

# Women Entrepreneurs and the Care Economy: Unlocking Innovation and Growth

**Daniela Behr and Felicia Siegrist**

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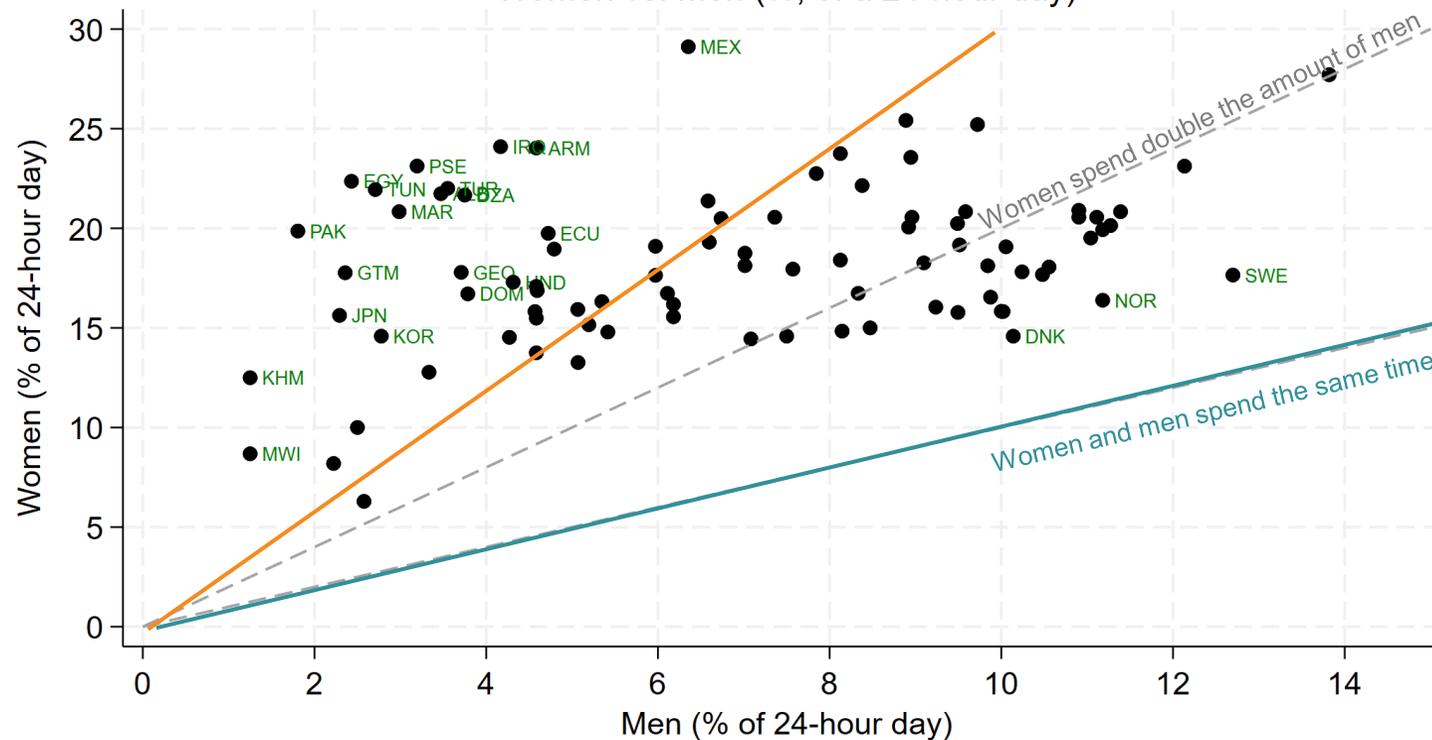
# Motivation



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Time Spent on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work  
Women vs. Men (% of a 24-hour day)

