abuse

Individuals interpret these broad cultural norms based on their own experiences, views and attitudes and act accordingly. Thus, in a context that is broadly supportive of corporal punishment of children, some teachers and parents consider it abusive, ineffective or unnecessary and do not use it (Clacherty et al., 2004; Dawes et al., 2004). Broad sociocultural norms concerning violence, as well as social hierarchies, also interact with gender norms in some cultural contexts. Thus, for example, in regions where son preference is strong (such as parts of South and East Asia), female foetuses are at risk of termination, with some pregnant women put under strong pressure from their husbands and in-laws, even if they themselves did not wish to abort their daughters (Harper et al., 2010).

In many cultures, masculinity is associated with physical dominance, and is seen as a factor underlying high levels of violence in some regions, such as the Caribbean (UNICEF, 2006b). Furthermore, where traditional gender roles have undergone significant changes and men are less able than in the past to fulfil culturally sanctioned breadwinner roles, they may reassert their authority through violence against women and children (UNICEF, 2006b; World Bank, 2006). General normalisation of violence can contribute to increased rates of violence against children. For example, rates of intimate partner violence and violence against children are strongly correlated with one another (Dawes et al., 2004; Krug et al., 2002; UNICEF, 2009a).

Children’s structural powerlessness compared with adults (based on their lesser physical strength, their dependence on adults for food and shelter and their social powerlessness) increases their vulnerability to violence, and limits the extent to which they can protect themselves. As Naker (2005) argues, discussing violence against children in Uganda,

‘Most violence against children, within the domestic realm, is the consequence of children’s low status in the social hierarchy of power. In other words, violence is inflicted on children mainly because they are children, and less so because of their actions. For example, an adult male who commits the same mistake as a child would not be beaten, but the child would.’ (p.4)

This is often exacerbated by the absence or weakness of protective structures, a failure that may reflect under-resourcing and an inability to effectively deter violence, an acceptance of particular forms of violence among those charged to protect children (e.g. school administrations that turn a blind eye to corporal punishment even where it is illegal because they do not approve of the law, or police who beat up street children and suspected young offenders) and/or a lack of accountability. For example, although 109 countries have banned corporal punishment in schools (UNESCO, 2011), in many countries these laws are widely flouted as the law is seen as foolish (ACPF, 2006a).

Poverty is often viewed as a factor increasing children’s risk of suffering physical violence, as in the ecological framework used by Krug et al. (2002), WHO (2008) and Pinheiro (2006), and at aggregate level there is evidence to support this. Krug et al. (2002) observe that ‘studies from Bangladesh, Colombia, Italy, Kenya, Sweden, Thailand and the United Kingdom have also found that low education and a lack of income to meet the family’s needs increase the potential of physical violence towards children’ (p.67), although they also note that there are exceptions to this pattern. They further conclude that

‘Numerous studies across many countries have shown a strong association between poverty and child maltreatment [...] Rates of abuse are higher in communities with high levels of unemployment and concentrated poverty.’ (p.68)

There are several plausible pathways by means of which this increased risk of physical violence might arise:

- Through increased stresses on parents/carers attempting to cope with economic shocks and poverty, which lead them to respond violently to children’s perceived misbehaviour or their requests for food, money or other items;

- Through increasing children’s risk of exposure to physical violence in different settings (e.g. in violent community settings, in workplaces etc.);
- If teachers punish poorer children more harshly (reflecting social prejudices, or because poorer children are less able to comply with school rules concerning appearance or able to do homework, or are more likely to come to school late because of their greater household roles);
- If peers select poorer children to bully and victimise (Pereznieto et al., 2010);
- As a strategy for coping with or response to poverty, inequality and limited economic opportunities. In its most extreme form, this could include killing infants families cannot afford to raise. Adolescent involvement in violent gangs and/or armed forces may also be a response to poverty, as the gang or armed group may provide food, clothing and social support, all of which the child or young person may previously have lacked, or a way of releasing frustrations related to poor young people’s marginalised position and lack of economic opportunities.

In the following sections, we examine the key factors underpinning different forms of physical violence against children in different settings and discuss whether and to what extent poverty exacerbates children’s risk of different forms of violence via any of these pathways.

5.3 Physical violence against children in their homes

The terms ‘violence’ and ‘abuse’ are often used interchangeably, and/or with different meanings. Some of the literature examined considers all physical violence against children to be abusive; others consider only severe violence, such as beating with an implement, or violence that causes injury as physical abuse, and view corporal punishment as a risk factor for physical abuse (e.g. Stith et al., 2009). Consistent with a child rights orientation, we consider all physical punishment of children as violence, distinguishing its severity where possible. However, in reporting different studies we adopt the terminology they use.

5.3.1 Corporal punishment of children at home

As the statistics outlined in Box 6 indicate, corporal punishment of children, particularly physical, is common in families across income groups in many countries, and often socially sanctioned or encouraged. WorldSAFE data cited in Krug et al. (2002) indicate high levels of both ‘severe’ and ‘moderate’ physical punishment of children, with between 4% and 36% of parents having beaten a child with an object in the previous six months, and between 29% and 75% having spanked their child on the buttocks with their hand. Qualitative studies with children indicate that many accept physical punishment as necessary (e.g. Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; Leach et al., 2003). However, others consider it one of their greatest problems, and even those who approve of it cite ‘over-beating’ or excessive corporal punishment as problematic. This would broadly correspond to definitions of physical abuse as violence with the potential to cause injury.

The studies examined suggest that the most critical factor determining corporal punishment of children is whether it is accepted or viewed as necessary in particular cultural contexts (Naker, 2005). Clacherty et al. (2004) illustrate this in South Africa, where children of Indian origin are much less likely to experience physical punishment than either Black or White children. Within this broad framework of cultural norms, individual attitudes make a critical difference in the extent of corporal punishment. Reporting on a large-scale study in South Africa, Dawes et al. (2004) conclude that, ‘of all other variables considered, including social class and population group, it is an attitude of support for corporal punishment that is the crucial predictor of its use’(p.10). Analysis of MICS data from 33 countries supports this conclusion (UNICEF, 2010b).

The evidence on the relationship between poverty and physical abuse or violence against children is contradictory. Reviewing studies, mostly from high-income countries, Krug et al. (2002) conclude confidently that poverty and overcrowding increase children’s risk of physical abuse; Reichenheim et al. (2011) report similar findings from Brazil, as do Clacherty et al. (2004) from South Africa and Clacherty et al. (2005a) from Zambia.³⁴ UNICEF’s study of MICS data found that, in 13 of 30 countries, there were

³⁴ Clacherty et al. (2005a) in Zambia report a higher incidence of ‘humiliating punishment’ (which included both physical and emotional punishment) both at home and in school among poorer children, and a higher incidence of physical punishment among lower-income children compared with better-off groups. There were also small (approximately 3%) differences in the percentage of low-income children who had experienced physical punishment at home – however, these were not statistically significant.

significant differences in the use of violent discipline between the poorest 60% of households and the better-off 40%, with poorer households making greater use of violent discipline in all but one case. In countries where severe physical punishment was reported (e.g. beating the child with an implement, beating them all over their body repeatedly), incidence was significantly higher among poorer socioeconomic groups (UNICEF, 2010b).

The higher stress levels facing poor households are seen to explain greater use of violent discipline; these may be exacerbated in households with large numbers of children to support, and/or in single-parent households without social support. US studies suggest that corporal punishment is more common in households with young parents, those with limited education and those who abuse alcohol (Dawes et al., 2004). UNICEF's (2010b) analysis of MICS data tested these conclusions and found that large household size is a risk factor for violent discipline of children in less than half the countries studied; where it is a factor, as in research in OECD countries, the risk is greater in larger households.

Qualitative analysis that probes children's experiences of physical violence lends some support to the idea that adult stress increases the prevalence of physical violence. For example, ACPF's (2006a) study in Ethiopia suggests parents who are unable to provide for children's basic material needs can respond violently if children ask for items such as food, books, uniforms etc. Studies of the social effects of crisis find similar patterns:

'When women have nothing to eat, they beat their children and verbally abuse them. Women are more stressed.' Focus group discussion in Kingston, Jamaica (2009).

'When I don't have anything in the house and I am upset, I beat up the children.' Focus group discussion in Yemen (2010).

Both cited in Heltberg et al. (2012:16).

Adult mechanisms for coping psychologically with poverty-related stresses, such as alcohol or narcotics, can also increase the risk of violence against children, since they impair judgement and self-control (see Section 5.6). They can also lead to increased violence against women (Heltberg et al., 2012; Hossain et al., 2010), which can be both distressing for children and disruptive if, for example, they have to flee with their mothers to somewhere safer (UNICEF, 2005).

This said, in over half (17 out of 30) of countries studied, there were no significant differences in socioeconomic groups' use of violent discipline. This mirrors findings from several other studies reviewed. As the authors of a large survey-based study on violence against children in Guyana concluded,

'The key informants attributed much of the physical abuse of children to the frustration felt by caregivers due to difficult socio-economic circumstances. However, this study did not find a relationship between the frequency and intensity of physical abuse, the economic situation of the home, the total number of siblings or the total number of people in the home. Children from households which were less well off economically, or from larger families or households, or from larger families or households, were not more likely to experience physical abuse. Factors such as economic status of the household and the size of a family may contribute to the caregivers' frustrations but, according to the findings of this study, are not the main reasons for the physical abuse of children perpetrated by caregivers. Rather the physical abuse perpetrated against the child in the home is associated with how the caregiver deals with these factors, and how they approach caring for and disciplining the child' (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004: 36).

One of the studies reviewed (Deb and Modak, 2010), which examined socioeconomic differentials in different forms of violence against children in Tripura (a state in North-eastern India), found that rates of physical violence against children were actually highest in the highest socioeconomic groups. They relate this to high expectations of children's academic achievement and the use of corporal punishment if these are not met.

Taken together, these studies suggest the degree of cultural acceptability of physical discipline of children is the most important factor influencing its prevalence. However, stresses related to poverty appear to exacerbate the frequency and severity of home-based corporal punishment of children in about half the studies conducted.

5.3.2 Infanticide and foeticide

In the past 20 years, a body of literature examining sex-selective abortion in India, China and a few other countries with strong son preference, such as Korea (e.g. Edlund and Lee, 2009), has developed. This has been motivated by the significant discrepancies in sex ratios (the number of males per females) in India and China, which indicate that a large number of girls and women are ‘missing’. Estimates of the number of ‘excess’ males or ‘missing’ females under 20 in China range from 20 million (ibid.) to 32.7 million in 2005 (Wei et al., 2009), with a corresponding figure of 20 million for India (Edlund and Lee, 2009).

Missing females on this scale may reflect sex-selective abortion, infanticide or selective neglect of girls once born. The literature suggests that, in India, selective neglect (discussed briefly in Section 6) is the single largest factor leading to unbalanced sex ratios among children (Arnold et al., 2002; Bhalotra and Cochrane, 2010), with sex-selective abortion next, and infanticide becoming rare as a result of the rise in sex-selective abortion (though data are very limited). Bhalotra and Cochrane (2010) estimate that 480,000 girls were selectively aborted in India every year between 1995 and 2005, equivalent to 6.2% of potential female births. By contrast, in China, sex-selective abortion appears to be the main cause of imbalanced sex ratios, with limited evidence of selective neglect once girls are born (Wei et al., 2009). Wei et al. (2009) calculate that an excess 1.32 million boys were born in China in 2005 alone.

Analysis of these forms of violence against children focuses largely on how cultural norms for son preference and for dowry avoidance (in India) affect the ways boys and girls are valued. There is relatively little analysis of socioeconomic differentials, possibly reflecting the data used, usually population censuses, and the difficulties in conducting qualitative studies on this sensitive area, subject to criminal penalties. We now present the evidence gleaned from the literature reviewed concerning the relationship between poverty, infanticide and sex-selective abortion.

There is little evidence from India to suggest a link between poverty and foeticide. Indeed, studies that disaggregate by socioeconomic group indicate that rates of both prenatal sex testing and female foeticide tend to be lowest among the poorest groups (Dagar, 2007), that more educated women are more likely to engage in sex-selective abortion and that, as a result, girls are increasingly being born into poor households in India (Bhalotra and Cochrane, 2010). This may reflect the costs of ultrasound and abortion, which can be prohibitive for poorer families, and the greater opportunity costs of educated women’s time, which may reduce their willingness to rear unwanted children (ibid.). As Bhalotra and Cochrane (2010) point out, this contradicts a common stereotype in India that it is among poor and ‘backward’ groups that son preference is concentrated and the *a priori* argument that poorer families might see the costs of ultrasound and abortion as preferable to those of raising a girl who will leave the family on marriage, as well as presenting wedding and dowry-related expenses.

Indeed, the data from India strongly indicate that the key factor is the desire for sons: Bhalotra and Cochrane (2010) argue that sex-selective abortion patterns reflect a desire for two sons. Rates of sex-selective abortion are highest among higher-order births, with girls who have older sisters but no brothers particularly at risk in India (Arnold et al., 2002; Bhalotra and Cochrane, 2010) and in parts of China (Wei et al., 2009). Ebenstein (2007) cites some evidence from China of sex-selective abortion of boys with an older brother, indicating a desire among some households for a daughter once they have a son. This reflects an expectation that girls will help their mothers around the house and the high costs of son’s marriages (ibid.; Chu, 2002).

Given that son preference is such a strong motivating factor in India, Bhalotra and Cochrane (2010) suggest that effective strategies to eradicate both sex-selective abortion and selective neglect of girls are likely to be those that focus on changing the cultural valuation of boys and girls. They note that incentive programmes such as cash transfers to families of girls below the poverty line are too recent for effects to be apparent. Their data also suggest that legal sanctions have had some effect. In China, the literature reviewed suggests that changes to the One Child Policy in areas where couples are allowed a second birth after the birth of a

daughter (Wei et al., 2009) or subsidies to families without sons (Ebenstein, 2007) might help reduce sex-selective abortion. In Korea, a combination of public education campaigns promoting the value of having daughters, rising education levels and increased urbanisation have led to a reduction in son preference (Chung and Das Gupta, 2007) and normalisation of the sex ratio by 2007 (Das Gupta et al., 2009).

