DHS Comparative Reports 2

Reproductive Preferences in Developing Countries at the Turn of the Century

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Reproductive Preferences in Developing Countries at the Turn of the Century

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Preface

One of the most significant contributions of the MEASURE *DHS+* program is the creation of an internationally comparable body of data on the demographic and health characteristics of populations in developing countries. The *DHS Analytical Studies* series and the *DHS Comparative Reports* series examine these data, focusing on specific topics. The principal objectives of both series are: to provide information for policy formulation at the international level, and to examine individual country results in an international context. Whereas *Comparative Reports* are primarily descriptive, *Analytical Studies* take a more analytical approach.

The *Analytical Studies* series comprises in-depth, focused studies on a variety of substantive topics. The studies are based on a variable number of data sets, depending on the topic under study. A range of methodologies is used, including multivariate statistical techniques. The topics covered are selected by MEASURE *DHS+* staff in conjunction with the MEASURE *DHS+* Scientific Advisory Committee and USAID.

It is anticipated that the *Analytical Studies* will enhance the understanding of significant issues in the fields of international population and health for analysts and policymakers.

Martin Vaessen
Project Director

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Executive Summary

This report is a review of reproductive preferences in 56 developing countries conducted by DHS between 1990 and 2000. Several measures of preferences are used: the ideal number of children, the proportion of women who want no more children, the planning status of recent births, and the wanted total fertility rate. For 35 countries that have conducted more than one survey, trends in preferences have been documented. And, for a subset of mostly sub-Saharan African countries, men's reproductive attitudes are also described.

In general, the number of children desired is declining in most Asian and Latin American countries. There is also evidence of a desire for smaller families in southern and eastern Africa but little change in the preference for large families is evident in western and middle Africa. Unwanted fertility is highest in the countries of northern Africa and western Asia as well as in Latin America; unwanted births are still uncommon in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in western and middle Africa.

A comparison of wanted fertility rates with recent actual fertility shows a potential for further declines in fertility and impending replacement levels in many Asian and Latin American populations.

Men's reproductive preferences in Africa tend to be higher than those of women and are also higher in polygynous marriages. In every country studied, couples with the wife wanting to stop childbearing with husbands who want more children are more numerous than the opposite combination

1 Introduction

Measures of the number of children desired are now a standard part of all fertility and family planning surveys. Their legitimacy was questioned by several demographers in the early years of these surveys (Hauser, 1967; Demeny, 1988; van de Walle, 1992), but their predictive capabilities (Westoff, 1990; Hermalin, 1979) and general programmatic utility have ensured their place in this line of research. The questions addressed by the various measures of reproductive preference are clearly important, including not only whether more children are wanted and how many are considered ideal but also the number of unwanted births that have occurred recently. Such information permits estimation of the implications of preferences for the rate of population growth with the calculation of a total wanted fertility rate analogous to the total fertility rate (TFR). The measurement of intentions is also integral to the assessment of the need for family planning services; these estimates of unmet need are the subject of another comparative report (Westoff, 2001). The preferred timing of the next birth is also now typically included in surveys, and the analysis of preferences has also been applied to the lengths of birth intervals (Rafalimanana and Westoff, 2001) to assess the implications of preferred intervals for the reduction of infant mortality as well as fertility. Another dimension of the subject is the reproductive preferences of men included in the men's surveys of the past decade (Ezeh, Seroussi, and Raggers, 1996).

One of the advantages of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) program is the repetition of surveys in many countries, which permits the assessment of trends in reproductive preferences (Bankole and Westoff, 1995). With these data from surveys repeated over five- to ten-year intervals, we are able to trace the emergence of the small family norm in many countries (Permana and Westoff, 1999; Marquez and Westoff, 1999) and to disaggregate the decline of fertility into its wanted and unwanted components.

2 Ideal Number of Children and Reproductive Intentions

The ideal number of children and the proportion of women who want no more children are shown in Table 2.1 for currently married women in 56 countries based on the most recent surveys, all conducted in the 1990s and the year 2000. In the countries outside of sub-Saharan Africa, the lowest average ideal number is 2.5 children, which was observed in five countries, and the highest is 4.5 in Yemen. A more sensitive measure is the ideal number of children among women who already have two living children (including current pregnancy) since virtually all women in developing countries want at least two. The range of this statistic for these countries extends from a low of 2.1 in Vietnam to a high of 4.1 in Yemen.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the range of ideal number of children is much greater, extending from a low of 3.3 children in South Africa (2.8 for women with two children) to a high of 8.5 and 8.2, respectively, in Chad. Niger is about the same with averages of 8.5 and 8.1. The overall average for the 29 sub-Saharan countries is 5.8—higher in western and middle Africa at 6.3 and lower in southern and eastern Africa at 5.4. The ideal number in South Africa is much lower than the other countries in the region; only Kenya and Zimbabwe approach that level.

The proportion of married women who say that they want no more children is also shown in Table 2.1. This is a particularly important measure because it bears directly on the population growth question and because it designates a segment of the population that may be at risk of having an unwanted birth. For all married women, this proportion ranges from a low of less than 10 percent in Niger and Chad to a high of 74 percent in Armenia and Brazil. In sub-Saharan Africa generally, the average is 28 percent, while in the other regions of the developing world, it is 59 percent.

Table 2.1 Ideal number of children and the percentage of women who want no more children among currently married women, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2001

Country	Survey date	Mean ideal number of children[1]		Percentage who want no more children[2]			
		All married women	Women with 2 children	All married women	Number of children[3]		
					2	3	4
SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/ CENTRAL ASIA							
Bangladesh	1999-00	2.5	2.3	58.9	66.0	83.0	90.9
Cambodia	2000	3.9	3.3	36.8	28.3	44.1	51.5
India[4]	1998-99	2.7	2.3	63.6	72.3	84.2	86.4
Indonesia	1997	2.9	2.7	49.6	51.5	70.5	80.6
Kazakhstan	1999	3.0	2.7	58.2	64.7	75.8	79.9
Kyrgyz Republic	1997	3.9	3.5	46.9	33.4	49.5	74.2
Nepal	1996	2.9	2.6	58.7	59.4	75.6	86.7
Pakistan	1990-91	4.1	3.6	39.9	16.6	35.8	51.5
Philippines	1998	3.5	3.0	61.9	53.2	74.6	84.8
Turkmenistan	2000	3.7	3.1	55.0	43.1	64.5	86.0
Uzbekistan	1996	3.8	3.2	51.5	37.1	60.0	80.2
Vietnam	1997	2.5	2.1	72.8	86.6	93.7	95.5
NORTHERN AFRICA/ WESTERN ASIA							
Armenia	2000	2.8	2.7	74.4	77.9	93.0	95.5
Egypt	2000	2.9	2.5	65.4	59.3	82.5	89.7
Jordan	1997	4.2	3.9	51.2	22.8	42.1	59.6
Morocco	1995	3.6	3.1	53.4	35.6	58.2	71.8
Turkey	1998	2.5	2.3	66.3	78.7	88.0	87.8
Yemen	1997	4.5	4.1	49.3	25.4	42.5	52.5
LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN							
Bolivia	1998	2.8	2.5	71.3	65.8	82.7	88.5
Brazil	1996	2.5	2.3	74.4	84.1	94.3	93.2
Colombia	2000	2.5	2.3	69.6	75.8	90.1	93.8
Dominican Republic	1999	3.2	2.9	60.9	49.4	86.5	92.8
Guatemala	1999	3.7	3.0	58.4	54.0	72.8	73.9
Haiti	2000	3.3	3.0	56.9	53.0	77.3	78.9
Nicaragua	1998	3.0	2.6	65.8	62.4	80.3	89.0
Paraguay	1990	4.4	3.5	43.6	33.8	52.2	58.2
Peru	2000	2.6	2.5	67.3	67.0	83.5	90.8
WESTERN/MIDDLE AFRICA							
Benin	1996	5.8	5.5	23.0	5.3	14.5	25.1
Burkina Faso	1999	5.9	5.6	19.6	7.0	10.9	19.8
Cameroon	1998	6.5	6.2	19.6	5.1	9.8	22.1
Central African Republic	1994	6.7	6.2	12.3	2.9	9.8	11.8
Chad	1996-97	8.5	8.2	10.0	1.5	5.4	9.9
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	6.0	5.4	21.6	7.2	11.8	20.8
Gabon	2000	5.4	4.9	23.1	12.3	17.3	28.3
Ghana	1998	4.6	4.1	35.0	16.1	36.1	53.2
Guinea	1999	5.9	5.3	20.9	5.9	12.8	24.9
Mali	2001	6.5	6.0	21.5	7.4	9.6	23.3
Mauritania	2000-01	6.8	6.0	19.0	11.3	15.0	22.3
Niger	1998	8.5	8.1	9.6	3.0	4.7	8.4
Nigeria	1999	6.7	6.2	19.6	5.1	11.0	22.6
Senegal	1997	5.7	5.5	23.0	5.0	9.1	19.6
Togo	1998	4.9	4.5	28.6	11.7	22.0	37.4
SOUTHERN/EASTERN AFRICA							
Comoros	1996	5.7	5.0	32.5	11.8	15.7	34.5
Eritrea	1995	6.6	5.9	18.1	7.3	9.3	17.9
Ethiopia	2000	5.8	5.5	32.0	17.8	25.6	39.0
Kenya	1998	4.1	3.4	53.3	33.9	51.8	72.2
Madagascar	1997	5.7	4.8	38.1	24.5	36.2	48.3
Malawi	2000	5.3	4.5	42.3	28.2	43.2	58.9
Mozambique	1997	6.2	6.0	16.9	6.7	14.7	19.9
Namibia	1992	5.7	4.2	33.5	34.6	35.3	38.7
Rwanda	2000	5.0	4.6	33.8	12.5	24.1	45.5
South Africa	1998	3.3	2.8	61.5	62.3	74.2	82.0
Tanzania	1999	5.7	4.9	28.7	12.7	23.5	47.0
Uganda	2000-01	5.1	4.4	38.4	15.8	29.0	44.0
Zambia	1996	5.7	5.0	28.5	12.1	23.2	30.6
Zimbabwe	1999	4.3	3.7	40.9	30.3	45.0	64.3