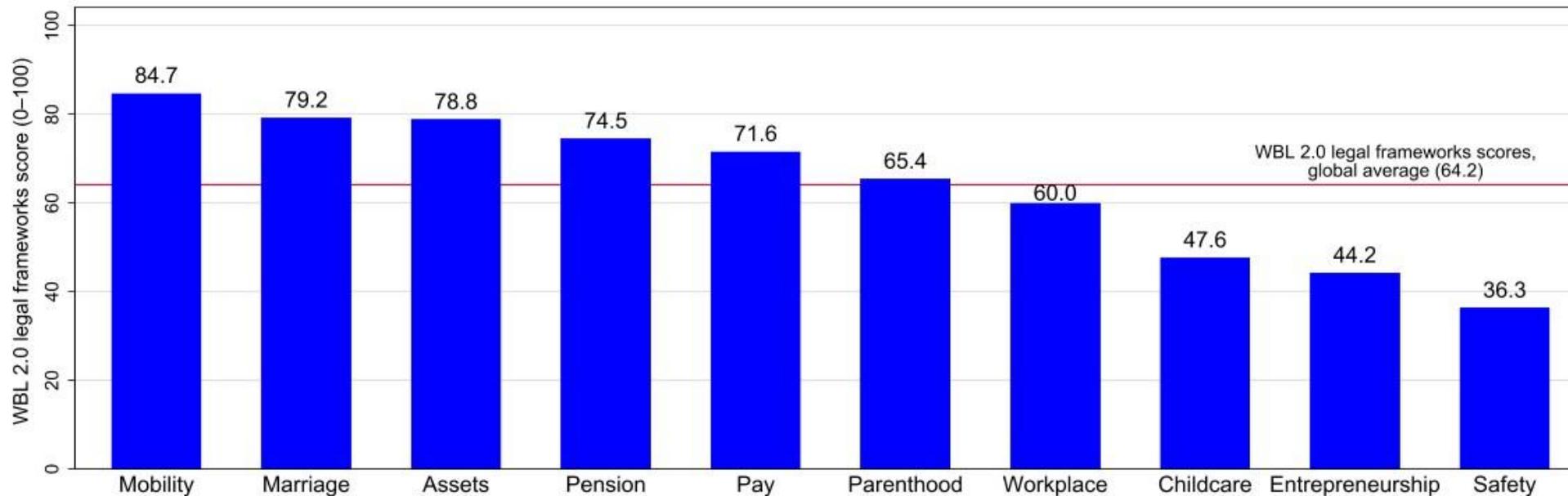


On average, women spend **about 3 times** the time that men spend on unpaid care work