There is also some evidence that poverty exacerbates the risk of infanticide, particularly of girls, but this is very clearly in interaction with a number of other factors. All the studies of infanticide examined for this review focused on South Asia, where a strong feminist movement has driven concern about female infanticide; none of the papers reviewed discussed male infanticide. Where female infanticide takes place, this is often related to a perception of daughters as an economic burden, and specifically the high cost of dowry. Several papers relate female infanticide to poverty (e.g. Baruah, 2009; Tandon and Sharma, 2006) though the strength of the evidence on which they draw these conclusions is not clear. It is notable that, in George et al.'s (1992) study of Tamil Nadu, higher birth order daughters (i.e. girls who already had elder sisters) were at much greater risk of infanticide – 80-90% of female infanticides were third or subsequent girls. Murthy's (1996) study found that poverty among *dais* (traditional birth attendants) was given as key reason for killing babies – they were given financial inducements to do so.

Some studies also cast doubt on the significance of poverty. For example, George et al. (1992) found in Tamil Nadu that all the infanticide deaths in the villages studied took place among landed families. They also found that they were in villages at some distance from main roads, that is, that specific cultural forces may have been an influence in those areas. Baruah (2009) suggests that, in some parts of India, government clampdown on sex selective abortions has led to an increase in female infanticide.

5.4 Physical violence in schools

Physical punishment is extremely common in schools in low- and middle-income countries,³⁵ and is widespread even in some countries where it is illegal. For example, over 60% of school-attending children in Naker's (2005) study in Uganda reported routinely being beaten by teachers, and 97% of children in a study in Cameroon cited by Pinheiro (2006). While beating appears to be one of the most common forms of school-based violence against children, survey evidence from East, Southern and West Africa indicates that children also face hair and ear pulling, have had their heads slammed against walls, have had their fingers squeezed around pencils, have been tied up with ropes, have been forced to stand, kneel or move in uncomfortable positions for long periods of time and have been assigned hard manual labour as punishments for misdemeanours (ACPF, 2006a; Naker, 2005). Many of these would be considered illegal assault or torture if applied to adults.

As with corporal punishment at home, cultural acceptance of corporal punishment at school among teachers, parents and, to a lesser extent, children is a critical reason why it continues and is so common. Indeed, as with corporal punishment at home, this form of violence against children is not just accepted – it is seen as having positive educational value – either to instil norms of good behaviour or to improve academic performance. In schools in many countries, it is an institutionalised and expected practice, and children from all socioeconomic groups, both girls and boys and children from all ethnic groups are at risk. Corporal punishment is often applied indiscriminately and arbitrarily, with children sometimes unaware why they were punished (Plan International, 2006).

This said, some of the literature reviewed suggests poorer children or those from socially excluded groups may be at greater risk of physical punishment in schools (e.g. Pinheiro, 2006), reflecting teachers' conscious or subconscious discrimination against poorer children. The *World Report on Violence Against Children* (ibid.) notes that children can face corporal punishment for poverty-related reasons outside their control, such as their parents not paying school fees. Other studies of corporal punishment in schools show that children are also punished for not having neat or clean uniforms and for not having the correct school

³⁵ It is also legal – and used – in schools in some high-income countries (e.g. some US states). See <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/frame.html> for an overview of states that have banned and those that permit corporal punishment in different settings.

supplies, both of which may be related to poverty. Poorer children often have higher domestic work burdens that prevent them from doing homework and/or mean they arrive at school late because they have had to complete a large number of chores first, both of which may mean they are physically punished (Clacherty et al., 2004; 2005a; 2005b; Naker, 2005).

Some studies also link the use of corporal punishment in schools to the low pay and poor working conditions experienced by many teachers in low- and middle-income countries. For example, Jones et al. (2008) suggest that the expansion of class sizes in many countries – one of the effects of the global policy drive towards universalisation of primary and secondary education – has created extra pressures on teachers and a perception that large classes can only be controlled through fear of violence. Plan Togo (2006) links the extensive use of corporal punishment in Togolese schools with the impact of structural adjustment of the economy in the 1990s. The freeze on civil service recruitment meant qualified teachers were increasingly replaced with unqualified auxiliary teachers who had no training in pedagogy or behaviour management, and were quick to resort to corporal punishment, and that a large number of unregulated private schools were set up, with very limited controls on teachers' behaviour. Castle and Diallo (2010) make a similar argument for Francophone West Africa more generally. Their research also shows that many teachers – poorly paid and demoralised – make their students work in their fields (to augment teachers' low salaries) or do house chores for them as punishments. As with sexual violence in schools, there is also anecdotal evidence that poor children face greater risk of corporal punishment because they are more likely to have to attend underfunded schools with poorly trained teachers who are more likely to resort to corporal punishment than their better-off counterparts.³⁶ More research would be needed to substantiate this.

There is some tentative evidence that suggests poverty may be associated with increased bullying – defined as a pattern of physically or emotionally aggressive behaviour – by classmates (Plan International, 2006), while MSI (2008) cites a study from Malawi that links poverty and hunger with boys' feeling frustrated and bullying other boys and girls. While the *World Study on Violence Against Children* (Pinheiro, 2006) found that between 20% and 65% of children had been bullied (emotionally or physically), in some countries prevalence is considerably higher. For example, Burton (2005) found in Malawi that bullying by other children was the most prevalent form of violence against children, experienced by 99% of the school children surveyed.

In some countries, adolescents' use of weapons at school is an issue of concern: Pickett et al.'s (2005) study of 35 developed countries (cited in SAS, 2009) found that between 10% and 22% of boys and 2-5% of girls carried a weapon. These were mostly used for fights in or around school. A 2002 UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) study from Brazil (also cited by SAS, 2009) found that 53% of private schools and 65% of public schools were considered insecure environments. Pinheiro (2006) cites evidence from the Caribbean of gang-related violence infiltrating schools as well as the wider community in poor urban areas, putting students at risk of serious violence by other students as well as adults.

5.5 Physical violence in the community

Poor children are more likely than their better-off peers to be working and at risk of violence by employers or customers, to be living 'on the street' or in other public urban space where they are vulnerable to violence from other children, organised crime and the police and to live in violent neighbourhoods. They are also more likely to perpetrate violence themselves, particularly in adolescence. This section examines the ways in which poverty exposes children to greater violence in the community in more detail.

5.5.1 Working children

'I know a lady who lives with her nephew in my neighbourhood. He tends the cattle and does all the domestic work. But this boy has the habit of stealing food from the house. One day the lady tied his hands and put them on fire. He lost his fingers and recovered only after a long treatment.' Ninth grade student, Ethiopia (ACPF, 2006a).

³⁶ Comments provided as a response to the ODI/Oak electronic survey (Smith, 2012).

Children working outside the home (the vast majority of whom are poor) are at risk of violence (physical and sexual) from their employers or co-workers. Thus, Hadi's (2000) study of child abuse among working children in rural Bangladesh found a strong association between poverty and child abuse (including physical violence), with older boys and the children of landless labourers particularly affected. In contrast with other studies that have highlighted the extent of violence against children at school, this study found that attending school was a protective factor.

Studies of child domestic workers confirm their particularly high vulnerability to domestic abuse. For example, 70% of the child domestic workers in Ray and Iyer's (2005) study in West Bengal had experienced physical abuse, and 47% had suffered an injury as a result of this abuse. A series of studies of child domestic workers document the severe physical abuses many face, including beating, kicking, hair pulling and burning by employers (HRW, 2003; 2006).

There are few studies comparing physical violence against working and non-working children. However, as Thorsen (2012b) points out, the same methods (corporal punishment, verbal abuse, deprivation of food) are used to discipline biological children as are used with child domestic workers. That said, the intensity and frequency of punishment or abuse may be worse for domestic workers; with biological children there is not necessarily the expectation that they must always be occupied in useful domestic tasks.

5.5.2 Street children

Street children, who live, work or spend large amounts of time in public urban space outside the control of adults (Thomas de Benitez, 2007), are at heightened risk of violence. This reflects public disdain or contempt for street children, who are often presumed to be criminals, which often erupts into violence. Indeed, in some countries, particularly in Latin America, police or vigilantes have killed street children simply because they are street children (Pinheiro, 2006). More commonly, street children face physical violence from peers, from older street youth, from the police and from organised criminals who demand protection money and/or extort money from them and respond violently if they cannot or refuse to pay (Conticini and Hulme, 2006; Thomas de Benitez, 2007; UNODCCP, 2006). The ACPF (2006a) found that, in Ethiopia, the police regularly round up children who are trading informally. Street children were 20% more likely to be beaten by the police in such incidents as compared with school children.

Lalor (1999) examined in some detail the victimisation experienced by street boys in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He found widespread abuse: being beaten was a weekly occurrence for approximately one-third of the sample. More than half reported being 'regularly' physically attacked on the streets, frequently severely. Injuries from stabbing, slashes from razor blades, fractured skulls and broken bones were quite common, even among this small sample. Injuries were most commonly inflicted during fights with other street boys, which arose over 'rights' to work in a particular area or perceived insults.

Reviewing studies of reasons why children end up living on streets, Lalor (1999) finds that poverty or financial reasons are usually the most common, but violence or abuse at home is often a significant factor. Conticini and Hulme (2006) argue that, in Bangladesh, poverty is less significant than physical violence at home as a factor pushing children onto the streets. A total of 16% of street children were from non-poor households and 28% from borderline poor households (i.e. 56% were poor), whereas only 2 of the 80 children they studied had experienced no violence at home before their move to the street, with boys experiencing more physical violence and girls experiencing more sexual violence, although both forms of violence were disturbingly common. In regions affected by war and political violence, issues such as displacement, separation and orphaning may be more important than poverty or abusive homes in driving children on to the street (Veale and Dona, 2003).

5.5.3 Violent crime

Both organised and petty crime are common in low-income urban areas, more so than in higher-income urban or rural areas. Children – particularly adolescent boys and young men – in these areas are at heightened risk of being victims of, witnesses to and, in adolescence, becoming involved as perpetrators of physical violence (UNICEF, 2006b). Witnessing or experiencing violence is associated with an increased propensity to commit violence (Krug et al., 2002).

Children as witnesses and victims of violent crime

Studies from low-income urban neighbourhoods in some countries indicate that large numbers of children are exposed to physical violence in their communities. For example, Shields et al. (2008) found that 48% of the 8-13 year olds interviewed in their study of violence in South African townships had witnessed a murder. A total of 33% of children in a Jamaican study were afraid of someone in their community or yard, 50% knew someone who had been shot, 39% knew someone who had been stabbed or cut and 23% knew someone who had been raped (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004).

Adolescent boys and young men in these communities are at significantly raised risk of both homicide and non-fatal injuries. Globally, boys and young men aged 15-29 constitute half of all victims of firearm deaths, an estimated 70,000-100,000 per year (SAS, 2006), while for every youth homicide there are an estimated 20-40 non-fatal firearm injuries (Krug et al., 2002). There is a strong association between economic inequality and homicide rates of 10-19 year-olds, especially boys, in low- and middle-income countries. For instance, in Cape Town, South Africa, male homicide rates in the townships exceed 200 per 100,000; in wealthier areas they are four times lower, at around 50 (Pinheiro, 2006) (although this is still high in comparative global perspective).

In addition to children being injured or killed – either by targeted violence, or if they are caught in cross-fire – in some contexts there is evidence of gangs kidnapping children to extort money from their families (SAS, 2009). Children are also affected by their neighbourhoods being unsafe to play in – this can affect their opportunities to play with other children, and to exercise. There is some anecdotal evidence of increasing childhood health problems such as obesity in low-income urban areas with high violent crime rates, where children's mobility is constrained.³⁷ Girls and young women in such areas are often at heightened risk of sexual violence; this can lead to girls dropping out of school, or getting married at young ages to seek 'protection' (Ahmad, 2012), and can limit the feasibility of young women from low-income areas commuting to better-paid jobs in other areas, thus reinforcing poverty cycles (Moser and von Bronkhorst, 1999).

Children and adolescents as perpetrators of crime

Adolescent involvement in violent crime is a major concern in some countries, and the subject of much more analysis than children as victims or witnesses of violent crime. Studies from Jamaica, for example, confirm the extent to which adolescents are involved in violence: one study from 2001 reported that 13-19 year olds committed a quarter of major violent crimes (murder, rape, armed robbery) (Wilson, 2001, in Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004). A WHO/PAHO study of school-going 10-18 year olds in the Caribbean found that 20% of boys and 12.5% of girls had at some time belonged to a gang (cited in UNICEF, 2006b). While not all gang members have necessarily committed violence, doing so is often a requirement of full membership. However, only a small proportion of young men are actually involved in violent crime – globally an estimated 6-7% of young men commit 50-70% of all crime and 60-85% of serious violent crime (SAS, 2006).

Most of the literature reviewed concerns adolescent involvement in gang violence. It is clear that resentment of economic inequalities and lack of economic opportunities, with high rates of youth unemployment and frequent social stigma against young men (and occasionally women) from 'bad' neighbourhoods (Maclure and Sotelo, 2004), fuel gang violence. Equally important are strained social cohesion and often a lack of supportive family relationships, which mean gangs provide an alternative social support network for young men (WHO and UNICEF, 2008). Thomas de Benitez (2009) cites a study from Brazil that neatly summarises the connections between poverty, inequality and involvement in violent crime:

'Frustration and anger over unequal distribution of opportunities are the breeding grounds for violence, rather than abject poverty per se [...] Where the rule of law does not exist or is fragile, where opportunities for employment are blocked and when individuals experience frustration on a large scale, interpersonal violence - mostly carried out by young men - increases (Barker, 2005: 64, cited in Thomas de Benitez, 2009:52).

³⁷ As shown in low-income slums of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in BBC's *Big Meets Bigger* screened on 7 August 2010.

Maclure and Sotelo (2004) and UNODC (2007) show how adolescents are often recruited into gangs through the offer of material goods that they lack – food, clothing. Once they have started to feel like a member of the gang’s social grouping, they are then required to commit violent acts. Furthermore, the economic returns to criminal activity can be many times those associated with the job opportunities available to most young disadvantaged men, often with low levels of education (Benvenuti, 2008). In these contexts, violence may be a way for socially excluded young men to obtain positions of social and economic status to which they feel they are entitled, particularly where dominant constructions of masculinity involve violence (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; SAS, 2006).