[1] Excludes non-numeric responses
[2] Women who are sterilized (or whose husbands are sterilized) are regarded as wanting no more children.
[3] Includes current pregnancy
[4] Ideal number of children is based on ever-married women.

The percentage of women who want no more children has one limitation in this comparative context. Women in different populations have different numbers of children that will influence their attitude toward the future. To eliminate this compositional bias, the percentage who want no more children is also shown for three family size categories separately: those with two, three, or four children. Populations in which the majority of women at parity two want no more children are well on their way to replacement-level fertility and the small family norm. The highest value is for Vietnam, where 87 percent of women with two children intend to remain at that family size (Table 2.1). Other countries with high proportions in this category are Brazil, 84 percent; Turkey, 79 percent; Armenia, 78 percent; Colombia, 76 percent; and India 72 percent. If we focus on the intentions of women with three children, the percentage who want no more children is high, with the exception of Cambodia (44 percent) and Pakistan (36 percent) and Jordan and Yemen (both 42 percent).[1] At parity four, the percentage wanting no more children is higher, mostly in the 80 and 90 percent range with the same exceptions noted above. Paraguay is an outlier with only 58 percent of women with four children wanting no more, which is 30 percent lower than all of the other Latin American countries in Table 2.1. As with Pakistan, it should be noted that the survey in Paraguay was conducted in 1990 and this statistic has undoubtedly changed since then.

The picture in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa is dramatically different (Table 2.1). Less than 20 percent of women with two children in the 15 western and middle African countries want to stop having children, and in 11 of these countries the proportion is less than 10 percent. Even in the three-children category, the proportion is above 20 percent in only two of the 15 countries (Ghana and Togo). Although the proportions increase somewhat at parity four in the western and middle African countries, Ghana is the only country in which more than 50 percent of women with four children want no more children.

The pattern in southern and eastern Africa is different, although even at parity four, only four of the 14 countries show more than 50 percent of women who want to cease childbearing (Table 2.1). South Africa is almost unique with 82 percent of women at parity four reporting that they want no more children. Even at parity two, the majority of South African women want to stop childbearing. Kenya and Zimbabwe are the next highest in the parity four group. Eritrea and Mozambique are at the low end of the scale in this region, with only 18 and 20 percent of parity four women reporting that they want no more children.

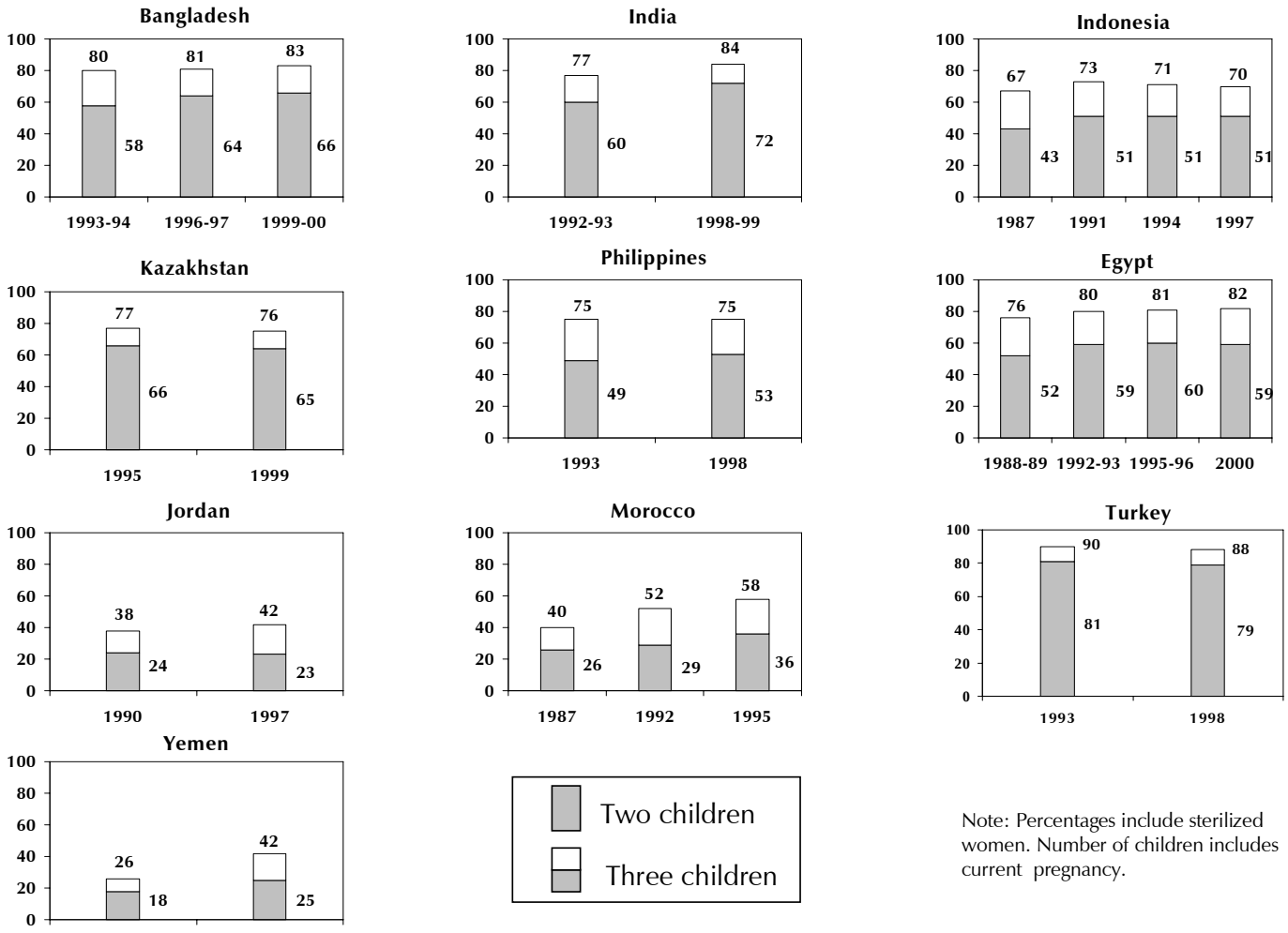
3 Trends in Reproductive Intentions

The changes over recent years in whether women want no more children are depicted in Figure 3.1. For the Asian and Latin American countries, the trends are shown for women with two and three children; for the sub-Saharan countries, the three-and four-child parities are selected. It is important to keep in mind that these patterns are observed at relatively short intervals, which means that one should not expect much change in basic attitudes toward reproduction. Indeed, the proportions who want no more children are fairly stable in many of the countries, but there are also some pronounced increases evident in these intentions. In Bangladesh and India, there are significant increases in the proportions of women with two children who wish to stop at two. Sharp increases are also apparent in Morocco and Yemen. In Brazil, the proportion of those with two children who want no more changed from 69 to 84 percent over ten years. Dramatic increases for both parity two and parity three women are evident for Guatemala and Haiti.

[1]The survey data for Pakistan are more than ten years old; a more recent survey (2000-01) indicates that this proportion has increased to 41 percent (NIPS, 2001).