# The Childcare-Entrepreneurship Gap in Legal Frameworks



Childcare and Entrepreneurship remain among the lowest-scoring areas globally

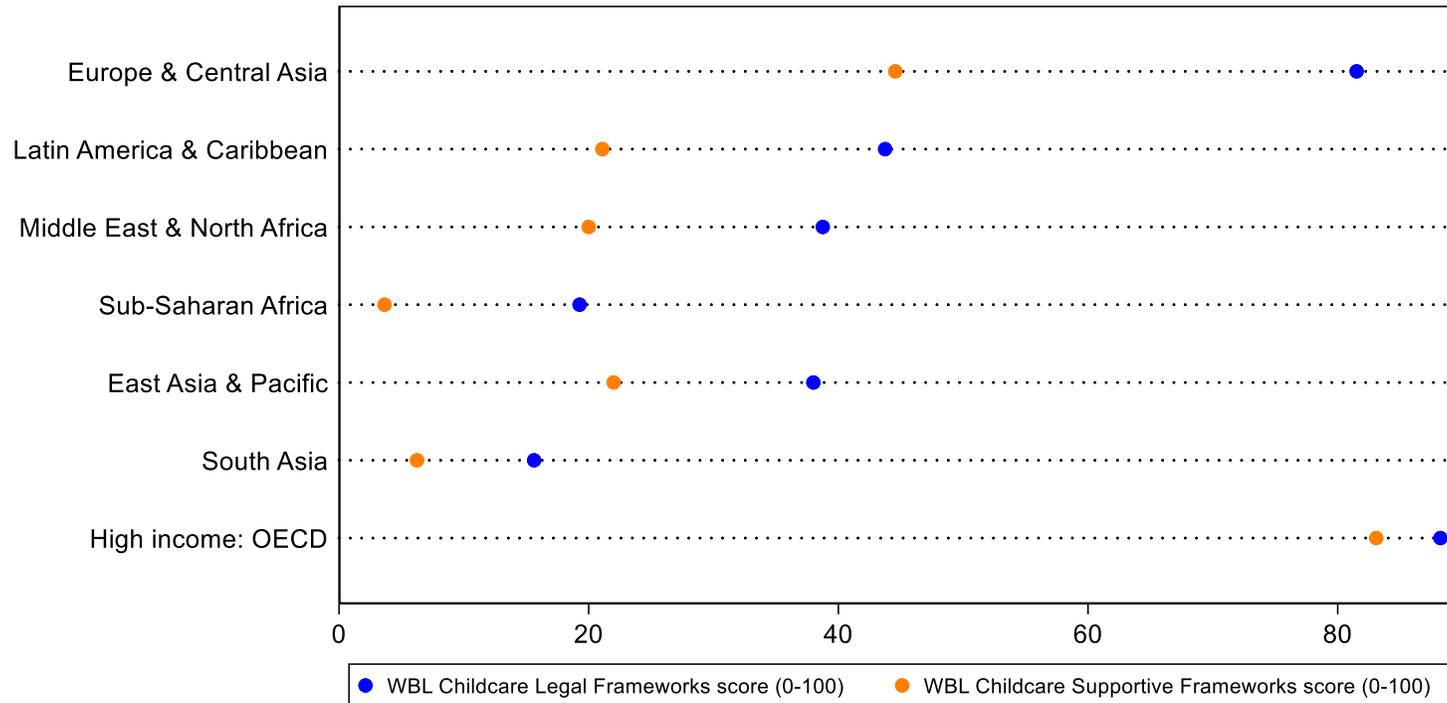


Source: *Women, Business and the Law 2024* database.



Access Women, Business and the Law data

# Implementation Gaps in Childcare



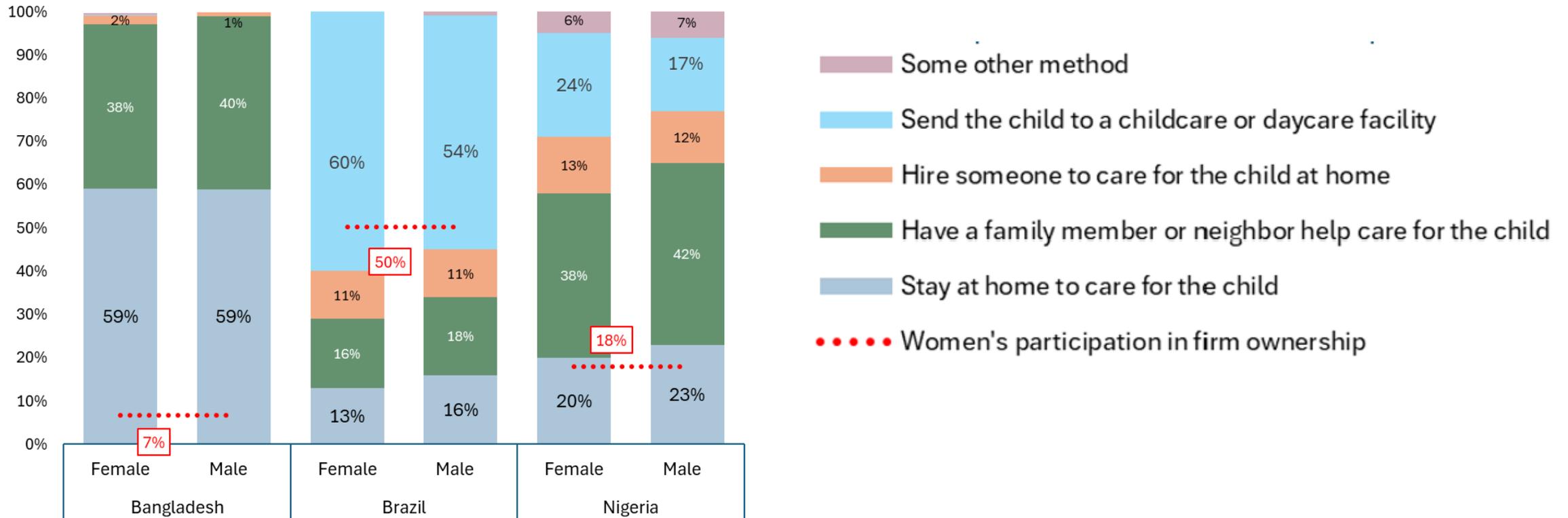
Gaps in public financing, quality monitoring, provider registries, and information accessibility limit effective childcare implementation.

Source: *Women, Business and the Law 2024* database.