The fact that relatively few poor boys and men perpetrate violent crime suggests that, in addition to these ‘macro’-level factors, a number of more individual factors affect involvement in violent crime. These include having experienced high levels of violence, either themselves or by witnessing domestic violence as a child, having experienced several changes of parenting arrangements, the absence of a mother and negative male role models (particularly fathers) (UNICEF, 2006a) and individual psychological factors, such as the extent to which they react angrily to annoyances or provocations (Krug et al., 2002; OECD, 2011).

5.5.4 Recruitment of children into armed forces

There is a large literature examining the relationships between poverty, inequality and conflict, and the impacts of conflict on child wellbeing and protection. Examining all of this is outside the scope of this review. As we acknowledge in the conceptual framework, conflict often contributes to the normalisation of violence against children, and thus has an independent effect on child protection violations in addition to its effect on poverty. Given the focus of this review on the relationship between poverty and child protection violations, in this sub-section we focus on one area: the role of poverty, inequality and social exclusion as factors contributing to children’s recruitment into armed forces, a situation where they are exposed to multiple violations of their rights to protection. Section 4 has already discussed the increased risk of different forms of sexual violence in situations of conflict.

In the decade up to 2007, over 2 million children were killed during wartime, with 6 million injured and more than 1 million orphaned or separated from families (UN, 2007, in Plan, 2008). The UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-general for Children and Armed Conflict (UN, 2009) argues that children, like other civilians, are deliberately targeted in some conflicts, through attacks on schools (see also SAS, 2009) for example. Children constitute one-third of victims of explosive remnants of war, such as landmines. None of the literature on children and conflict reviewed here discusses whether poorer children are disproportionately affected by violence during conflicts.³⁸

Despite significant international efforts to outlaw the use of child soldiers, recruitment and deployment of children in armed forces continue (SAS, 2002). Children, whether actively involved in fighting or in support roles, face numerous violations of their rights: they may be abducted and forced to join the armed forces; they may be forced to kill, to work around camps, to spy or inform on family or friends, often at threat of gunpoint and being killed or beaten if they do not comply (SAS, 2002; HRW, 2012; UNICEF, 2005). Girls are often subject to rape, as well as expected to cook, clean and provide other domestic services around the camp (ibid.).

Brett (2004) points out that, in situations of conflict, where rape, abduction and physical violence are rife, some girls volunteer to join armed forces as they feel safer with a gun. Or they align themselves with a particular commander so they have some choice in their sexual partner. In situations of conflict, girls fleeing sexual or physical abuse at home may join armed forces as they perceive no other realistic options. Sometimes, financial incentives to both children and their families are used to convince children to become soldiers (Hogg, 2007), and/or wages are paid directly to children’s families (Machel, 1996). Grievances related to poverty and inequality, and/or to violent repression of family members or others in their community, are other important reasons for children joining armed forces (Brett, 2003).³⁹

³⁸ This may reflect its specific focus on recruitment into armed conflict, rather than the wider effects of conflict.

³⁹ Forced recruitment is also common (Hogg, 2007; HRW, 2012) and may be as or more significant than economic reasons or ideological agreement with the armed group.

5.6 Factors exacerbating and reducing the risk of physical violence

5.6.1 Individual factors

Age and gender

How age and gender affect children's risk of physical violence vary from one form of violence to another.

Homicide

WHO data indicate that children under age two are at greatest risk of death from physical abuse, while the peak age for risk of non-fatal physical abuse is mostly under twelve but varies between countries (Krug et al., 2002). In industrialised countries, infants under one year are at greater risk of homicide than either one to four or five to twelve year olds, but there is insufficient data to assess whether this pattern extends to middle- and lower-income countries (Pinheiro, 2006).

Homicide rates among boys aged 15-17 are nearly three times greater than those among girls of the same age. In the Americas, Africa and Eastern Europe, where some of the highest adolescent homicide rates are found, the rates among 15-17-year-old boys are two to six times higher than those among girls of the same age group (Pinheiro, 2006). For non-fatal violence, victimisation rates are also substantially higher among males than among females; for instance, studies in Kenya indicate a ratio of 2.6 males for every female victim of violence receiving hospital emergency treatment, and a ratio of 3:1 in Jamaica (ibid.).

Corporal punishment

MICS data indicate that, globally, children aged five to nine are most likely to experience physical punishment (UNICEF, 2010b). However, in some countries the average age is lower – in South Africa three year olds were most likely to be smacked (with a hand) and four year olds to be beaten with an object (Dawes et al., 2004).

Overall, the evidence suggests that boys face more severe and frequent corporal punishment but that girls are also at considerable risk (Pinheiro, 2006), particularly where corporal punishment of children is common. Naker's (2005) study in Uganda reflects this pattern, with older boys experiencing the most severe forms of physical violence, such as burning, tying up and severe beatings. Girls were more likely to experience forms of violence less likely to leave physical marks, such as twisting ears. Some parents interviewed said they avoided burning girls as scars might reduce the brideprice they received.

Naker (2005) found no difference in the frequency with which boys and girls experienced common forms of physical violence such as caning or slapping. Likewise, most studies of school violence show relatively small differences in the extent to which boys and girls have experienced it (such as a 3 percentage point difference between boys and girls in Barbados (Pinheiro, 2006) and similar findings in Zambia, South Africa and Swaziland by Clacherty et al., 2004a; 2005a; 2005b)). In contexts where corporal punishment is less common, gender differences may be wider. For example, a study in China found that 10% of girls but 26% of boys had experienced corporal punishment at school (Pinheiro, 2006).

Analysis of MICS data shows no consistent relationship between place of residence (i.e. rural or urban) and prevalence of violent discipline (UNICEF, 2010b).

Characteristics of perpetrator

Psychological characteristics

Stith et al. (2009), reviewing studies from high-income countries, found parental psychological characteristics – specifically their quickness to anger, often related to unrealistic developmental expectations of their children and or negative feelings about particular children – were an important risk factor in physical abuse of children.

Gender

Krug et al. (2002) and UNICEF (2010b) find that the majority of physical violence against children is perpetrated by women, reflecting the greater amount of time spent by women with children. However, both

found that life-threatening physical abuse was more likely to be perpetrated by men (Krug et al., 2002; Naker, 2005).

5.6.2 Substance abuse

Some qualitative research relates physical abuse of children by their carers to parental use of alcohol (e.g. Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004; ILO, 2001; Naker, 2005) and, more rarely, narcotics (e.g. UNICEF, 2006b). However, Stith et al.'s (2009) meta-review of studies from high-income countries found no relationship between substance abuse and physical abuse of children. The quantitative studies of physical violence against children reviewed here did not collect data on parental alcohol abuse, and thus do not analyse their relationship.

There is clear evidence of the role of alcohol in fuelling armed violence. As Reichenheim et al. (2011) found in Brazil, 76% of crimes prosecuted in one Brazilian state capital involved the use of alcohol (either by perpetrator or victim). The strength of this relationship is borne out by a number of other studies of urban and/or gang violence, which indicate that use of alcohol is often a factor triggering violence (World Bank, 2011b). Likewise, evidence from research and programmes with street children finds that much violence between street children is fuelled by abuse of substances, most often glue (Thomas de Benitez, 2007).

5.6.3 Social exclusion and disability

A UNICEF regional study of violence against children in the Caribbean found that, in several countries, children in marginalised minority ethnic groups faced higher rates of physical, sexual and emotional abuse (UNICEF, 2006b). It is not clear, however, whether this principally reflects cultural factors or is related to the social and economic marginalisation these groups face. They found children with disabilities at heightened risk of all forms of abuse and younger children (under 12) also at greater risk.

UNICEF 2005 in ACPF (2010) estimates that disabled children are 1.7 times more likely than their non-disabled peers to suffer physical abuse; Jones et al. (2012) suggest this is an underestimate. Based on analysis of datasets including 18,000 children, they suggest disabled children are 3.7 times more likely than their non-disabled peers to experience corporal punishment. Naker's (2005) interviews with disabled children in Uganda indicate that physical abuse is very often accompanied by emotional abuse. UNICEF's (2006b) study of several Caribbean countries also found children with disabilities at heightened risk of all forms of abuse, while Reichenbaum et al. (2011) found in Brazil that children with health problems were more likely to be subject to physical abuse. Explanations for this pattern of violence include the stigma surrounding disability, which leads to children with disabilities being undervalued and not accorded even the (fairly minimal) rights accorded to other children, and the additional stresses of caring for a disabled child.⁴⁰

5.6.4 Education

Although children are exposed to high levels of violence at school, taken together the evidence considered here suggests that the effects of education are protective against violence both at home and in the community. Reviewing a number of studies, mostly based on US data, Krug et al. (2002) find lower levels of parental education to be a risk factor for physical abuse of children. UNICEF's (2010b) analysis of MICS data found that children raised by more educated mothers/primary caregivers were less likely to experience violent discipline in slightly more than half of the countries analysed. In a similar vein, children interviewed in ACPF's (2006a) study in Ethiopia related ignorance of alternative methods of discipline to a lack of education in their parents and elders' generations.

Reviewing various studies from Latin America, Heinemann and Verner (2006) find that increasing educational levels are associated with a reduction in violent crime and domestic violence. Because out-of-school children in Guyana were at greater risk of violence on the streets and at work, Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004) found that attending school was a protective factor, particularly for girls. Losing a parent through death or abandonment increased children's risk of school dropout and subsequent exposure to physical and sexual violence in the community.

⁴⁰ There is much evidence of the physical abuse of disabled children in institutions (Everychild et al., 2011; Pinheiro, 2006).

5.6.5 Strength of social cohesion and protective social relationships

There is some evidence to suggest strong social cohesion helps protect against community violence: Pinheiro (2006) concludes that poorer communities and their children appear to be most vulnerable to interpersonal violence when exposed to economic and population changes that contribute to community disorganisation and, ultimately, to a community's ability to control violent behaviour. In this vein, OECD (2011) argues that young parents raising children in challenging urban environments where resources are scarce and where they are disconnected from family and other supportive social networks find it difficult to provide the sense of social connection their children need to develop nonviolent coping skills.

Research from low-income urban communities in Brazil and the US where gang violence is prevalent suggests the following factors reduce the probability of a young man's involvement in gangs:

1. Having a valued, stable relationship or multiple relationships with people (a parent, a grandparent, a female partner) whom they would disappoint by becoming involved with gangs;
2. Having access to alternative identities or some other sense of self that was positively valued by the young man and by those in his social setting, particularly the male peer group (e.g. being a good student, being a good athlete, having musical skills, having a good job);
3. Being aware of the risks associated with the violent version of masculinity promoted by gang members; and
4. Finding an alternative male peer group that provides positive reinforcement for non-gang-involved male identities.

Less personal exposure to violence and thus less desire for revenge were also important (Barker, 2005a; Barker and Ricardo, 2005, both cited in Small Arms Survey, 2006. Consistent with this argument about the importance of strong social connectedness, research in Jamaica has also shown religiosity to be an important protective factor (UNICEF, 2006b).

In terms of violence against children in their homes, UNICEF's (2010b) analysis of MICS data found no relationship between children's living arrangements and the prevalence of violent discipline in the majority of countries they studied. In those where living arrangements were a significant factor, those living with one or both parents were at greater risk than those living with no biological parent. This challenges studies that indicate a higher incidence of physical violence against orphans as compared with non-orphans. UNICEF (2010b) also found a mixed relationship between single parenthood and use of violent discipline, with higher rates of violent discipline in single-parent households in some countries and in two-parent households in others. Earlier studies, and those from developed countries, such as those reviewed in Krug et al. (2002), have generally found a correlation between single parenthood and higher rates of physical abuse of children.

Several qualitative studies (e.g. Conticini and Hulme, 2006 in Bangladesh; Naker, 2005 in Uganda) emphasise the vulnerability of children with stepparents and/or orphans to abuse at home. Indeed, this abuse from stepparents is frequently cited as an important push factor leading children to leave their homes and live on the street (Conticini and Hulme, 2006; Thomas de Benitez, 2009).

Few of the studies reviewed mention the institutional structures intended to protect children from violence. This suggests their role in preventing violence against children or responding to it is often minimal, or may (as in the case of the police, criminal justice and residential care systems) lead to further abuse. One partial exception is foeticide, where some analysis suggests enforcement of the law has been somewhat effective in reducing its incidence Dagar, 2007).

5.7 Summary

Drawing on the preceding discussion, Table 4 indicates the significance of different factors underpinning different forms of violence against children.

Table 4: Role of different factors underpinning different forms of physical violence against children

Factor/ form of violence	Sociocultural (including subcultural) norms	Poverty	Comment/other key factors
Corporal punishment at home	xxx	x	Evidence from some countries that poorer children are at greater risk of corporal punishment and/or more severe punishment; others show no difference
Corporal punishment at school	xxx	x	Some studies indicate poorer children are more frequently and severely punished by teachers; others show no difference
Physical violence in community	xxx	xxx	Poorer children exposed to wider range of situations where they may face violence e.g. on street, at workplace, in violent neighbourhoods, from police etc.
Foeticide and infanticide	xxx	xx	Female foeticide and infanticide profoundly influenced by son preference; in South Asia, anticipated inability to pay daughter's future wedding costs is a motivating factor; in China, son preference exacerbated by One Child Policy; no evidence found on male foeticide or infanticide
Gang violence	xx	xxx	Lack of strong family/social ties are another key reason for children/adolescents joining gangs; this may reflect the effects of poverty on family and social cohesion
Child soldiers	x	xx	In some contexts, other factors such as forcible recruitment are key reasons for children's involvement

Note: xxx – very significant; xx – moderately significant; x – not very significant.

This table does not show weak protective structures, since these are crucial for every form of violence.

6 Inadequate care of children

6.1 The problem and its context: large numbers of children with insufficient care to keep them safe or meet their basic emotional or physical needs

Box 7: Headline statistics – inadequate care

In a study of over 1,000 children in Guyana, 28% of children under 13 and 48% of out-of-school children under 13 had been left without adult supervision (Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004).