Figure 3.1 Trends in the percentage of currently married women who want no more children, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1986-2000

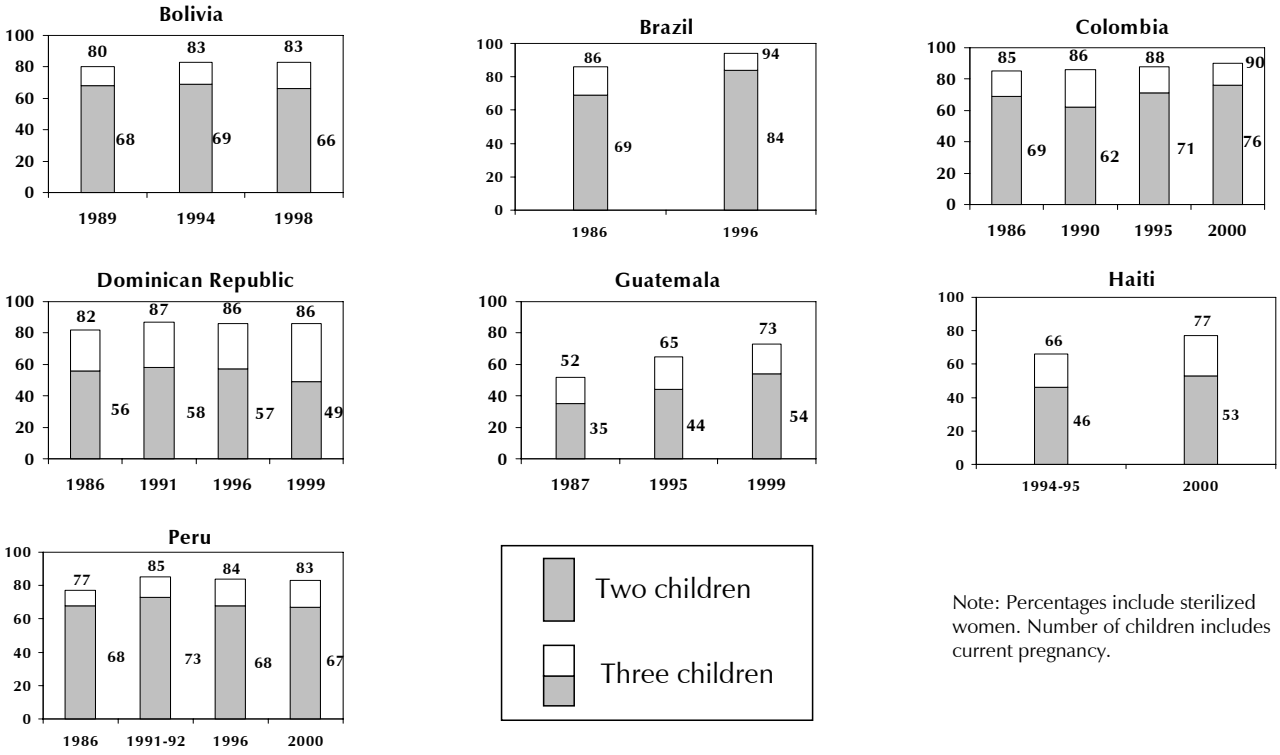
ASIA AND NORTHERN AFRICA



Note: Percentages include sterilized women. Number of children includes current pregnancy.

Figure 3.1—Continued

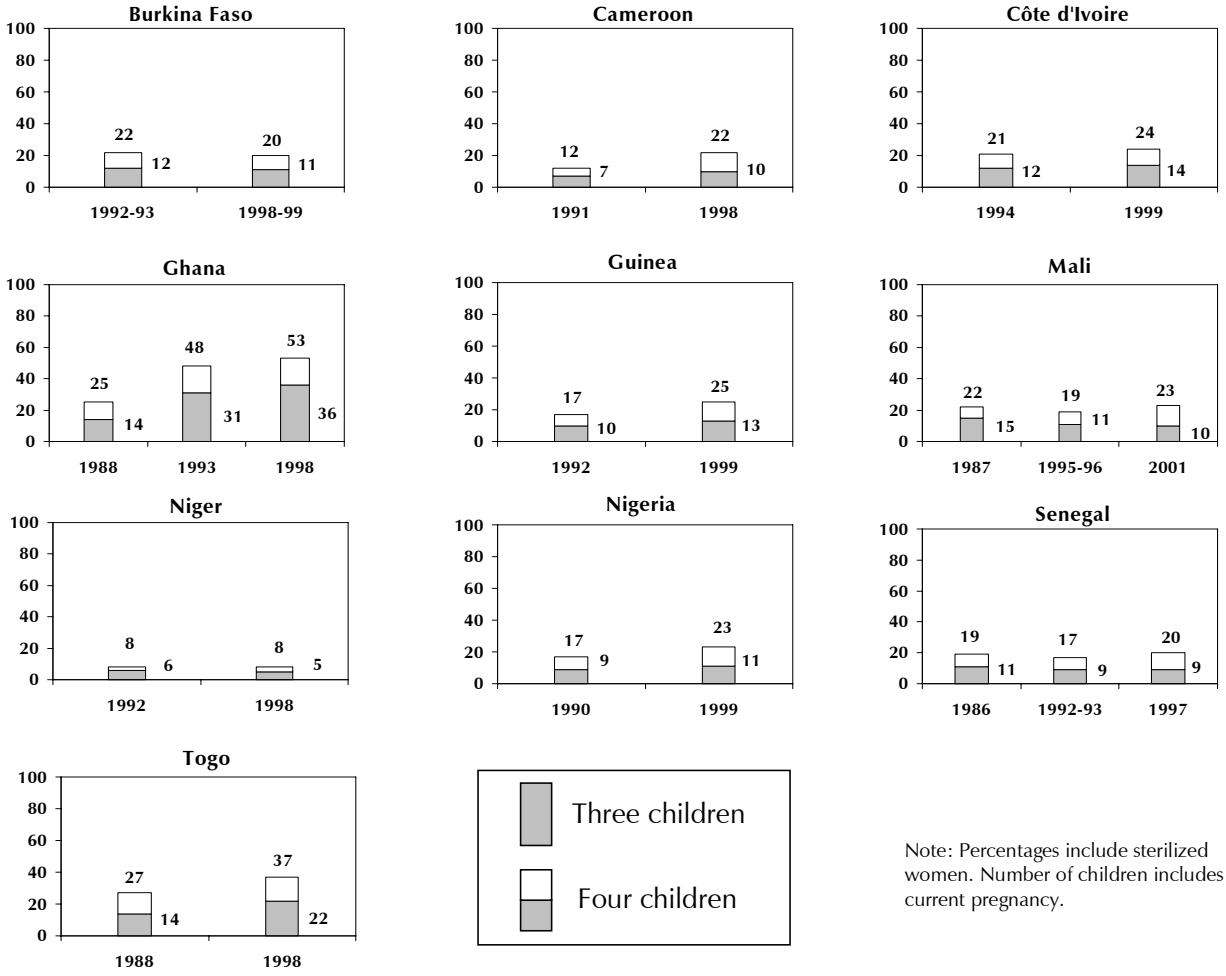
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN



Note: Percentages include sterilized women. Number of children includes current pregnancy.