# Childcare Solutions for Women Vary by Context



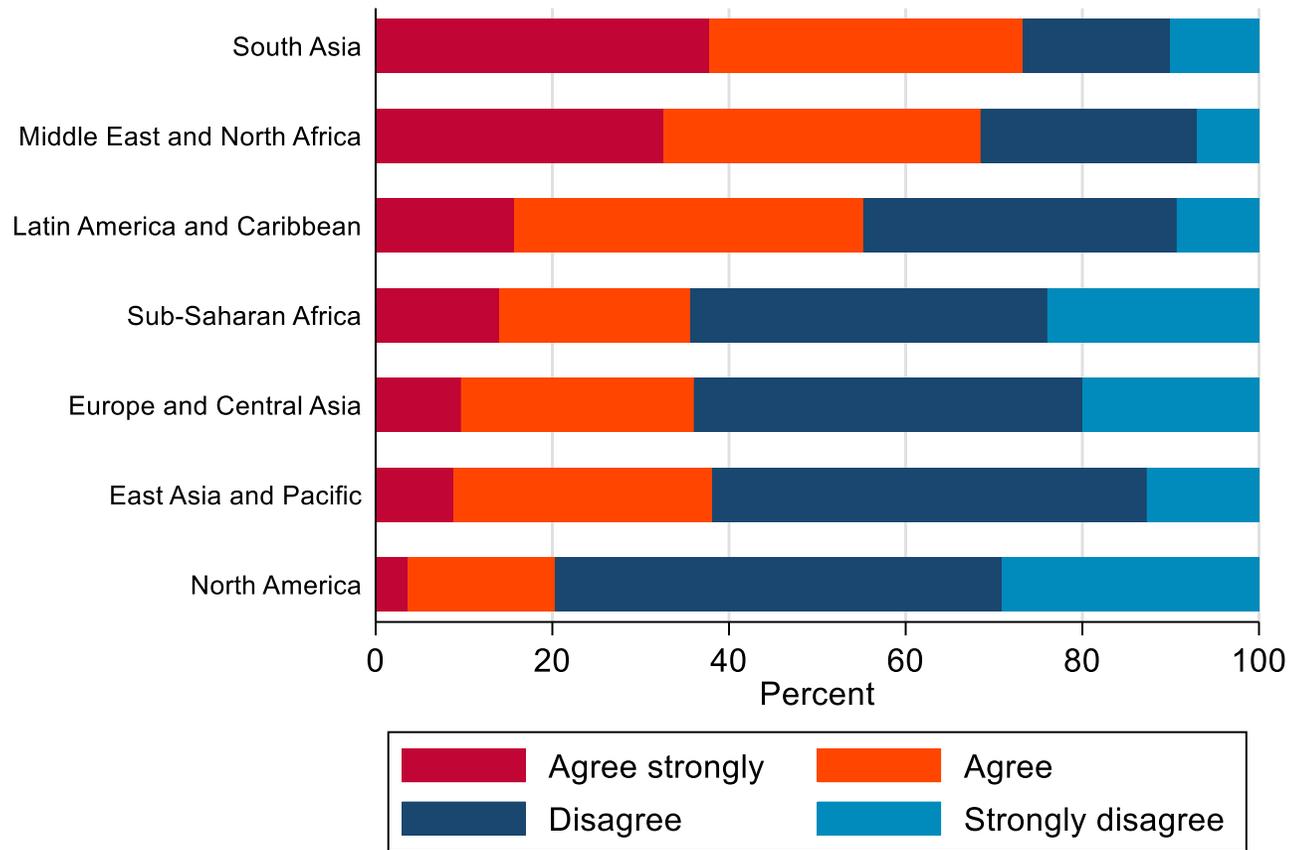
What is the primary method of childcare used by most women?



# Social Norms and Perceptions are Shaping Women's Choices



A preschool child is likely to suffer with a working mother



*“Even though both me and my husband are entrepreneurs, (...) the responsibility for everything related to our daughter still falls on me... when she gets sick at school, it's always me whom they call. **It's always the mom.** The mentality is still that the mother is responsible for all of this.”*

Renata Betti, co-founder of Talent Academy in Brazil

# Incorporating Childcare Systematically into Entrepreneurship Policy



- Care constraints are a structural barrier to women's entrepreneurship
- Investing in care is smart economics
- The care economy is an untapped market opportunity
- Public-private collaboration is essential
- Care and entrepreneurship policies must complement each other

# Thank you!



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## Unlocking Women's Entrepreneurship through Childcare Reform

Daniela M. Behr\* & Felicia Siegrist\*

This Brief explores how childcare responsibilities shape women's entrepreneurial choices and business growth, drawing on data from the *Women, Business and the Law* project as well as complementary evidence from Bangladesh, Brazil, and Nigeria. Globally, women spend nearly three times as much time providing unpaid care compared to men, constraining their ability to start and grow firms. While laws enabling women's economic participation are expanding globally, limited supportive childcare policies limit women's choices and entrepreneurial potential. Even where laws exist, gaps in their implementation or enforcement as well as prevailing social norms may shape how families divide care, how markets respond, and how policymakers prioritize childcare. This Brief highlights the importance of incorporating care systematically into entrepreneurship policy. It calls for expanding affordable and quality childcare, addressing social norms, and supporting women-led care enterprises through accelerators, market access platforms, and tailored financial products. It highlights initiatives like the *Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi)* as models for coordinated investment in the care economy to unlock women's entrepreneurial potential.



Access the policy  
brief here



<https://www.we-fi.org/knowledge-portal/>



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