A total of 44% of households in Mexico, 48% in Botswana and 30% in Vietnam have occasionally or regularly left children under 14 alone or in care of other children while adults are working (Ruiz-Casares and Heymann, 2009).

8 million children worldwide live in institutional care (Pineiro, 2006). At least 80 per cent of these have one or more living parent (Karlsson et al, 2010).

Good-quality care that promotes children's healthy physical, emotional and cognitive development, and ensures their safety and protection from harm, is increasingly recognised as central to good child wellbeing outcomes (Iram and Butt, 2004). In contrast with the other issues considered in this report, which focus on processes and actions that are harmful to children, in this section we focus on the absence of a vital input for children's safe and healthy development. In addition to increasing children's risk of worse education, health or nutritional outcomes, and of accidental injury, the absence of adequate care can also increase the risk of violation of other protection rights.

Several large-scale trends have profoundly affected families' and communities' capacities to care for children. Growing integration into cash economies and widespread poverty increase the need for households to have several members earning income. Changes in work patterns related to globalisation, urbanisation and industrialisation have led to large-scale entry of women into the labour force, often into work that is incompatible with the care of children (Heymann, 2006; Myers, 2001; Razavi, 2011). Changes in social norms concerning single parenthood and views on gendered responsibilities for the care and support of children have additionally increased the demands on women to combine income earning and care of young children, sometimes with little help from these children's fathers (Chant, 2010, cited in Razavi, 2011). Furthermore, extended family members often assumed to be available to care for children, such as grandmothers and aunts, are increasingly likely to be in paid work themselves or to be living far away as a result of increased migration (Heymann, 2006). Simultaneously, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has created new care needs – both for people with HIV/AIDS and for the orphaned children of those who have died.⁴¹

Working conditions in both the formal and the informal sectors frequently involve long hours – 12-hour shifts and compulsory overtime are not uncommon in manufacturing, a major employer of young women (Heymann, 2006). Informal sector work, which is often low paid and insecure, equally requires long hours to generate sufficient income. Young parents' migration to take up greater opportunities elsewhere also

⁴¹ To some extent, and for some groups, these pressures creating greater demand for child care are partially offset by an overall fertility decline, which is reducing the number of children to be cared for, and by some improvement in the availability of amenities (such as water and electricity), reducing the labour demands associated with care (Razavi, 2011). However, the effects of these forces are smaller than those that constrain households' care capacities.

potentially affects the care available to children. Taken together, the necessity of earning income and the long hours involved mean mothers of young children face severe time poverty and/or cannot be physically present. This can mean children being left to care for themselves or in the care of people who, for various reasons, are unable to provide the care that meets children's developmental needs.

It can also mean that, when parents or children's main caregivers are present, they are preoccupied with household chores and unable to attend to children, and they may lack time to prepare nutritious food or may assume health problems do not need medical attention. The consequences for children of this 'squeeze on care' include being left without adequate supervision, support and emotional guidance, potentially affecting their physical and mental health and risk of accidents; learning and educational outcomes; emotional wellbeing and behaviour; and broader social cohesion.

The literature examined for this section is substantially more disparate than for the other three thematic areas and falls into several discrete bodies. We focus on analysis of how poverty affects arrangements for the day-to-day care of children while adults in their households are working and their living arrangements; and a literature on discrimination in care between different children.⁴²

6.2 Conceptualising the relationship between poverty and inadequate care

The care children receive is influenced by sociocultural norms as to what constitutes good, adequate or inadequate care, household and community resources (such as time, money, knowledge and capacity) and broader social resources, such as the legal and institutional context and the availability of key services.⁴³

Caregiving practices and views on care are both culturally and historically specific. For example, ideas about when children are able to look after themselves and other children often differ widely between cultural contexts. In addition, the global child protection community now considers institutional care a poor environment to meet children's developmental needs; however, in much of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, where there is a long legacy of institutional care, state officials and many parents frequently view residential institutions much more positively (UNICEF, 2010a). Sociocultural norms also affect which children are seen as priorities, particularly where resources are constrained (see Section 6.4).

Poor households typically have fewer resources of time or money at their disposal to provide or secure good-quality care for their children. They may also face constraints on physical capacity, as, for example, in the case of grandparents looking after orphans. Typically, support services, such as community-based rehabilitation for disabled children or nurseries and preschools, are biased towards urban and better-off areas, and/or charge fees that are unaffordable for poor households.

Box 8: Inadequate care or neglect?

In OECD countries, inadequate care is usually framed as 'neglect'. However, definitions of neglect vary (Dyson, 2008; McSherry, 2007), with some emphasising a deliberate or wilful failure to meet children's needs; others suggest neglect may be inadvertent but based on lack of knowledge. The term 'neglect' is not much used in the literature on low- and middle-income countries, reflecting the fact that the majority of poor families strive to meet their children's needs in profoundly constrained circumstances. In such contexts, behaviour or care practices that might be considered 'neglectful', such as leaving young children unsupervised or not feeding them enough, generally reflect an acute lack of resources rather than a lack of

⁴² Analysis of the large literature on the relationship between poverty, caregiving practices (generally referring to feeding and hygiene practices) and children's health and nutrition outcomes is outside the scope of this review.

⁴³ This conceptualisation builds on UNICEF's work on the determinants of children's health and nutrition, which recognises that good-quality care requires economic resources (such as food and money), caregiver resources (such as knowledge and sociocultural norms that support good caregiving practices) and health resources (including the healthiness/safety of the child's environment) (Iram and Butt, 2004). It also builds on Razavi (2011), who argues that good-quality care requires *time, money* and the *availability of services*, such as day care, kindergartens or support services for the carers of sick relatives. To this we add *physical capacity*, as it is clear from studies of orphans cared for by grandparents that *sickness and infirmness of carers* affects the quality of care children receive.

knowledge or a deliberate choice (Coope and Theobald, 2006).

Some authors suggest that in low- and middle-income country contexts it may be more fruitful to focus on the societal processes that leave children without adequate care, rather than labelling individual poor parents as neglectful (Espey et al., 2010; Ruiz-Casares and Heymann, 2009).

In this review, we use the term 'neglect' only when reporting studies – mostly from OECD countries – that employ the term.

The consensus from the OECD literature suggests that poverty is an important factor exacerbating the risk of neglect (Dyson, 2008; McSherry, 2007). Some analysts argue that neglect among poor families is more likely to come to official notice because of such families' higher levels of contact with other public bodies (housing offices, unemployment and social security offices etc.) (Dyson, 2008). Others suggest that, in conditions of poverty, some parents may develop modes of operation that lead to limited engagement with children (McSherry, 2007) or become addicted to alcohol and narcotics that impair their judgement and mean they are unable to care for their children (Dyson, 2008). The OECD studies reviewed rarely mention the effects of time poverty: this may reflect high incidence of unemployment in the households of children who come into contact with social services.

Both the OECD literature on neglect and analysis from low- and middle-income countries emphasise the fact that, while poverty may increase the risk of neglect or inadequate care, children from non-poor households may also be affected. This may reflect time poverty in well-off professional households with parents working long hours. It may also reflect discrimination against particular children (see Section 6.4). Substance abuse impairing adults' ability to care for children may occur across social classes, although data on this in low- and middle-income countries could not be found for this review.

6.3 Pathways by means of which poverty increases the risk of a child receiving inadequate care

In this section, we focus on two routes by means of which poverty may increase children's risk of receiving inadequate care: through its effects on day-to-day supervision and care of children; and through its effects on children's living arrangements.

6.3.1 Day-to-day supervision and care

Child care arrangements have generally been outside the purview of development studies. Studies that touch on child care generally focus on the implications for women's labour force participation, or issues related to early childhood development from an educational perspective. As Heymann (2006) argues, care and supervision of young children is generally assumed not to be a problem requiring policy attention or action, as it is assumed that parents can work and supervise children simultaneously (Palriwala and Neetha, 2011) or that extended families can care for them. However, changing family structures and working patterns, with greater migration and less co-residence among extended families, means this is frequently not the case. Across the five middle-income countries Heymann (2006) studied, less than a third of low-income parents could rely on extended family for helping without needing to provide assistance, and in fact half the low-income parents interviewed were providing assistance to their extended families.

Box 9: Studies on poverty and care of children in low- and middle-income countries

The path-breaking Global Working Families study (reported in Heymann, 2006 and Ruiz-Casares and Heymann, 2009) examined child care arrangements for preschool and school-age children in seven countries: Botswana, Brazil, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the US and Vietnam. It involved interviews with over 1,000 families and analysis of survey data on 55,000 families. Findings were disaggregated by

parent's socioeconomic group, level of education and household structure (e.g. single parents vs. two-parent family). The study examined the ways in which working conditions and the HIV/AIDS epidemic had affected households' capacity to care for children, and the consequences for children of different types of child care arrangements. It is thus by far the most comprehensive analysis of issues related to working families' child care arrangements and poverty, and we draw substantially on it in our analysis.

Several other – mostly qualitative – studies document an increase in children being left alone while parents are working as an effect of economic shocks and/or increased poverty. For example, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) (2009) observe increased rates of children being left in sibling care in impoverished communities in Kyrgyzstan; Harper (1994) notes children being left at home unattended (and sometimes tied to furniture) as one of the consequences of the poverty associated with transition to a market economy in Mongolia.

As with the other issues discussed in this paper, providing adequate care while parents are working is an issue for very large numbers of children. In 2006, Heymann estimated that at least 340 million of the world's children under 6 and 590 million of those between 6 and 14 lived in households in which all adults worked for pay. In the *Global Working Families* country studies, all adults were working for pay in 29-68% of households with preschool-age children, while 31-78% of school-age children lived in households with all adults working (Heymann, 2006). Although providing adequate day-to-day care while parents are working is a particularly pressing concern in urban areas, ensuring children are adequately cared for while adults in their households are working is a challenge in rural areas also, particularly in contexts where migration and HIV/AIDS have limited the availability of extended family members who could provide care.

Working families with pre-teen children (or children of an age considered as needing supervision) have the following choices: take children to work (where this is feasible), make use of formal child care services, whether free, subsidised or fully paid for by parents, pay for informal child care, rely on unpaid care or leave them home alone. This section discusses evidence of how poverty affects working parents' child care choices and the adequacy of the care children receive.

Caring for children while working

Caring for children while working is possible principally for self-employed parents or those working in parts of the informal sector (Palriwala and Neetha, 2011). Many workplaces do not permit workers to bring their children, on health and safety grounds or out of concern about reduced productivity (Heymann, 2006). However, a significant proportion of working parents combine work with looking after children.

A total of 46% of the parents interviewed in Mexico in the *Global Working Families* study had taken their children to work with them regularly or occasionally (Heymann and Ruiz-Casares, 2009); a quarter did so regularly (Heymann, 2006). They also found that some parents – particularly women – had taken up home-based work, such as piece-work, which is typically low paid but enables them to supervise children simultaneously.

The relatively few studies of children's experiences at parental workplaces indicate an enhanced risk of accidents and ill health, as children are usually relatively unsupervised while parents are working, exposed to environmental hazards and generally receive little stimulation (Bryant, 2005). Heymann (2006) cites examples of children tied to table legs while their mothers worked, or exposed to traffic dangers while their parents hawked goods. While generally preschool children are most at risk, Bryant's study of three countries in Asia suggests children of undocumented migrant parents are at particular risk, since they are unable to attend school and thus are highly likely to accompany parents to work. Hernandez et al.'s (1996) study of the young children of Mexican street vendors found a higher incidence of gastro-enteritic diseases (though a lesser incidence of acute respiratory infections) among children cared for with working mothers on the street as compared to those cared for elsewhere. Children with home-working parents are also potentially exposed to hazards from chemicals or machinery used in their parents' work (Heymann, 2006).

Making use of formal child care provision

Formal child care provision (such as nurseries or preschools) has the potential both to provide children with early education and to facilitate parents' working. However, poorer households face greater constraints than better-off households in using child care facilities. In many countries, provision of early childhood care and education is biased towards better-off areas and/or only available for restricted hours and for children aged three or over (UNESCO, 2007). Formal child care or preschool education is often too expensive for poor families: only 27% of poor working families in Heymann's (2006) study as compared with 52% of non-poor working families made use of formal centre-based child care. The frequently poor quality – particularly in rural and poor urban areas – is also a deterrent to their use and limits the contribution they make to children's development (Palriwala and Neetha, 2011; Penn, 2004).

However, where affordable child care provision exists, children are much less likely to be left at home alone, where they are at risk of accidents and assault or are required to care for themselves in ways beyond their capacity. Thus, Heymann (2006) found that only 19% of parents using formal child care had left their child at home alone compared with 82% of those who used an unpaid child to care for a preschooler. That almost 20% of parents with places at child care centres had left preschoolers at home alone at some point reflects parents' long working hours, which often include days when centres are closed.

Heymann's (2006) study identified three main types of informal care: care by unpaid children, care by unpaid adults (often relatives) and care by low-paid adults or children. Several respondents noted that unpaid or low-paid carers did not take their responsibilities seriously and neglected children in their care while they were working or socialising. Or they were unable to care for children adequately because of immaturity (in the case of other children), old age or health problems. This type of care was generally seen as unreliable and meant children were at risk of receiving inadequate care. However, parents relying on unpaid or low-paid care were unable to pay more experienced babysitters.

Leaving children at home alone

As a last resort, families unable to find other care may have no alternative to leaving young children at home alone – sometimes this may be in the care of pre-teen siblings, sometimes they are entirely alone. Between 30% and 48% of households in Heymann's (2006) study had left children under 14 at home alone occasionally or regularly.⁴⁴ Poverty and multidimensional disadvantage exacerbated the risk of children being left alone, although the constraints on working families mean this was by no means confined to poor households: 56% of poor parents and 45% of non-poor parents in Botswana and 40% of poor parents compared with 31% of non-poor parents in Mexico had left their children at home alone. Parents with a middle school or lower education were more than twice as likely to have to leave their children home alone or in the care of other unpaid children as those with a high school or higher education (Heymann, 2006); UNICEF (2010b) cites a study in Mexico that also found more educated mothers to be less likely to leave a baby in the care of an older child or alone. Single parents more often lacked social support and other relatives who could care for young children – 78% of single parents with no other caregivers in the household had left children alone compared with 30% of those who had a spouse, partner or other caregiver in the household. The poor working conditions of many low-paid workers, with limited or no leave rights, also increase the risk that children – even when sick – may be left at home alone.