Figure 3.1—Continued

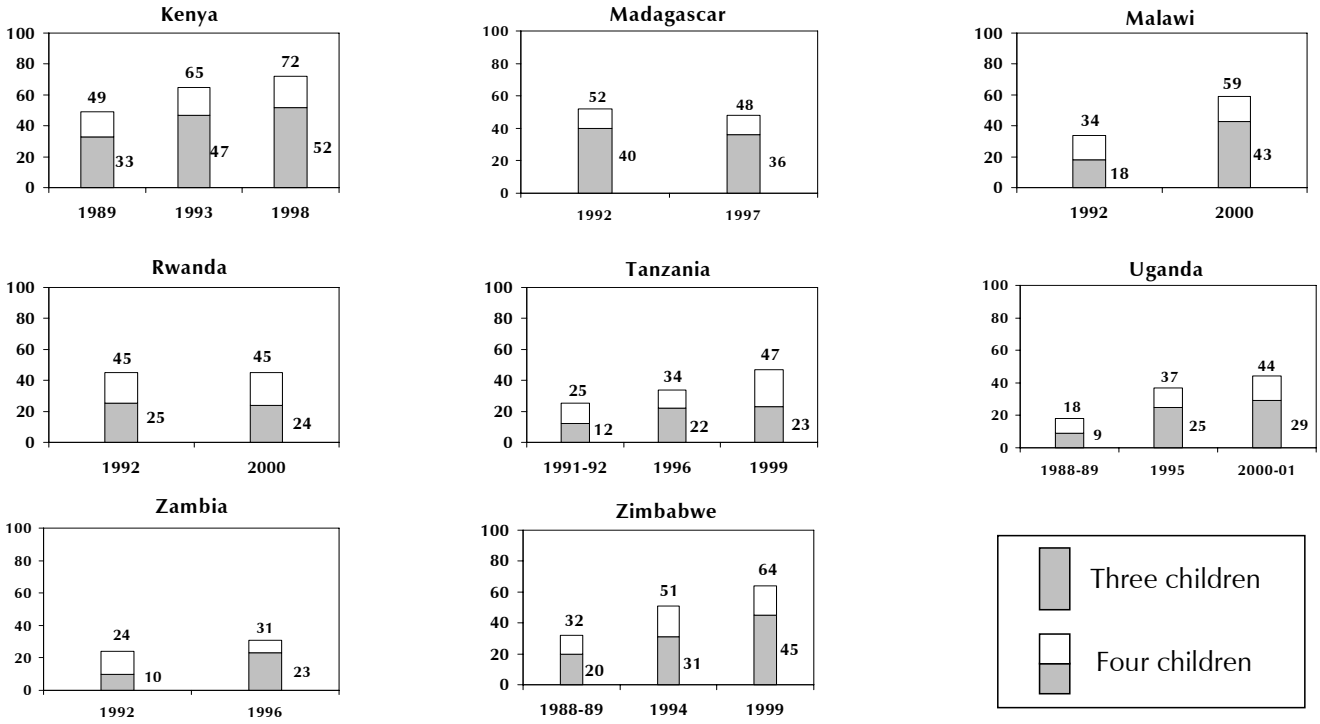
WESTERN AND MIDDLE AFRICA



There are only a few countries in western and middle Africa that show substantial increases in the proportions wanting to stop having children at parity three or four—the case of Ghana is particularly striking with the proportion wanting no more children (at parity four) rising from 25 to 53 percent between 1988 and 1998. Togo also shows a strong trend; Nigeria and Guinea show more moderate increases.

Figure 3.1—Continued

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA



Note: Percentages include sterilized women. Number of children includes current pregnancy.

Such trends are clearer and in some cases dramatic in southern and eastern Africa. Significant increases in the desire to stop childbearing at three or four children are evident in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In Malawi, for example, the proportion who wish to stop at three children increased from 18 percent in 1992 to 43 percent in 2000, while those wanting to stop at four children increased from 34 to 59 percent. No change is apparent in Rwanda, and some suggestion of an opposite trend appears in Madagascar. The norm of family limitation has clearly taken hold in many of the countries of this region even though it is still at much higher levels of fertility than in other parts of the world.

4 Planning of Recent Births

A question on whether recent births were wanted at the time of conception, at a later time, or not at all is routinely included in the DHS questionnaire for births occurring during the three or five years preceding the interview. The planning status of these births is classified into intended, mistimed, and unwanted births. Particular attention is focused on unwanted births because of their implications for the family and for the rate of population growth. The reliability of the responses to the question has been evaluated for Morocco with the benefit of a longitudinal design that permitted repeating the question to the same women about the same births three years later (Bankole and Westoff, 1998). Rationalization of births initially reported as unwanted as wanted was clearly involved; the implication is that the level of unwanted fertility is underestimated and that this effect is associated with the duration of recall.

Aside from the issue of reliability, the level of unwanted births is a combination of preferences for limiting childbearing and the prevalence and effectiveness of birth control in the population. For example, the percentage of unwanted births in Chad is less than 1 percent, the lowest among the 56 countries in Table 3.1. The proportion of women using a modern method of contraception in that country is only 1.2 percent, and women in Chad have the highest ideal number of children, 8.5, and along with Niger, Chad has the lowest proportion of women who want no more children (10 percent). In contrast, Armenian women report 25 percent of their recent births as unwanted. In that population, although the total contraceptive prevalence rate is more than 60 percent, the use of traditional methods (mostly withdrawal) accounts for nearly two-thirds of all use and there is a high rate of induced abortion. Armenian women report 2.8 children as the ideal number, and 74 percent want no more children. Bolivia and Peru are similar with women relying heavily on traditional methods and nearly one-third of their births reported as unwanted.

The proportion of births reported as unwanted is low in the south/southeast and central Asian countries included in this review, with the exceptions of Cambodia, the Philippines, and Nepal. Unwanted births reach their highest levels in northern Africa and western Asia and, with the exception of Paraguay (the survey was in 1990), they are high in the Latin America/Caribbean region, where mistimed births are also more common. On average, only 55 percent of all births in this region are reported by their mother as having been wanted at the time they occurred.

The planning status of births in sub-Saharan Africa differs in western and middle Africa from that in the southern and eastern regions. The proportion of unwanted births is less than 10 percent in the 15 western and middle African countries; Ghana shows the highest proportion (9 percent). In contrast, 10 of the 14 countries in southern and eastern Africa show that more than 10 percent of births were unwanted, with Malawi the highest at 22 percent.

The widely varying levels of unwanted fertility in different parts of the world suggest that increases in unwanted fertility are an integral part of the fertility transition. As smaller families become more normative and contraception becomes more prevalent, the risk of having an unwanted pregnancy increases. In some countries, abortion may also increase in the period before effective methods of contraception become widespread.

Table 3.1 Percent distribution of births in the past five years by planning status and wanted and total fertility cases for the preceding three years, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2001

Country	Survey date	Planning status at conception: Wanted then	Wanted later	Wanted no more children	Total[1]	Total wanted fertility rate	Total fertility rate
SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/ CENTRAL ASIA							
Bangladesh	1999-00	66.9	19.3	13.5	100.0	2.2	3.3
Cambodia	2000	66.7	8.9	23.5	100.0	3.1	4.0
India	1998-99	78.4	11.9	9.4	100.0	2.1	2.9
Indonesia	1997	83.0	8.7	8.3	100.0	2.4	2.8
Kazakhstan	1999	82.4	8.3	8.9	100.0	1.9	2.0
Kyrgyz Republic	1997	86.4	7.6	5.4	100.0	3.1	3.4
Nepal	1996	61.9	19.2	18.1	100.0	2.9	4.6
Pakistan	1990-91	76.4	8.4	13.0	100.0	4.3	4.9
Philippines	1998	54.2	26.9	18.2	100.0	2.7	3.7
Turkmenistan	2000	94.3	2.2	1.2	100.0	2.7	2.9
Uzbekistan	1996	94.7	2.4	1.9	100.0	3.1	3.3
Vietnam	1997	73.3	14.9	11.9	100.0	1.9	2.3
NORTHERN AFRICA/ WESTERN ASIA							
Armenia	2000	62.0	12.9	24.9	100.0	1.5	1.7
Egypt	2000	81.5	5.0	13.4	100.0	2.9	3.5
Jordan	1997	62.7	20.4	16.9	100.0	2.9	4.4
Morocco	1995	73.2	12.5	14.1	100.0	2.2	3.3
Turkey	1998	69.2	11.2	18.8	100.0	1.9	2.6
Yemen	1997	54.6	23.0	21.8	100.0	4.6	6.5
LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN							
Bolivia	1998	47.6	20.2	31.7	100.0	2.5	4.2
Brazil	1996	50.6	26.1	22.3	100.0	1.8	2.5
Colombia	2000	47.6	29.2	23.1	100.0	1.8	2.6
Dominican Republic	1999	53.3	32.4	13.8	100.0	2.0	2.6
Guatemala	1999	69.7	18.0	11.8	100.0	4.1	5.0
Haiti	2000	43.9	26.0	29.8	100.0	2.7	4.7
Nicaragua	1998	65.6	15.9	17.3	100.0	2.5	3.6
Paraguay	1990	76.1	16.9	6.7	100.0	4.0	4.7
Peru	2000	43.8	25.3	30.7	100.0	1.8	2.8
WESTERN/MIDDLE AFRICA							
Benin	1996	73.6	19.3	5.7	100.0	5.0	6.0
Burkina Faso	1999	78.8	17.5	3.0	100.0	5.7	6.4
Cameroon	1998	70.9	20.4	6.1	100.0	4.3	4.8
Central African Republic	1994	75.7	16.0	7.0	100.0	4.7	5.1
Chad	1996-97	90.0	7.9	0.9	100.0	6.1	6.4
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	65.0	20.1	7.9	100.0	4.4	5.3
Gabon	2000	54.9	37.6	6.8	100.0	3.5	4.3
Ghana	1998	62.9	27.5	8.9	100.0	3.6	4.4
Guinea	1999	79.9	13.5	3.9	100.0	5.0	5.5
Mali	2001	79.2	16.6	3.2	100.0	6.1	6.8
Mauritania	2000-01	71.2	22.1	6.3	100.0	4.3	4.7
Niger	1998	86.7	11.0	1.0	100.0	7.2	7.5
Nigeria	1999	77.8	15.8	3.1	100.0	4.8	5.2
Senegal	1997	64.1	27.2	6.8	100.0	4.6	5.7
Togo	1998	57.1	33.3	8.1	100.0	4.2	5.2
SOUTHERN/EASTERN AFRICA							
Comoros	1996	42.5	41.3	14.4	100.0	3.7	4.6
Eritrea	1995	80.8	13.5	4.9	100.0	5.7	6.1
Ethiopia	2000	63.0	19.6	17.3	100.0	4.9	5.9
Kenya	1998	51.4	37.2	11.1	100.0	3.5	4.7
Madagascar	1997	73.5	13.8	12.0	100.0	5.2	6.0
Malawi	2000	59.6	18.3	21.7	100.0	5.2	6.3
Mozambique	1997	74.2	20.1	3.7	100.0	4.7	5.2
Namibia	1992	65.0	21.4	12.3	100.0	4.8	5.4
Rwanda	2000	64.3	22.8	12.5	100.0	4.7	5.8
South Africa	1998	45.7	35.5	17.3	100.0	2.3	2.0
Tanzania	1999	77.5	11.4	11.0	100.0	4.8	5.6
Uganda	2000-01	60.3	24.8	14.6	100.0	5.3	6.8
Zambia	1996	62.7	29.2	6.5	100.0	5.2	6.1
Zimbabwe	1999	62.4	30.2	7.2	100.0	3.4	4.0