There is some qualitative evidence from Kenya of stresses related to the global economic crisis leading to increased family disintegration, and/ or to stressed parents neglecting parenting activities:

'Reports of rising household disintegration were widespread, with a particularly common claim that men were abandoning families, typically to move in with women food vendors, as they were unable to cope with the strains of household provisioning. Similar claims were made of some women. Women described how men would drink to get through the day, particularly when they failed to get casual labour. Children, too, complained that women had abandoned their responsibilities in favour of drink, a view that was backed up by a Mukuru school teacher' (Hossain et al., 2010: 30).

⁴⁴ These statistics are not disaggregated so it is unclear what proportion of children were left at home alone regularly and what proportion were left at home alone occasionally.

Heltberg et al. (2011), collating findings from fieldwork in 17 low- and middle-income countries on the social effects of economic crisis, found that,

‘Children were often left alone or in the care of older siblings as all adult family members had to work long hours away from home [...] Lack of public kindergartens often forced mothers to leave small children unattended or in the care of older siblings’ (p.16).

Consequences for children of being left with inadequate care

Children left alone, in the care of other young children or unsupervised by adults are at increased risk of accidents, unhelpful or dangerous treatment for illnesses or injuries, malnutrition and lack of stimulation that may compromise their cognitive development. Summarising the *Global Working Families* study findings, Heymann (2006) concludes,

‘Where poverty is greatest and the safety nets nonexistent, one- and two-year-olds are being left home alone. Where the safety nets are slightly better but still inadequate, older children – that is six- and seven-year-olds are being left home alone [...] in every country in which we have worked, we have found children getting injured because they have no adults to care for them or because their parents have no choice but to take them to dangerous work situations’ (p.35).

Although evidence on the relationship between poverty, care and child wellbeing outcomes is scattered and limited (with the exception of accidents), we summarise insights from the papers reviewed.

Increased risk of accidents

Inadequate or no supervision increases children’s risk of accidental injury. The young children in Heymann’s (2006) study either left alone by their parents or ostensibly under the care of adults or other children were sometimes allowed to wander out of the house, were left locked in with no exit route in the event of accidents or experienced injuries, often related to cooking accidents and fire. Thus, preschool children looked after by an unpaid carer were more likely than those in formal care to experience accidents or emergencies while their parents worked (57% vs. 35%). Howe et al. (2006) found that young children being regularly cared for by a non-household member⁴⁵ was associated with an approximate doubling of the likelihood of serious falls in Vietnam; near-fatal injury in India; and any injury in India, Peru and Vietnam.

Studies from Bangladesh show inadequate supervision while adults are working, often around the homestead, is a key factor underlying the high incidence of death by drowning and, to a lesser extent, other accidents (Giashuddin et al., 2009; Linnan et al., 2007). In China, Shen et al. (2009) found that non-fatal injury rates were twice as high among rural children left behind when parents had migrated as among those who lived with their parents. However, even in the presence of adults, lack of awareness of objects and activities dangerous for children can increase the risk of injuries. For example, Ruiz-Casares (2009) cites a study from Nigeria that found that 88.7% of burns happened in the presence of a competent adult.

Risks related to inadequate supervision are exacerbated by the fact that poorer children frequently live in less safe environments, where the range of injury-inducing hazards is more common. For example, families may be cooking at floor level, using highly flammable substances such as kerosene, or cheap, hazardous heaters; hazards may also lie in their surroundings, such as flat roofs and bodies of water that are often unfenced (Balan and Lingam, 2011; Ruiz-Casares, 2009). Injuries are also more likely to be left untreated for financial reasons. Together, these factors lead to greatly increased fatality and injury rates in low- and middle-income countries as compared with high-income countries,⁴⁶ and among poorer children as compared with their better-off peers (Mock et al., 2008). For example, in Bangladesh, poor children are 2.8 times as likely than better-off children to die following injuries (Ghiasuddin et al, 2009).⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The implication is that this care is provided at home or in the carer’s home and not at a formal child care centre but this is not clear from the study.

⁴⁶ Child death rates from drowning, burns and falls are significantly higher in low- and middle-income countries, at 7.8, 4.3 and 2.1 per million, respectively, than in high-income countries (1.2, 0.4 and 0.4 per million, respectively) (WHO data, cited in Balan and Lingam, 2011).

⁴⁷ One contrasting example from a study of Canadian data suggests that in only 2% of cases of children being judged by social workers as inadequately supervised did this lead to injury, and only half of the children injured required medical treatment (Ruiz-Casares et al., 2012). This may reflect expansive definitions of inadequate supervision.

Effects on children's health, nutrition and education

There is some evidence, summarised by Nakahara et al. (2006), indicating that peer child care during working mothers' absence increases children's risk of poor nutrition. Their own study in Nepal found that the unavailability of appropriate childcare (i.e. competent adult) support was associated with an increased risk of malnutrition among children aged 10-24 months of both non-working and working mothers. The *Global Working Families* study (Heymann, 2006) found young children left in the care of siblings or other children being unfed or fed inappropriate foods (e.g. chilli that burned their mouths). They found children aged as young as four being left alone with food their mother had cooked before going to work and being left to help themselves when hungry. Heltberg et al.'s (2011) study of the social effects of economic crisis found that, in the Central African Republic, the need to leave young children to be cared for by older siblings had 'reportedly resulted in increased disease prevalence among small children as their brothers and sisters did not know how to feed them properly or take care of them when they were ill' (p.16).

We found no quantitative evidence of the effects on children's health of being left alone or with inadequate care. However, Heymann (2006) found examples of carers neglecting sick children – even leaving them at home on their own – and of sick children not receiving medication while their parents were out. Heymann's study also found that the poorest parents with the worst working conditions were most likely to have to leave sick children alone, as they were least likely to have paid leave.

Heymann (2006) also examined the effects of constraints on adults' care capacity on children's education. The *Global Working Families* study found that children cared for by unpaid child carers were significantly more likely to have subsequent behavioural or academic difficulties than those cared for by adults. They also found that children whose parents were unable to be involved in their education were twice as likely to experience educational or behavioural problems as those whose parents were involved. A total of 51% of parents surveyed in Vietnam and 82% in Botswana had been unable to be involved in their children's education because of work commitments – typically extremely long hours, lack of paid leave and lack of flexibility. We did not find any other studies that examined the effects of constrained day-to-day care capacity on children's education.

Older children and absence of guidance

While most studies of care focus on young children, there is also evidence – discussed in Section 5 above – that a lack of parental time for support and guidance of adolescents can put them at greater risk of involvement in violent crime as peer groups such as gangs provide a source of social support and connection and role models not available from young people's families. UNICEF (2010b) cites a study of adolescent boys in Puerto Rico that found that boys with less parental monitoring, measured by time spent with family, were significantly more likely to be involved in delinquency. Parental monitoring can also help buffer the effects of exposure to violence on children's psychological wellbeing (ibid.). See also Section 6.3.2, which outlines evidence of the effects on children of being left behind by migrant parents.

Risk of violence

Children without adequate care are also at increased risk of physical and sexual violence. Heymann (2006) cites examples of children being sexually assaulted while the adults in their households were out working. Equally, there is some evidence of children without adequate care being at greater risk of violence within their household. Analysis of MICS data suggests an association between inadequate supervision of children and increased risk of violent discipline in approximately 20% of the countries studied. In these countries, they found that children who had been left in the care of a child under 10 at least once experienced higher levels of violent discipline than those not left in the care of other children. In the 12 countries with sufficient data to permit analysis, levels of severe physical punishment were significantly higher (by at least 5 percentage points) in households where young children have been left without adult supervision (UNICEF, 2010b).

Ballet et al.'s (2011) study in Mauritania found that children of poor working mothers in urban Mauritania who cannot afford hired child care are at greater risk of physical or emotional violence (often from fathers); Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN) corroborates this (RAPCAN,

1997), noting that children who are cared for by unemployed fathers or stepfathers while their mothers are working are also at increased risk of sexual abuse. They also found an association between parents working long hours and physical violence, arguing that time-poor parents frequently resort to violence to enforce their authority, and that children neglected by their parents for long hours have more opportunities to get into trouble and then are violently punished.

6.3.2 Through effects on children's living arrangements

Worldwide, children live in a wide variety of family forms. Everychild (2010a) estimates that 24 million children worldwide or about 1% of the world's child population live outside parental care. A significant proportion of these children are in kinship care – such as, for example, an estimated 90% of orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa (Everychild, 2010b). Indeed, though the UNCRC and international policy such as the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children implicitly take parental care as the norm, for many children living with both parents is not the norm. This reflects cultural norms, whereby temporary fostering of children by relatives is normal, as well as widespread migration for work and the effects of conflict and HIV/AIDS. For example, in South Africa, approximately a third of children live in nuclear families (Budlender and Lund, 2011). Children living outside parental care should not automatically be considered as receiving 'inadequate' care – both because children in the care of their parents can be cared for inadequately and because children may well receive good care with kin or foster carers or in small residential institutions. The exception to this is large-scale residential care, which considerable evidence has shown to be harmful to children's wellbeing and developmental outcomes, with the effects on younger children particularly serious (Browne, 2009; Everychild, 2011).

Poverty and the absence of economic opportunities can affect decisions about children's living arrangements in a number of ways. Poverty can, for example, be a driving force for parental migration, which frequently necessitates leaving children behind (de la Garza, 2010).⁴⁸ It affects decisions about who children will live with if their parent(s) die (van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). It can mean parents looking for alternative carers for their children, and informally fostering them out to other families or placing them in institutional care. The resources available to children's new households also profoundly affects the care they receive. This section summarises insights from the literature reviewed on the relationships between poverty, children in kinship care and institutional care and children caring for themselves, such as street-living children. We discuss the implications for orphans and children left behind by migrant parents separately, as the presence of remittances in the case of most migrant children means their experience is qualitatively different from that of orphans.

Children in the care of relatives (kinship care)

Orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS

The extensive literature on both orphans' risk of poverty and their wellbeing outcomes shows considerable variation between country contexts and between maternal and paternal orphans. Orphans are often thought to be at increased risk of inadequate care. Box 10 summarises the evidence.

While most policy attention concerns orphans, the Joint Learning Initiative on Children and AIDS (JLICA) suggests (JLICA, 2009) that children 'on the path to orphanhood' are at risk of inadequate care. The loss of income associated with adults being too sick to work and/or to tend garden plots, and the additional expenses associated with illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, can reduce the resources available to meet children's needs. Children with sick parents may be having to provide extensive care for them, and potentially also for younger children as well as themselves, with negative effects on their education and mental health.

⁴⁸ While it is well established that migrants tend not to be from the poorest households, which cannot afford the upfront costs associated with migration, the majority of internal and international migrants are driven by better economic opportunities at their destination.

Box 10: Are orphans at increased risk of inadequate care?

'I know a girl whose parents died due to HIV/ AIDS. Afterwards she went to live with her aunt. She was responsible for taking care of her aunt's children. I always see her do heavy work. If she declines, she is always beaten. When she washes her clothes together with those of the children, the aunt would shout that she is not equal with her kids, and orders her to wash her own clothes some other day and to do other tasks immediately.' Sixth grade student in Ethiopia (ACPF, 2006a:51).

Most studies find orphans at increased risk of ill being compared with non-orphans. However, the degree of difference varies considerably, with some studies finding significant differences in orphans' and non-orphans' wellbeing and the others finding only minor or insignificant differences (Richter and Desmond, 2008). For example, Campbell et al. (2010) found differences between orphans' and non-orphans' school attendance rates to be lower than those between boys and girls, rural and urban children or poor and better-off children, in nine of eleven Sub-Saharan Africa countries studied. However, other studies, such as Monasch and Ties Boerma (2004), found significant differences in orphans' and non-orphans' school enrolment rates, with that of double orphans 13 percentage points below that of non-orphans. Foster and Williamson (2000) cite a number of studies that show orphans to be at increased risk of malnutrition compared with non-orphans. As discussed in Sections 3, 4 and 5 above, there is some evidence suggesting orphans are at increased risk of early marriage and sexual and physical abuse, although some studies do not find significant differences, particularly with respect to sexual abuse.

How far do these findings indicate that orphans are at elevated risk of inadequate care compared with other children? There is some evidence to suggest orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS frequently live in poorer households (e.g. Cluver et al., 2011a) with fewer resources to dedicate to their needs, particularly if they live with grandparents (Cook et al., nd; Kuo and Operario, 2010; Roelen and Delap, 2011). This is, of course, not always and everywhere the case: for example, Richter and Desmond (2008) found in South Africa that children in households headed by young adults (rather than elderly people), particularly those with a single earner, were at greatest risk of hunger. In some cases, orphans' poverty is exacerbated by relatives taking their family's property or by households absorbing a large number of children (Cook et al, nd).

Although we did not find statistical evidence of how common this is, qualitative evidence indicates some orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS are living with sick or infirm adults. Whether this is the result of old age and failing health and strength, or illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, children in these households are at risk of care that does not meet their needs. Thus for example, reviewing studies from Sub-Saharan Africa, Foster and Williamson (2000) suggest one reason why orphans have higher rates of malnutrition than non-orphans is that ailing parents may be unable to grow or prepare sufficient nutritious food for their children.

Children in such households – particularly adolescents – may become net providers rather than recipients of care. Evans (2010) cites data suggesting that 'well over 4 per cent' of children in Sub-Saharan Africa are regularly involved in caring for parents, siblings or other relatives. Robson et al. (2006) find that, though many children manage to combine their caring responsibilities with education, their education is frequently affected by having to miss school periodically, arriving late or being unable to do homework. Poorer children are more likely to be affected in that households are more likely than better-off households to rely on their labour.

Child and youth-headed households – although a small proportion of households with orphans (Richter and Desmond, 2008) – may face specific challenges in providing care, particularly if their property has been 'grabbed' by relatives (Evans, 2011; van Blerk and Ansell, 2007). Qualitative studies with young household heads indicate that meeting their siblings' needs, while still young and in need of emotional guidance themselves as they make the transition to adulthood, can be challenging (Evans, 2011; Ruiz-Casares, 2010). Both young household heads and their siblings may also be at increased risk of sexual assault (Eigen Kipp et al., 2010).

Despite material hardships, some qualitative evidence (ACPF, 2006a; Everychild, 2010b; Foster and Williamson, 2000) suggests that orphans' emotional needs are often better met by grandparents, and that other relatives more frequently discriminate against them in favour of their own biological children. One quantitative study of discrimination of against orphans in Tanzania (Baarøy and Webb, 2008) found that orphans were more likely to be overworked, experience violence, be given insufficient food and not be allowed to attend school than other children, including foster children, in the household. Double orphans (those who had lost both parents) and girls were particularly affected. That studies of orphans so often mention discrimination highlights the importance children ascribe to loving care, not simply to whether their basic needs are met.

In conclusion, it appears that orphans' wellbeing is affected both by poverty and by households' physical capacity to provide care, and that their risk of inadequate care is higher than for non-orphans. That said, most studies suggest differences are small and development strategies should focus on all disadvantaged children in a locality rather than targeting only orphans.

Migrant children

Findings concerning the impacts of parental migration on the care and protection of children left behind are contradictory and context-specific, and appear to depend on the child's age, who migrated (mother, father or both), who the child is left with, the extent of emotional and educational support the child receives from their carer and the extent to which resources are regularly remitted. De la Garza's (2010) review of the effects of being left behind by migrating parents indicates that maternal migration can have negative effects on children's psychological wellbeing and educational performance, particularly if mothers are absent while children are under five. However, effects on older children's educational achievement can be positive (ibid.). Others, however, find children suffer educationally from parental absence. This is particularly the case for secondary school-age children who take on the household responsibilities of absent mothers, with girls especially affected (Bakker et al., 2009).

De la Garza (2010) indicates that children left behind by migrating parents are often less well supervised, and receive less support and encouragement than those whose parents are present. They may also suffer from lack of role models. He cites Jamaican studies that indicate that children whose mothers migrate are more likely to become involved in violence. He also notes that various UNICEF country studies have found that children left behind are more vulnerable to drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, psychosocial problems and violent behaviour. Several reviews have also found children left behind by migrant mothers to be at elevated risk of sexual abuse and exploitation (Bakker et al., 2009; de la Garza, 2010; Frederick, 2010). Fathers' absence may also increase girls' risk of sexual abuse, particularly if their mothers engage in unions with new partners to bring in additional resources (Bakker et al., 2009). Asis (2007), by contrast, finds that, in the Philippines, 10-12-year-old children with migrant parents are less at risk of abuse than non-migrant children. This may reflect the role of remittances in alleviating domestic stresses, and a greater capacity of extended families to care for the children of migrant parents (Bryant, 2005).

Institutional care

Although poverty is by no means the only reason behind children's entry into institutional care in low- and middle-income countries, the studies reviewed all confirmed it is an important one.⁴⁹ Tomescu's (nd) study in Romania found that, after 1989, with increasing poverty rates, women aged 35-40 years old, who had at least one child at home, made up a significant proportion of mothers sending children into residential care. Previously, residential care had been used principally by very young, unmarried women, and for disabled children. Similarly, the growth in the numbers of children in institutional care in parts of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States in the 1990s is often attributed to the economic and social dislocation related to the shift to market economies.

Bilson and Cox's (2007) study in Sri Lanka found that approximately half the children in institutional care were there because of poverty. Similarly, in Bulgaria, they found that the main reason given by parents for sending their children to residential institutions was lack of food, heating and supplies. Consultations with children undertaken by Everychild (2011) also attest to poverty being a major reason for children's entry into institutional care. Tangaroensathien et al. (2000), cited in Harper et al. (2012), note that the numbers of children in residential care in Thailand rose following the economic crisis of the late 1990s. Migration – often a response to poverty – is another key reasons for children entering institutional care, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, where the existence of institutions facilitates residential care being perceived as a viable child care choice (UNICEF, 2010a).

⁴⁹ Other factors include sickness of carers, disability (an estimated 60% of the children in institutional care are disabled (UNICEF, 2010a)) and separation of children from their families during migration, conflict or disasters.

However, UNICEF (2010a) suggests ‘poverty’ or ‘economic reasons’ are often cited as shorthand for a more complex set of circumstances, including family strain/breakdown and absence of extended family, often in the context of poverty, where parents perceive that residential care may provide for their children’s material and education needs. Summarising reasons for children entering institutional care in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNICEF (2010a) argues,

‘Often families are simply seeking day-care facilities to be able to work, or educational facilities in the localities where they live. When they find such services unavailable, or inaccessible, they resort to boarding schools or institutions instead’ (p.5).

In some countries (particularly in eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States), there is evidence of social workers judging poor families – often those with other problems, such as alcohol or drug dependence or a history of violence – as inadequate parents and thus children are taken into residential care (UNICEF, 2010a). Jawad (2009) found similar patterns in Lebanon, with children whose parents could not afford to pay school fees being placed in residential care.

Poverty can also lead to institutionalisation more indirectly. For example, it can mean that illnesses such as HIV/AIDS that lead to orphanhood are not treated or that children have to go into residential care to receive proper support for disabilities or medical treatment that families cannot afford on an outpatient basis (Roelen and Delap, 2011). Poorer children are more likely to live in vulnerable environments and thus are at greater risk of separation from families in the event of environmental shocks.

This review found limited evidence of literature discussing the relationship between poverty and abandonment of children, although some studies mention increased abandonment of children as a consequence of economic shocks (e.g. Harper et al., 2012; IFRS, 1999). It is possible that some studies of the reasons for and circumstances in which children enter institutional care explore this issue in more depth. Detailed review of such literature was beyond the scope of this assignment. There is some journalistic evidence (e.g. IRIN, 2003a) of impoverished households abandoning babies into institutional care, hoping they would be adopted by a household better able to look after them.

Institutional care is widely recognised to be a poor developmental environment for young children, since they are more likely to suffer from poor health, physical underdevelopment and deterioration in brain growth, developmental delay and emotional attachment disorders. Consequently, they are at greater risk of reduced intellectual, social and behavioural abilities compared with those growing up in a family home (Browne, 2009). As noted in Sections 4 and 5, children in institutional care are often at greater risk of physical and sexual abuse. Whetten et al. (2009) provide some evidence from five Sub-Saharan African countries that the outcomes for primary school-age children (six to twelve) in small or medium-sized residential care homes may be positive. They found no systematic differences between the educational outcomes of orphans in this kind of institutional care and orphans living in households without a biological parent.

Children caring for themselves⁵⁰

Several groups of children and adolescents principally care for themselves, with a greater or lesser degree of adult support. These include child-headed households, street-living children and some child migrants. Both the factors underlying children moving into these living situations and the implications for their wellbeing vary. Child-headed households are principally the result of orphanhood. Most studies have focused on orphanhood arising from HIV/AIDS, although conflict is potentially another important factor. A combination of poverty and violence are key reasons for children moving to live in public urban spaces (‘streets’) (Conticini and Hulme, 2006; Lalor, 1999; Thomas de Benitez, 2009). Child migrants frequently respond to perceptions of greater economic opportunities than are available where they live.

How far children caring for themselves are at risk of not meeting their basic needs varies considerably. Some studies emphasise the resilience of street children, child-headed households and child migrants, and their

⁵⁰ This section summarises findings discussed in the sections on physical and sexual violence. They are repeated here so that key findings on the vulnerabilities of children and young people caring for themselves are consolidated in one place for readers with a particular interest in this issue.

ingenuity and dedication in meeting their own needs, and, in the case of child and youth-headed households, those of younger siblings. Others point out that the experiences of child migrants in particular do not differ greatly from those of other young people in similar labour markets (e.g. Hashim, 2006). Other studies focus more on the vulnerabilities of these children and adolescents. In particular, they may be more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse than children living with a greater degree of adult protection (Sections 4 and 5). As noted above, the absence of adults in their households may mean they lack emotional support and guidance, although studies of child-headed households show they are often adept at forming supportive relationships with peers and adults in the community (e.g. Ruiz-Casares, 2010). Street children may be at greatest risk as a result of the absence of adult support and role models, as they are often exposed to criminality and other risky behaviour (e.g. drug taking).

6.4 Factors exacerbating and reducing risk of inadequate care

The previous discussion explored how poverty, intertwined with factors such as lack of services and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, contributes to children receiving inadequate care. We now explore the role of sociocultural norms in increasing specific children's risk of inadequate care.

6.4.1 Discrimination against particular groups of children: girls

Where son preference is strong, girls are at risk of discriminatory treatment. This discrimination may be manifested in shorter breastfeeding (Jayachandran and Kuziemko, 2009), or in deprioritising medical treatment for sick girls. Higher birth order girls (those with several older sisters) are particularly at risk. However, it is not clear that such discriminatory treatment is necessarily exacerbated by poverty. For example, Miller's (1997) review of studies published in the 1980s finds a greater son bias in food allocation in South Asia in propertied (i.e. better-off) socioeconomic groups than in unpropertied groups.

6.4.2 Discrimination against particular groups of children: non-biological children

Evidence from a variety of different contexts suggests non-biological children in a household are often at greater risk of discrimination. Box 10 outlines evidence concerning the discriminatory treatment of orphans; some studies, such as Conticini and Hulme (2006), find stepchildren at particular risk of physical and sexual violence (see sections 4 and 5).

There is also some qualitative evidence that disabled children are also at increased risk of inadequate care (ACPF, 2006a; Naker, 2005). This reflects socioeconomic norms that view disabled children as a burden and an absence of services that help provide tailored care and support to children with particular disabilities. However, there is less research on disabled children's experience of inadequate care than other child protection violations.

Box 11: Summary – poverty and inadequate care of children

Poverty has a strong effect on the care children receive. This is particularly the case where poverty means parents have to work long hours to generate income or migrate for work. This can mean children are left alone without effective care and supervision while adults are working, and are at increased risk of accidents, violence and mental and physical health problems. There is also some evidence that children of migrant parents are at greater risk of inadequate care (particularly when young), physical and sexual violence and involvement in anti-social activities.

Poverty also affects the care orphans receive and significantly increases children's risk of going into institutional care. Other key factors affecting the adequacy of care children receive include the availability of support services (such as preschools, nurseries or community-based rehabilitation) and the extent of support from extended families and others in the community. Certain groups of children – particularly girls, non-biological children in a household and disabled children – also face discrimination, which limits the care they receive.

7 Key findings and conclusions

7.1 Overall relationship between poverty and child protection violations

There is considerable variation in the ways poverty affects child protection outcomes. Overall, the extent of most of the child protection violations we examined is exacerbated by poverty. In the majority of areas we examined, sociocultural norms that condone particular practices appear to be key underlying factors. However, poverty increases children's risk. One key route by means of which this takes place is by increasing economic pressures on households, which respond in ways that do not safeguard and may directly conflict with children's rights to protection. Examples include economically motivated child marriages, children's entry into commercial sex work and leaving children without adequate care while parents are working. Poor children are also at greater risk of protection violations because they are often exposed to a wider range of social contexts in which violations can occur, for example in workplaces, in their neighbourhoods or through relationships with landlords or patrons.

There is variation within each of the thematic areas analysed. For example, commercial sexual exploitation of children and transactional sex are strongly related to poverty; domestic sexual abuse less so. At community level, physical violence is strongly associated with economic deprivation; the evidence concerning corporal punishment is much more contradictory, with aggregate statistics suggesting a relationship but many individual country analyses finding none. There is limited evidence supporting an association between poverty and foeticide, with most evidence suggesting cultural factors play a more important role.

7.2 Key findings: child marriage

While child marriage occurs only in cultural contexts that condone it, within these contexts poorer girls are considerably more likely to be married before age 18 than are better-off girls. For example, World Bank data from 49 countries show the highest rates of marriage before 18 in the bottom income/wealth quintile in every country. However, in countries where child marriage is common, around 20% of girls in the top quintile are married before age 18. This reflects strong cultural preferences favouring early marriage of girls in contexts with high child marriage prevalence.

Cultural norms are often exacerbated by poverty, as marrying a daughter off can bring income into a household and reduce current or anticipated future expenditure (e.g. dowry), and can be seen as a way to secure her future economically and keep her safe in violent or insecure communities. Economic and environmental shocks can also push families into marrying off adolescent girls. Poorer girls are less likely to complete secondary education, and to have fewer alternative opportunities to marriage. Although some girls are withdrawn from school in order to marry, a more common pattern is for girls to drop out of school for economic reasons and subsequently to be seen by their families as ready for marriage. In many countries, orphans and girls living in rural areas are more likely to be married before age 18 than non-orphans and urban girls. This may reflect greater poverty/and or more conservative cultural norms.

Overall, child marriage is associated with intergenerational poverty traps, as married girls rarely continue their education, and they and their children face significant health risks from early sexual activity and childbearing. HIV/AIDS rates, for example, are higher among married than among non-married adolescent

girls; adolescents face greater risk of death or serious complications during childbirth. They are also at greater risk of gynaecological conditions such as obstetric fistula, which can lead to social exclusion. Married girls are at greater risk of domestic violence.

Since ‘child marriage’ refers to a range of situations, with children’s age at marriage, that of their partner, the degree to which it is consensual, whether and when it is accompanied by sexual intercourse and childbearing and the married child’s living conditions all varying considerably, there is unsurprisingly considerable variation in children’s perspectives on the issue. Some girls resist child marriage, running away if they cannot change the arrangements that have been made for them; others – usually older adolescents – view it positively as their best chance of escaping poverty and violence at home. In all cases, however, the health risks of early childbearing remain.

7.3 Key findings: sexual violence

The significance of poverty as a factor underlying different forms of sexual violence against children varies considerably between the different forms of sexual violence.

There is some quantitative evidence to suggest rates of familial sexual abuse are similar across socioeconomic groups. However, some qualitative evidence indicates poorer children may be at heightened risk of abuse, since their living conditions and those of their communities create opportunities for sexual abuse that tend not to arise in better-off children’s lives (e.g. bed-sharing with opposite-sex individuals; long journeys on foot to reach basic services). Furthermore, poorer children are potentially at greater risk of sexual abuse by landlords and employers; those who flee abusive working or living conditions may find themselves at risk of physical or sexual abuse on the street or in residential care institutions.