[1] Includes missing data

5 Wanted Fertility Rates and Total Fertility Rates

The preceding discussion of unwanted fertility focused on the planning status of recent births. From a demographic perspective, the question of interest is what would fertility rates be in the absence of unwanted births? The standard measure utilized by DHS is the rate devised by Lightbourne for the World Fertility Survey (Lightbourne, 1987). Designated the total wanted fertility rate (TWFR), the measure is calculated in the same way as the conventional total fertility rate except that the births in the numerator exclude those exceeding the desired or ideal number of births at the time of the survey. The TWFR and the TFR are shown for each country in the last two columns of Table 3.1.

The actual TFRs calculated for the several years before each of these surveys show that only two of the 56 countries have reached replacement level—Kazakhstan (2.0) and Armenia (1.7). From a comparison of the values of the TFRs and TWFRs, it appears that the decline in fertility is still in process. Many of the countries show TWFRs that if realized, would indeed reduce their fertility to levels around or below replacement. India and Bangladesh are important examples. Other countries that would realize replacement-level fertility or lower include Vietnam, Morocco, Turkey, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. The gap between the two rates is greatest in Peru, with a current TFR of 2.8 and a TWFR of 1.8.

With an average TFR of 5.5, the picture in sub-Saharan Africa is very different. With the exception of South Africa, no country in the region has come close to replacement level even in the theoretical sense of what fertility would be if women's preferences prevailed (the TWFR in South Africa is 2.3 and the TFR is 2.9). On average, the observed TFR for all 29 sub-Saharan countries (5.5) would decline to 4.7 if women had the number of births they preferred. The average gap between actual and desired fertility in western and middle Africa is greatest in Gabon, Ghana, Senegal, and Togo, where the TWFR is close to 20 percent lower than the TFR. In southern and eastern Africa, Kenya shows the greatest gap, with a 25 percent drop required to reach the desired level of 3.5. Other countries with gaps of 20 percent or more are Comoros, South Africa, and Uganda. Further declines in fertility in these countries are very likely to continue if not accelerate.

6 Trends in Wanted and Unwanted Fertility

The declines of fertility in these countries can be analyzed in terms of changes in the number of children desired and changes in the control of fertility and the reduction of unwanted births (Figure 6.1 and Table 6.1. Figure 6.1 shows the trends in total fertility, subdivided according to wanted and unwanted fertility. In Table 6.1, a more precise decomposition of these changes is presented. If we look first at the countries in Asia and northern Africa, we see that most, but not all, of the recent declines in fertility can be attributed to the reduction of wanted births. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the declines in fertility have been more equally divided between wanted and unwanted births.

In sub-Saharan Africa, most declines in the TFR, many of which are very small, are due to declines in wanted births. Two exceptions are Kenya, where a decline of two births per woman between 1989 and 1998 is equally divided between the two components, and Rwanda, where a moderate decline in the TFR from 6.3 to 5.8 was due to a decline of 0.9 over eight years in unwanted births, accompanied by an increase of 0.5 in the wanted births (Table 6.1). This country, of course, experienced massive upheavals beginning with the genocidal events in 1994. The whole family planning program was dismantled, not to mention other effects. In several of the sub-Saharan African countries, there have been slight increases in the unwanted component accompanied by declines in wanted fertility—a pattern that might characterize the early stages of the transition when the motivation to control fertility precedes the availability of methods. This pattern is also evident in Haiti and in Yemen.

Figure 6.1 Trends in wanted, unwanted, and total fertility rates, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1986-2000