The increasingly recognised problem of sexual abuse by teachers and other school staff primarily reflects these adults exploiting power differentials between students and staff. Studies suggest teachers coerce students into sexual relationships principally via the threat of poorer grades or corporal punishment. There is no systematic evidence that poorer girls (the studies examined did not document any teacher sexual abuse of boys) are more affected. This may reflect the fact that studies have been carried out primarily in contexts where poverty levels are high; there is anecdotal evidence of less abuse by teachers in schools attended by better-off children, but further research would be needed to substantiate this.

Poverty increases both girls’ and boys’ risk of commercial sex work and transactional sex, with considerable qualitative evidence of an increase in the sexual exploitation of children as a consequence of the global economic crisis. There is less evidence of boys being trafficked for sexual exploitation than there is for girls. The literature on the relationship between poverty and trafficking is polarised, with some studies finding that trafficked children are not necessarily from the poorest households; others emphasise the role of economic inequalities as a key underlying factor.

There is limited evidence concerning the relationship between poverty and sexual violence between peers. Where this occurs, it seems to reflect the dynamics of gender relations in particular contexts. However, the factors that increase poorer children’s risk of sexual assault in the community (such as having to walk long distances to access basic services, lack of lighting (e.g. in poor urban areas)) may mean poorer children are at increased risk of sexual assault by peers; further research would be needed to substantiate this.

While girls are at greater risk of all forms of sexual violence than boys, the limited evidence on boys’ vulnerability indicates that, where poverty is a significant factor, it is significant for both girls and boys. There is also some evidence that orphans are at greater risk of specific forms of sexual violence.

7.4 Key findings: physical violence

As with sexual violence, the extent to which physical violence against children is related to poverty varies between the different forms of physical violence considered.

Where cultural norms condone corporal punishment at home, children from all socioeconomic groups face physical violence. Gender differences between contexts but are usually low where the prevalence of corporal punishment is high. There is some quantitative evidence of higher rates of physical violence against children in low-income households, although this relationship varies significantly between countries. MICS data, for example, indicate an association between poverty and physical violence in 13 of 30 countries studied; most of the other quantitative studies reviewed found a greater prevalence of physical punishment in poorer households. There is also some evidence that poorer children and boys are at greater risk of more severe physical punishment.

Where corporal punishment is widespread in schools, all children are at risk. No studies using quantitative data on socioeconomic differences in experiencing school violence were found for this report. However, qualitative evidence indicates several mechanisms by means of which poor children may be at greater risk of violent punishment by teachers: they are more likely to face constraints in paying fees or charges, in having the required school supplies or uniform or in being able to arrive on time with homework completed, as they may have to earn income or have a heavier burden of household chores than better-off children. Schools in poorer areas and/or attended by poorer children may be less well resourced and more likely to have poorly trained teachers who immediately resort to corporal punishment.

The evidence concerning the relationship between poverty and female infanticide is inconclusive: some studies find a link with poverty and some do not. The vast majority of studies on female foeticide reviewed explore the dynamics of this practice in India and conclude that son preference is the most significant factor underlying female foeticide. They argue that poverty is not particularly significant. While families selectively aborting female fetuses may in part be motivated by avoiding the additional costs associated with daughters' weddings, the poorest families can rarely afford the costs of an ultrasound and termination. Most quantitative evidence indicates that foeticide is less common among poorer socioeconomic groups.

Poorer children are at greater risk of experiencing, witnessing or involvement in violence in the community. Adolescent boys from low-income households and communities are particularly at risk both of becoming victims and of perpetrating violence. Younger children in violent poor urban communities are at risk of being caught in crossfire, and of intimidation and bullying, and their opportunities to play and socialise in their communities are constrained. Most studies indicate that grievances related to economic inequalities and lack of economic opportunities are key factors underlying adolescent involvement in violence; weak family relationships – often associated with economic stress – that drive young people to seek support from peers are other key factors, as are subcultural values that condone or glorify violence.

There is also some evidence that poorer children may be at particular risk of recruitment into armed conflict, either because armed political movements' ideologies respond to grievances about economic inequalities or if poor families are targeted with incentive payments.

7.5 Key findings: inadequate care

The evidence reviewed suggests poverty contributes to inadequate care of children in several ways.

Poor children are at greater risk than non-poor children of being left unsupervised, in the care of siblings or in the care of an adult who lacks the capacity to care for them properly. This increases their risk of accidental injury, may affect their nutrition and health and increases their risk of physical and sexual abuse. Constraints on poor working adults' capacity to supervise and guide the adolescents in their care can also mean they seek support from peer groups, and are at increased risk of involvement in violence.

The evidence reviewed suggests orphans are at enhanced risk of inadequate care: this partially reflects the often-greater poverty of households caring for orphans. It may also reflect ill health and physical incapacity on the part of orphan's carers and strain on the emotional as well as economic resources of households caring for significant numbers of dependants.

Evidence concerning the effects of parental migration on the care of children left behind is contradictory; impacts depend on the child's age, whether their father, mother or both parents migrated, the capacity of their carers and the resources remitted to them. Some studies find positive educational impacts (mostly among older children). Most reviews of the effects on children's emotional wellbeing are negative; a common finding is that children of migrant parents are less well supervised than those of non-migrants and are thus at greater risk of involvement in anti-social activities such as violence and drug or alcohol abuse. The majority of studies reviewed also find that children left behind by migrant parents, particularly mothers, are at greater risk of physical and sexual abuse.

There is clear evidence that economic deprivation is an important factor underlying children's entry into residential care. Sometimes, poor families are judged by social or health workers as incapable of looking after their children – sometimes as a direct consequence of poverty, sometimes where poverty has led to family breakdown or adult drug or alcohol abuse. Sometimes, poor families make the choice to send children into residential care themselves, perceiving it as a better way to meet their needs.

7.6 Key findings: risk and protective factors

The evidence reviewed suggests some groups of children are at greater risk of one or more of the child protection violations examined in this report.

Disabled children face increased risk of sexual and physical violence, in particular.

Some violations affect one *gender* more than another: significantly more girls than boys are married as children; girls are at higher risk of sexual violence, though it is increasingly recognised that boys are affected both at home and in their communities, and in some contexts boys are also sexually exploited commercially. Boys are at higher risk of homicide and of severe physical punishment, although girls also face high levels of physical punishment.

Orphans are at increased risk of inadequate care, child marriage and sexual violence than non-orphans. There is also some qualitative evidence of orphans being at greater risk of physical violence, but no quantitative data could be found to substantiate this.

At aggregate level, *education* both of children and of parents is an important factor, with clear evidence that it is associated with reduced levels of child marriage, physical violence and inadequate care, and reduced risk of intimate partner violence in adulthood. However, there are high levels of violence in many schools and, for individual children, school may be an additional site of violence rather than offering protection.

This review has uncovered relatively little systematic evidence concerning the effects of other services. This may reflect the limited availability of data, whereas there is considerable large-scale quantitative data on education levels. One key exception to this is clear evidence of the contribution that *child care services* (e.g. nurseries or preschools) can make to preventing young children being left without competent adult care.

There is some evidence – though less than might be expected – that strong family and community structures help protect children. This may be because the strength of social support is harder to quantify than factors such as education completion rates. There is particularly strong evidence of the role of family and community relationships in protecting adolescents from engagement in violence, and against sexual exploitation of children.

This review found limited evidence concerning the role of institutional structures for child protection. However, in some areas and contexts, legal change had helped protect children – this was particularly evident in the areas of child marriage and foeticide. The absence of evidence in this review reflects the fact

that often the focus has been on children's experiences and/or identification of factors increasing the risk of protection violations. In other words, the absence of evidence does not mean these structures do not have an important role to play. The fact that they were so little mentioned does, however, indicate that they are generally not perceived by children or families as possible sources of protection.

7.7 Implications for policy and practice

The evidence reviewed for this report corroborates the widely held view that poverty often exacerbates the frequency of child protection violations. Where this is the case, it occurs through four main routes: through increasing the relative powerlessness of children and thus their vulnerability to different protection violations; as a direct or indirect response or strategy for coping with poverty (as in the case of commercial sex work or in some cases of marrying off a daughter to reduce household costs); to bring resources into the household (e.g. bride price); and through increasing stresses on adults and adolescents, which may lead to increased physical violence or emotional withdrawal. The evidence related to the latter route is the most limited, and contentious, with some qualitative studies finding a link but little quantitative evidence.

Some of the child protection violations reviewed bear little relation to poverty, and relate principally to sociocultural norms that condone particular abuses of children. Examples include foeticide and corporal punishment in schools. This would indicate that effective strategies for reducing these are likely to involve changing norms, and anti-poverty components would be likely to have limited traction (see Marcus and Page, 2013).

Others, such as commercial sexual exploitation of children, transactional sex and urban community violence, are very strongly related to economic deprivation. This would indicate that effective strategies for reducing these violations of children's rights are likely to involve measures to reduce poverty and strengthen livelihoods centrally, a conclusion broadly echoed by our review of child protection interventions (Marcus and Page, 2013).

Most of the child protection violations reviewed occupy a middle ground where sociocultural factors that condone particular violations are primary and set the context in which poor children are at increased risk. Examples include child marriage and corporal punishment at home. In such contexts, addressing sociocultural factors that lead to child protection violations is likely to be the most important component. However, policies and programmes that strengthen households' livelihoods and make them less vulnerable to shocks and stresses are likely to be an essential complement, and could reduce the additional vulnerability children from poor households face.

It is clear that it is not only the income dimension of poverty that affects the risk of protection violations. Four other elements appear particularly crucial:

- *Limited* access to information, which is associated with low levels of parental education, and limited access to the media affect knowledge of the law, of good caring practices, of alternatives to violent punishment and of the risks associated with trafficking or early marriage. Where poverty limits children's access to education and to the media, it can also increase the likelihood that children lack information on whom they can turn to if abused.
- *Insecure living environments* are particularly associated with increased risk of physical and sexual violence. This is often compounded by reliance on goods, utilities and services located at some distance from poor people's housing. For example, in urban slums, many people rely on communal toilets or water supplies, and women and girls are at risk of assault while using these facilities. Where organised criminal activity is widespread, physical violence is often common, and adolescent boys are at particular risk of becoming victims and/or being drawn into such activity. In such environments, pressures towards early marriage are greater, as marriage can seem an effective way of protecting girls from sexual assault.
- *Time poverty* is related to long working hours and very limited effective labour rights (even in the formal sector in many countries). This increases the risk of young children being left alone, or without competent carers, which exposes them to hazards, puts them at risk of developmental damage from inadequate stimulation and also increases their vulnerability to abuse, particularly sexual abuse.
- *Absence of key social services* emerges as another key aspect of poverty contributing to some of the child protection violations reviewed here. Adequate care of children while parents are working is particularly

affected by the presence or absence of affordable, reliable child care services. Given that education plays an important role in reducing the risk of early marriage and, some studies show, of sexual abuse and intimate partner violence, enhancing the affordability, accessibility and quality of education would seem likely to have an important contribution to make to the increased protection of children.

The weakness of child protection systems in many contexts emerges clearly from the literature reviewed: protective structures were rarely mentioned in the qualitative literature that explored children and families' experiences of different violations. While arguably not a driver of child protection violations, the absence of effective deterrence and response mechanisms appears to increase the risk of such violations occurring. It also means that very little formal support is available to children whose protection rights have been violated. The absence of effective preventative and rehabilitative services may lead to abuses occurring for a longer period, and may increase the severity of their impacts, although further empirical evidence of this is needed.⁵¹

The child protection violations examined are closely related, and frequently experienced together; experiencing one often increases the risk of others. Thus, for example, children without adequate care are at increased risk of sexual abuse; girls married at a young age are both at increased risk of sexual assault (legalised within marriage) and of physical violence in the context of marriage. This implies that, where economic deprivation is an important underlying factor, reducing poverty in a multifaceted way – to include addressing time poverty, limited access to information, poor housing and unsafe communities – may reduce the risk of several violations.

In addition to poverty, key other factors or characteristics increasing children's risk of protection violations are disability and orphanhood, and, depending on the violation concerned, gender and age. Broadly speaking, girls are at greater risk of sexual violence, although boys' risk is significant and often underestimated, and boys are at greater risk of fatal physical violence, as both victims and perpetrators. Although most studies find limited gender differences in the frequency of physical punishment, boys are generally at risk of most severe punishment. No significant gender differences in children being left without competent care were found.

7.8 Strength of evidence and emerging evidence gaps

This review has examined over 500 papers that in some way address the relationship between poverty and our four focal areas of child protection in low- and middle-income countries, substantially more than we initially expected to find.

7.8.1 Areas with strong evidence

On some areas, such as child marriage, corporal punishment of children and, to a lesser extent, sexual violence, there is now considerable qualitative and quantitative information available examining the relationship between poverty and these violations. There is also extensive statistical analysis of the extent to which orphans face increased risk of protection violations, and some discussion of how orphanhood intersects with economic deprivation. Most of the statistical analyses examined are disaggregated by sex, and so for most issues there is reasonable evidence of the extent of gender difference in children's experience. This largely involves micro-level analysis of the association between socioeconomic status and particular child protection outcomes.

There is emerging evidence of the impact of economic shocks in terms of increasing the risk of a number of child protection violations – particularly sexual exploitation, children being left without competent care, early marriage and physical violence. This evidence is strongest in relation to sexual exploitation, but remains scattered, rather than systematically consolidated, and, unlike the now considerable body of evidence on human development impacts and impacts on child labour (e.g. Cockburn et al., 2012; Mendoza and Rees, 2012), is based entirely on qualitative analyses. This said, a quest for a stronger body of quantitative evidence on issues such as these that are less amenable to effective quantification may be

⁵¹ Our adapted systematic review of interventions (Marcus and Page, 2013) found very little evidence concerning the effectiveness of 'rehabilitative' interventions and thus of their role in reducing the severity of impacts on children whose protection rights have been violated.

unnecessary: the qualitative evidence is indicative of the need for more effective social protection and, taken together with the quantitative evidence of the impact of crises on other areas of child wellbeing, may be sufficient.