ASIA AND NORTHERN AFRICA

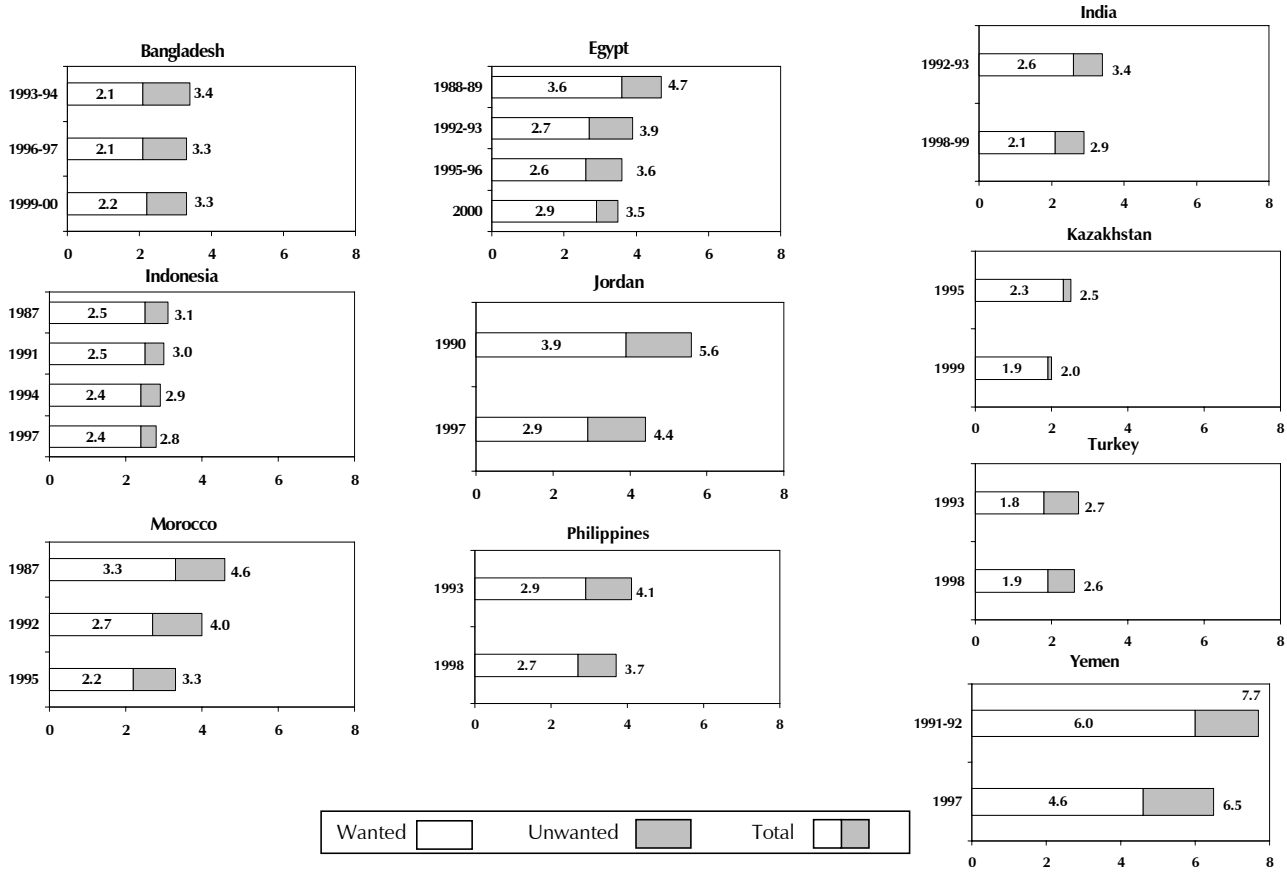


Figure 6.1—Continued

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

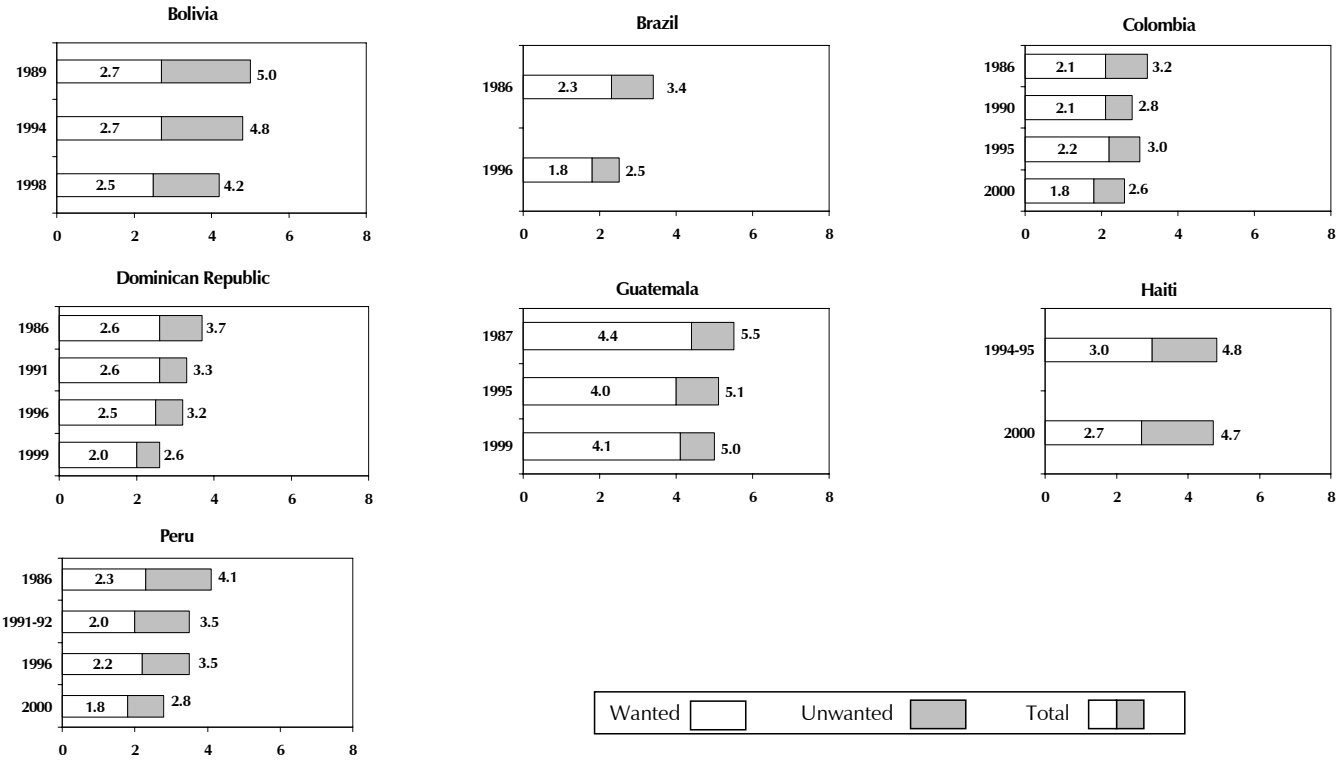


Figure 6.1—Continued

WESTERN AND MIDDLE AFRICA

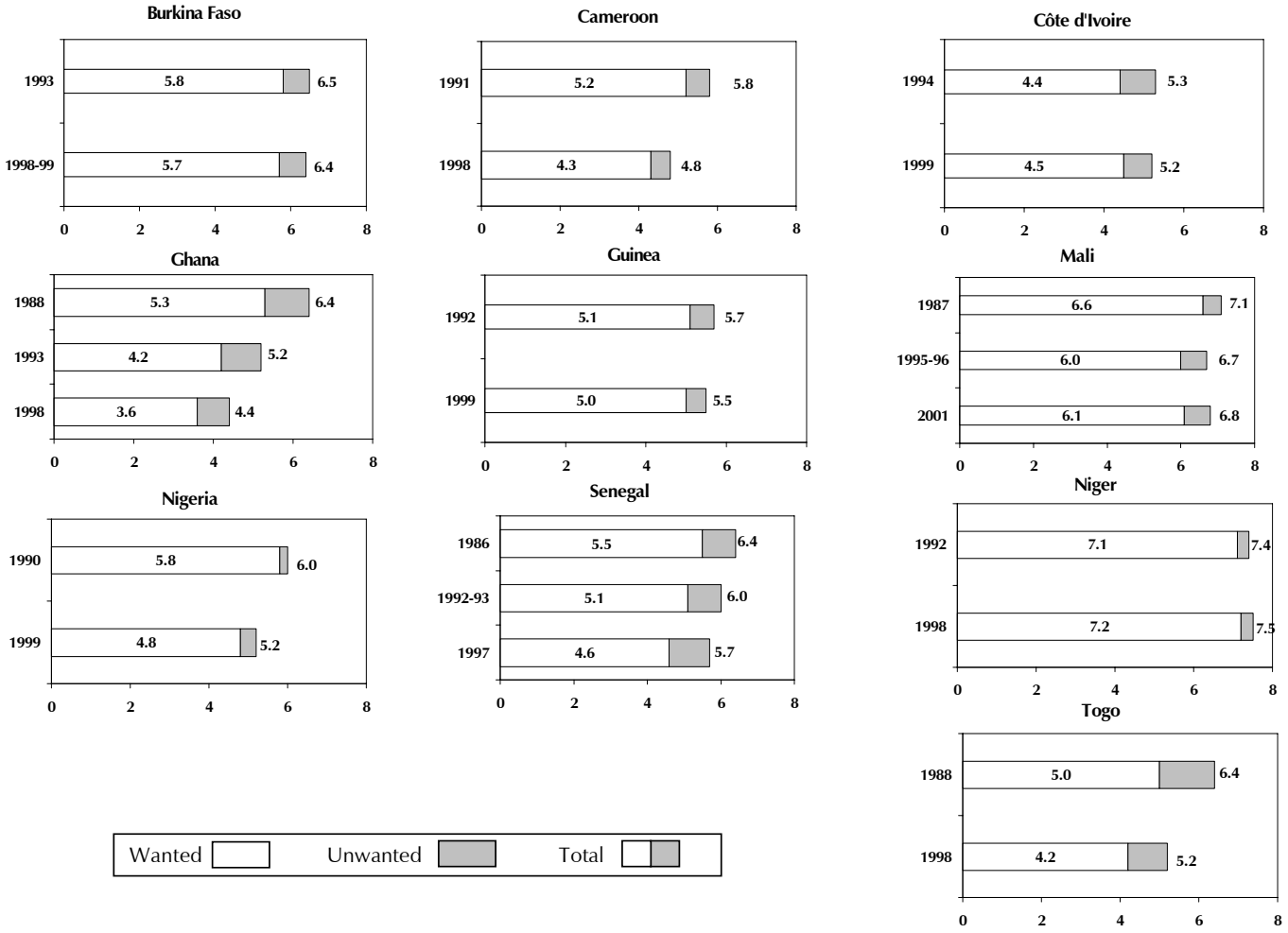


Figure 6.1—Continued

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA

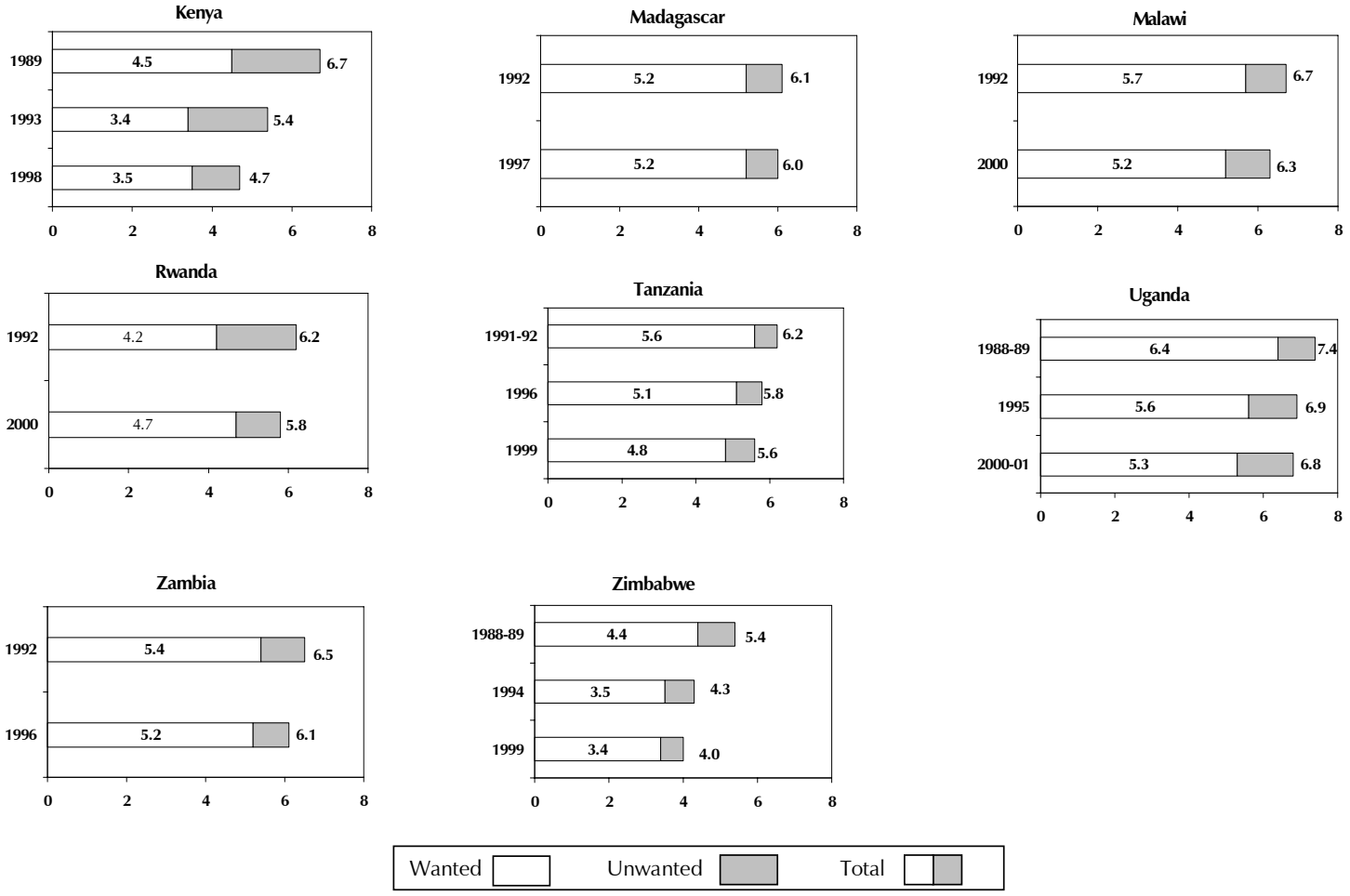


Table 6.1 Declines in the total fertility rate and declines in wanted and unwanted components of fertility, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1986-2001

Years between surveys	Country	Decline		
		Total fertility	Wanted fertility	Unwanted fertility
	ASIA AND NORTHERN AFRICA			
6	Bangladesh	0.1	+ 0.1	0.2
6	India	0.5	0.5	0.0
10	Indonesia	0.3	0.1	0.2
4	Kazakhstan	0.5	0.4	0.1
5	Philippines	0.4	0.2	0.2
11	Egypt	1.2	0.7	0.5
7	Jordan	1.2	1.0	0.2
8	Morocco	1.3	1.1	0.2
5	Turkey	0.1	+ 0.1	0.2
5	Yemen	1.2	1.4	+ 0.3
	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN			
9	Bolivia	0.8	0.2	0.6
10	Brazil	0.9	0.5	0.4
14	Colombia	0.6	0.3	0.3
13	Dominican Republic	1.1	0.6	0.5
12	Guatemala	0.5	0.3	0.2
6	Haiti	0.1	0.3	+ 0.2
14	Peru	1.3	0.5	0.8
	WESTERN AND MIDDLE AFRICA			
6	Burkina Faso	0.1	0.1	0.0
7	Cameroon	1.0	0.9	0.1
5	Côte d'Ivoire	0.1	+ 0.1	0.2
10	Ghana	2.0	1.7	0.3
7	Guinea	0.2	0.1	0.1
6	Mali	+ 0.1	+ 0.1	0.0
6	Niger	+ 0.1	+ 0.1	0.0
9	Nigeria	0.8	1.0	+ 0.2
11	Senegal	0.7	0.9	+ 0.2
10	Togo	1.2	0.8	0.4
	SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA			
9	Kenya	2.0	1.0	1.0
5	Madagascar	0.1	0.0	0.1
8	Malawi	0.4	0.5	+ 0.1
8	Rwanda	0.4	+ 0.5	0.9
7	Tanzania	0.6	0.8	+ 0.2
11	Uganda	0.6	1.1	+ 0.5
5	Zambia	0.4	0.2	0.2
10	Zimbabwe	1.4	1.0	0.4

7 Men's Reproductive Preferences

Reproductive decisionmaking normally involves at least two people—a woman and a man. It is therefore important to consider the fertility motivations and desires of both men and women to gain a clear understanding of the levels as well as the trends of fertility in a given population. Whereas much is known about the fertility desires and behavior of women, much less is known about the preferences and behavior of men. However, in many developing countries, men play significant and often dominant roles in fertility decisionmaking and behavior (Bankole, 1995; Casterline et al., 1997). Moreover, the fertility motivations and behavior of men may be different from those of women (Bankole, 1992; Ezeh et al., 1996). In this section, we document the fertility preferences of men mostly in countries of sub-Saharan Africa and a few countries from other regions, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean. The selection of the countries was determined solely by availability of male data.

8 Ideal Number of Children

The number of children that men want varies widely between countries and between regions of the developing world (Table 8.1). In sub-Saharan Africa, the average number of children desired among married men ranges from 4.3 in Kenya and Rwanda to 15.1 in Chad. With the exception of Kenya, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe, the mean ideal number of children exceeds five children in the sub-Saharan countries included in this analysis. As in Chad, the estimate is higher than ten children in Niger. In contrast, fertility desires are considerably lower in the countries included in this study from other regions. In fact, in none of them is the mean ideal number of children as high as the lowest number found in sub-Saharan Africa; in these countries, the mean ideal number of children varies relatively little, ranging from 2.4 in Bangladesh to 4.2 in Pakistan.[2]

Table 8.1 Mean ideal number of children among currently married men, by number of children, level of education, and type of marriage, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2000

Country	Survey date	All married men	Men with 2 children	Level of education			Type of marriage	
				No education	Primary	Secondary+	Monoga-mous	Polygy-nous
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA								
Benin	1996	8.5	7.3	10.8	6.5	4.6	7.3	11.1
Burkina Faso	1999	7.9	5.8	8.5	6.5	4.2	6.8	10.6
Cameroon	1998	8.7	7.5	13.7	8.7	6.6	7.7	14.0
Central African Republic	1994	9.0	8.0	10.8	9.5	7.0	8.6	12.3
Chad	1996-97	15.1	13.9	17.3	13.2	8.5	13.6	19.9
Comoros	1996	6.4	5.5	7.0	6.5	5.1	6.1	7.9
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	6.9	6.1	8.1	6.2	5.1	6.3	9.5
Ethiopia	2000	7.7	6.2	8.2	7.2	4.6	6.9	15.6
Ghana	1998	5.2	4.4	8.4	5.3	4.4	4.7	8.4
Guinea	1999	8.5	6.7	9.6	7.0	5.7	7.3	10.8
Kenya	1998	4.3	3.6	6.9	4.5	3.8	4.1	6.1
Mali	1995-96	9.2	8.3	10.0	8.0	5.7	8.3	11.9
Mozambique	1997	8.1	6.8	8.3	8.5	5.3	7.6	10.7
Niger	1998	12.3	11.5	13.3	9.6	7.4	11.5	15.3
Nigeria	1999	9.3	8.4	13.1	8.4	7.2	8.7	11.3
Rwanda	1992	4.3	4.0	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.1	5.7
Senegal	1997	9.4	6.6	11.1	7.6	5.4	8.1	12.9
Tanzania	1999	6.3	5.0	9.1	5.9	4.6	6.1	8.8
Togo	1998	6.0	4.9	8.1	5.7	4.6	5.4	8.0
Uganda	1995	6.3	5.4	6.8	6.5	5.2	6.0	7.6
Zambia	1996	6.6	5.1	7.5	7.3	5.7	6.4	9.0
Zimbabwe	1999	4.5	3.5	6.7	5.5	3.8	4.3	7.2
OTHER REGIONS								
Bangladesh	1996-97	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.3	u	u
Bolivia	1998	3.2	2.8	3.8	3.3	3.2	u	u
Brazil	1996	2.9	2.5	3.9	3.0	2.6	u	u
Dominican Republic	1996	3.8	3.7	4.2	3.8	3.5	3.7	4.1
Haiti	1994-95	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.0	u	u
Kazakhstan	1999	3.4	3.2	u	3.8	3.3	u	u
Nicaragua	1998	3.4	2.8	3.9	3.5	3.0	3.4	3.0
Pakistan	1990-91	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.7	3.8	4.2	4.5
Peru	1996	2.8	2.5	3.6	3.2	2.6	u	u
Turkey	1998	2.7	2.4	4.7	2.7	2.6	u	u

Note: Mean ideal number of children is calculated based on men who gave numeric responses.
u = Unknown (not available)

[2] It should be borne in mind that the survey in Pakistan took place about ten years ago and that this statistic is likely to have declined. The next highest mean ideal number of children among men is in the Dominican Republic (3.8).