7.8.2 Areas with weaker evidence

The evidence is most scattered for inadequate care, and particularly the issue of care of children while parents are working. Here, we have drawn extensively on the *Global Working Families* study, which took place in middle-income countries. No focused analyses of this issue in low-income contexts were found for this review, though Department for International Development (DFID)- and World Bank-funded analyses of the social impacts of economic crisis touch on this issue in several low-income countries.

There are some areas where there are plausible pathways that would indicate that poorer children are at greater risk of violations, but limited evidence could be found that either confirms or refutes the suggestion. For example, limited evidence was found examining the ways in which living in a poor urban area might increase children's risk of exposure to physical and sexual violence (often experienced together). The emerging evidence on this issue is scattered across several sectors, including analyses of access to water and sanitation, urban community planning and urban transport, and has a primarily urban focus. No consolidated evidence on the ways in which poverty could exacerbate risks in rural areas was found, although there is anecdotal evidence (for example) of girls facing sexual assaults while collecting firewood.

While there is clear evidence that some strategies for coping with poverty can lead to violations of children's protection rights (e.g. child marriage or trafficking as a response to economic shock or stress), it is much less clear how quantitatively significant particular coping strategies are. For example, in a particular context, how far is child marriage a response to shocks, and how does it reflect long-standing cultural values? Understanding the significance of particular causes numerically as well as qualitatively is essential for developing nuanced responses.

The ways in which poverty intersects with other aspects of social exclusion processes to increase children's risk of protection violations is not always well established. For example, a few papers note an increased prevalence of physical violence or sexual abuse among marginalised minority groups (e.g. Cabral and Speek-Warnery, 2004) or observe that specific sociocultural groups are at increased risk of trafficking (e.g. Dottridge, 2004), but do not discuss the processes that contribute to that increased prevalence. Thus, the relative importance of cultural values, of the opportunities available to young people in particular geographical contexts and of poverty as drivers is often unclear.

There is very little analysis in the literature examined of the institutional context in which child protection violations occur, and the way broader pressures affect this. The limited literature that explores the effects of economic shocks and stresses on child protection outcomes focuses principally at the household level and pays little attention to effects on public service capacity or broader issues such as social cohesion. This means the role of public services may be underestimated in any analysis of the relationship between economic deprivation and child protection outcomes. One notable exception is Castle and Diallo (2008), who discuss how systemic underfunding of the education system in West Africa, coupled with reforms introduced during the adjustment period, may have exacerbated pressures on teachers, and in turn created a perception that corporal punishment is essential for managing large classes.

More broadly, stronger analysis of the political economy of action and inaction on child protection issues would complement the micro-level focus of many of the emerging insights, and could usefully inform more nuanced and effective strategies for better protecting children.

There is a lack of information on certain groups of children: for example, only three studies were found that examined the specific risks of protection violations that disabled children face. Only two studies focused on sexual violence against boys; although many others disaggregated by gender and reported differences between girls and boys, the focus is still very much on girls. Literature on the relationship between poverty, conflict and violation of children's protection rights – and particularly the impact on the care that children receive – is also limited.

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Annex 1: Bodies of literature, main paradigms, key insights ad gaps

Body of literature	Main paradigm re. child protection and poverty	Examples	Key insights	Gaps/limitations	Implications for interventions
Multidisciplinary violence and child protection literature	Ecological model identifying factors at individual, relationship, community and societal level (including poverty) that increase risk of exposure to/propensity to perpetrate protection violations.	WHO (2002) Pinheiro (2006) ICRW (2011) Cabral and Speek-Warnery (2004)	Protection violations are an outcome of multiple factors and processes at different levels Dynamics of vicious spirals where poverty and protection violations exacerbate one another Identification of risk factors through quantitative analysis	Role of policies and institutions in preventing and responding to protection violations	Multifaceted approaches likely to be more effective than single-focus approaches
Economic and environmental shocks and poverty literature	Macro-level factors are important drivers of child maltreatment.	Harper et al. (2012) Heltberg et al. (2011) Hossain et al. (2010)	Effects of macro- and meso-level policies and trends on households and on public sector capacity can lead to pressures on families and effects on social cohesion that increase risk of protection violations	Limited attention to child protection (reflecting focus of studies on education, health and nutrition, and, in some cases, child labour)	Effective protection requires household- and community-level anti-poverty programmes, and strengthening of protective public services
Child rights	Poverty increases risk of	Much NGO literature	Rights are indivisible and	Potential tension with local	Multifaceted approaches working

Body of literature	Main paradigm re. child protection and poverty	Examples	Key insights	Gaps/limitations	Implications for interventions
perspectives	violation of children's rights. Cultural norms that accord little power to children and/or legitimate maltreatment and absence of protective state institutions are other key factors.	UNICEF (2009a) World Vision (2008)	interconnected; increased enjoyment of one (e.g. adequate standard of living) can increase that of others (e.g. protection from abuse and exploitation) Right to protection is as important as right to education, health etc. Can bring spotlight to different duty bearers and to 'hidden' groups facing violence/abuse	understandings of abuse Some literature more descriptive than analytical Sometimes focus on specific groups can divert policy attention from larger numbers of affected children outside those groups	on different causes simultaneously are likely to lead to greater realisation of rights to protection Promoting children's rights involves cultural change: child protection cannot entirely be achieved by 'stealth' (less poverty and better services) Emphasis on different contributions of different actors (duty bearers)
Feminist literature/gender analysis	Protection violations (particularly of girls) largely reflect gendered and generational abuse of power – which may play out in different ways among different socioeconomic groups, but also cut across socioeconomic groups.	Bower (2003) ICRW (2011)	Gender-discriminatory social norms contribute to and affect men, women, girls and boys' responses to poverty. They affect public policy priorities (e.g. level of investment in key social services) and condone certain forms of maltreatment (e.g. child marriage) The family is not necessarily a safe haven; can be a site of child abuse	In practice, strong emphasis on female disadvantage can obscure maltreatment of boys Limited attention to political dynamics	Promoting gender equality is an important strategy for reducing protection violations Strategies for supporting abused children must respect that they may not wish to be reunified with their families

Body of literature	Main paradigm re. child protection and poverty	Examples	Key insights	Gaps/limitations	Implications for interventions
Political economy perspectives and Institutional analysis	Political and institutional structures and dynamics are key factors underlying poverty and affecting responses to both poverty and child maltreatment.	Holmes and Jones (2009) Castle and Diallo (2008)	How power and resource dynamics lead to low prioritisation of child protection issues How progressive laws can be undermined at local level Dynamics of political mobilisation for/against greater protection of children	Very little literature exploring these issues	Be sensitive to political interests and alliances involved and frame strategies accordingly Work with well-placed champions for child protection issues who can influence peers
Anthropological literature	Socioeconomic and cultural context sets framework in which decisions about households' future and child-rearing are made.	Thorsen (2012b) Boyden et al. (2012) Evans and Mayer (2012)	Local perspectives on what constitutes child abuse can differ substantially from those of the international community and many development actors. Often a particular disjuncture for adolescents who are not considered as children in need of protection	Sometimes relatively little attention to institutional context – sometimes reflecting the absence of formal protective institutions in the lives of the groups studied	Sensitivity to local understandings of protection is essential. Widening social and economic options essential complement to 'sensitisation' strategies
Public health perspectives	Poverty is a key factor increasing risk of protection violations – its importance varies by context and type of violation.	Baaroy and Webb (2008) Giashuddin et al. (2009) Hervish and Feldman-Jacobs (2011)	Detailed quantified analysis of relationship between poverty, child marriage and physical violence. Attention to short- and longer-term physical and emotional effects	Studies often based on large household datasets, so more textured material and analysis of wider economic/political/institutional context often absent	Quantified analysis of risk factors helps indicate priority areas for prevention

Table A.2 Insights from different bodies of literature on relationship between poverty and specific child protection issues

Body of literature	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Multidisciplinary violence and	Highlights poverty as important factor underlying	Some discussion of economic drivers of trafficking and	Sees poverty as a factor that increases children's risk of exposure	Some analysis of factors underlying neglect but less than for other themes

Body of literature	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
child protection literature	child marriage, with cultural norms and lack of educational and employment opportunities for girls Quantitative studies often provide statistical evidence of higher child marriage rates among poorer groups	commercial sexual exploitation and transactional sex Some analysis of capacity of protective formal and informal structures Some analysis of social cohesion, particularly with respect to urban sexual violence	to violence in the community and potentially at home. Also stresses importance of (sub)cultural norms condoning violence Literature on involvement as victim or perpetrator in gang/neighbourhood violence qualitative and often has deeper analysis of role of poverty and inequality	Some analysis of poverty as a factor leading to institutional care of children Many papers explore relationship between poverty, care available to orphans and child wellbeing
Economic and environmental literature	At micro level child marriage may be a response to idiosyncratic economic shocks, e.g. crop failure, indebtedness (Cooke et al., nd) and a strategy for coping with current or anticipated poverty, and/or costs (e.g. dowry) (Amin and Huq, 2008; ICRW, 2011)	Limited discussion in economic shocks literature; some literature on environmental shocks identifies increased sexual violence following disasters Some analyses of social impacts of crisis document rise in commercial sex work and transactional sex by girls as well as adult women (e.g. Heltberg et al., 2011; Hossain et al, 2011)	Tends to see violence against children as a relatively autonomous cultural practice and relationship with poverty not explored in most studies. Most detailed exploration of the relationship between poverty and violence against children is in the conflict and fragility literature, which also explores the role of poverty as a driver of youth violence	Little attention in social impacts of economic shocks literature. Harper et al. (2012) and Heltberg et al. (2011) are exceptions. They trace impacts of economic shocks on women's time and capacity to care for children. This literature also touches on children being left behind by migrant parents

Body of literature	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
Child rights perspective	Concentrates on violation of right to choose spouse when sufficiently mature, rights to education and health and risk of sexual and physical violence. Locates problem in low status of girls in context of poverty	Tends to document and recommend; relatively less fine-grained analysis. However, child rights perspectives often infuse other disciplinary approaches. Causal analysis generally related to poverty, gender norms and failure of protective institutions. Often involves analysis of legal protection and its failures	Documentation of situation, including analysis of legal protection or its absence. Particular focus on corporal punishment by adults, and/ or bullying by peers. Points out role of 'protective' state institutions as perpetrators of physical violence	How poverty can lead to institutionalisation of children How early childhood development programmes can prevent older children missing school to look after younger children Selective neglect of certain children in the context of poverty (often on the basis of gender and disability)
Feminist literature/gender analysis	Examines how gendered social norms in context of poverty circumscribe parental aspirations for daughters (e.g. Amin and Huq, 2008). Highlights consequences for girls/young women of early marriage and childbearing	The most nuanced literature (e.g. Bower, 2003) combines gender analysis with analysis of the dynamics of poverty. As with child rights perspectives, gender analysis infuses sociological analysis and empirical studies	Focuses mostly on gender-based violence; some literature acknowledges the risks facing married adolescent girls (e.g. ACPF, 2006a; UNICEF, 2005). Insights on cultural acceptability of physical violence	Care literature focuses mostly on constraints on women's labour force participation and links to poverty. A few papers examine effects on child wellbeing of low-income mothers' working conditions and barriers to adequate care (Heymann, 2006; Palriwala and Neetha, 2011)
Institutional and political economy analysis	Limited analysis. Some insights concerning organised opposition to increasing legal age for marriage, and micro dynamics of how law enforcement fails at local level (e.g. UNICEF, 2010c; ICRW, 2008)	Concentrates on failure of state to prevent and respond effectively to sexual violence, and/or discusses role of state and public institutions as perpetrators of sexual violence	Concentrates on failure of state to prevent and respond effectively to sexual violence, and/or discusses role of state and public institutions as perpetrators of sexual violence	Limited. Some analysis of political and institutional forces favouring residential care for disadvantaged children. Also some analysis of narratives that obscure severity of the crisis concerning adequate care for preschool- and primary-age children
Anthropological perspectives	Illuminates ways in which poverty pressures lead to child marriage in different cultural contexts and the varied perspectives of different actors (ICRW, 2011). Also shows that, for older	Analyses how dynamics of gender, age and masculinity lead to sexual violence in specific contexts. Illuminates different actors' perspectives on sexual violence, its causes and risk factors and ways of	Illuminates local (including children's) understandings of what is considered acceptable and abusive violence (e.g. Columbia Group for Children in Adversity, 2011)	Strategies low-income parents unable to afford quality child care employ Risks to children of sibling care Children and parents' perspectives on different care options (including fostering orphans and institutional care)

Body of literature	Child marriage	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Inadequate care
	adolescents, marriage may be a way to escape abusive home (Evans and Mayer, 2012)	preventing and responding to it		
Public health perspectives	Main focus is on health consequences of early childbearing (raised maternal and child mortality, risk of obstetric fistula); statistical associations with poverty generally noted	Focus on potential consequences of sexual violence (e.g. HIV, early sexual debut, mental health consequences). Some literature discusses potential long-term effects on wellbeing	Focuses on documenting scale of physical violence against children and its effects (including fatalities, injuries, psychological effects). Usually based on quantitative data and analyses relationship with poverty. Tends to focus on violence leading to/with potential to cause physical injuries	Significant body of research on the relationship between poverty and the risk of accidental injury
Summary: strengths and gaps	Strong on analysis of relationship between cultural norms, poverty and child marriage, both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Limited analysis of relationship between environmental shocks and child marriage. Most analysis is at micro level; relatively little analysis of the political economy of effective anti-child marriage programmes	A growing body of work examines relationship between poverty, gender norms and sexual violence. Qualitative analysis of poverty–sexual violence linkages is strong; fewer quantitative data are available, reflecting problems of obtaining accurate data. Very limited analysis of sexual violence against boys	Reasonable quantitative evidence base on prevalence of physical violence and risk factors. More limited contextual analysis of pathways by means of which poverty and physical violence are related (except in relation to youth violence). Some problems associated with incommensurate definitions of abuse (e.g. between child rights and public health perspectives)	Little analysis of the way poverty undermines working parents' ability to care for their children. More analysis of relationship between poverty and institutionalisation of children, reflecting strong policy interest. Significant analysis of issues related to orphanhood, including relationship between poverty, quality of care and risk of physical and sexual violence and child marriage



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