The negative association between education and fertility preferences among women is well-established (Bankole and Westoff, 1995). This relationship is evident in all countries included in this report. The mean ideal number of children among men also declines with education. The educational difference in fertility preference is greater in sub-Saharan Africa than in the other regions. For example, the mean ideal number of children falls from at least ten among men with no education to less than seven among men with secondary or higher education in Benin, Cameroon, Mali, and Senegal. In the countries of other regions included in this study, the largest difference in the mean ideal number of children by education is found in Turkey where the estimate ranges from 4.7 among men with no education to 2.6 among men with secondary or higher education.

Men in polygynous unions are expected to prefer a greater number of children than their counterparts in monogamous unions since high fertility is believed to be one of the strong motivations for having more than one wife. Table 8.1 supports this assertion. In all of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa included here, polygynous men desire more children than monogamous men. The average difference between men in the two types of marriage ranges from 8.7 children in Ethiopia to 1.6 children in Rwanda and Uganda.

In virtually all countries of sub-Saharan Africa for which data are available, the mean ideal number of children surpasses the mean actual number of children reported by fathers (Table 8.1 and Table 8.2, respectively). In 13 of 19 comparisons, the mean number of children fathered by men lags behind the ideal number of children by more than one child. The reverse is the case for countries in the other regions. In all of the nine comparisons in other regions, men on average have had more children than they consider ideal. This difference exceeds one child in Bangladesh. In many of these countries, the observed difference holds at all levels of education. The difference in the pattern of relationship between ideal and actual number of children in sub-Saharan Africa compared with the other regions is because demand for children is greater in the former (characteristic of countries in the early stage of fertility transition) than the latter (where many countries are already near the end of the transition) (Bongaarts, 1992). Since meeting this demand is often subject to constraints such as the need to space births and the possibility of pregnancy wastage, infertility, and child mortality, it is easier for the actual fertility to lag behind the ideal in a situation where the latter is very high.

The number of children desired by married men tends to decline over time. This pattern is evident in eight of the nine countries for which data are available (Figure 8.1). The only exception is Burkina Faso. The reduction in the mean ideal number of children reported by married men between the earlier and later surveys in these countries is particularly large in Tanzania, Senegal, Kenya, Ghana and Cameroon.

The difference in the number of children that women and men consider ideal varies greatly across regions (Figure 8.2). In all sub-Saharan countries except Rwanda, men want more children on average than women. This is particularly the case in some western and middle African countries such as Benin, Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal, where the difference between the mean ideal number of children for men and women ranges from 2.4 in Mali to 6.6 in Chad. The countries where the difference is not substantial include Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe. Outside of Africa, women and men report similar ideal numbers of children. In virtually all of these countries, the difference between the ideal number of children reported by women and men is less than one child on average.

Table 8.2 Mean number of children fathered by currently married men, by level of education, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2000

Country	Survey date	All married men	Level of education		
			No education	Primary	Secondary+
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA					
Benin	1996	6.8	7.6	6.4	4.5
Burkina Faso	1999	5.9	6.2	4.8	3.7
Cameroon	1998	4.6	6.5	4.2	3.8
Central African Republic	1994	4.8	5.5	4.9	4.2
Chad	1996-97	5.8	6.0	5.7	4.6
Comoros	1996	5.9	7.2	4.6	3.5
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	u	u	u	u
Ethiopia	2000	5.1	5.9	4.1	3.0
Ghana	1998	4.1	5.5	4.2	3.7
Guinea	1999	5.5	6.1	4.6	4.3
Kenya	1998	4.5	6.2	4.9	3.9
Mali	1995-96	5.7	6.2	4.6	4.2
Mozambique	1997	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.0
Niger	1998	6.1	6.6	4.5	3.8
Nigeria	1999	5.9	7.4	5.8	4.5
Rwanda	1992	u	u	u	u
Senegal	1997	u	u	u	u
Tanzania	1991-92	5.3	6.8	4.8	5.1
Togo	1998	5.5	7.0	5.3	4.1
Uganda	1995	5.1	4.9	5.2	4.8
Zambia	1996	4.8	5.0	5.2	4.5
Zimbabwe	1999	3.5	6.4	4.6	2.7
OTHER REGIONS					
Bangladesh	1996-97	3.5	3.7	3.8	2.9
Bolivia	1998	4.1	6.0	5.2	3.3
Brazil	1996	3.1	5.1	3.5	2.2
Dominican Republic	1996	4.0	5.5	4.5	2.5
Haiti	1994-95	4.4	5.2	4.6	2.5
Kazakhstan	1999	2.6	u	2.9	2.4
Nicaragua	1998	4.0	5.3	4.2	3.0
Pakistan	1990-91	u	u	u	u
Peru	1996	3.5	5.1	5.0	2.8
Turkey	1998	3.1	7.0	3.5	2.1

u = Unknown (not available)

Figure 8.1 Trends in mean ideal number of children among currently married men, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1988-1999

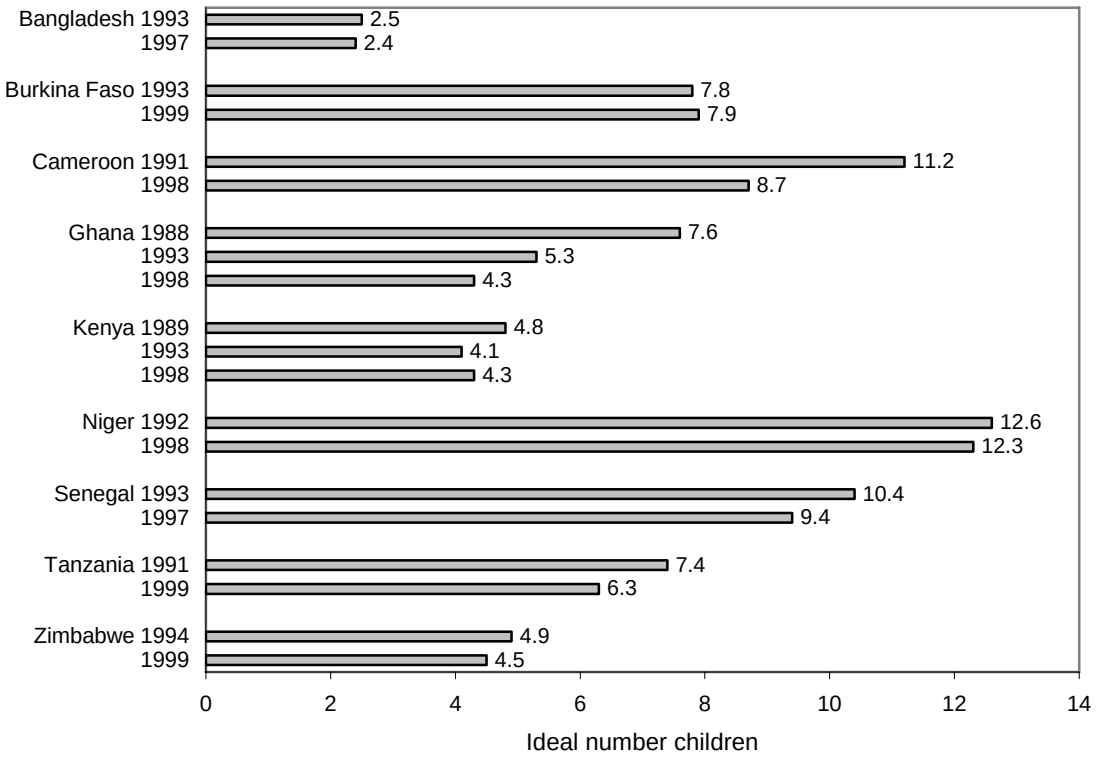
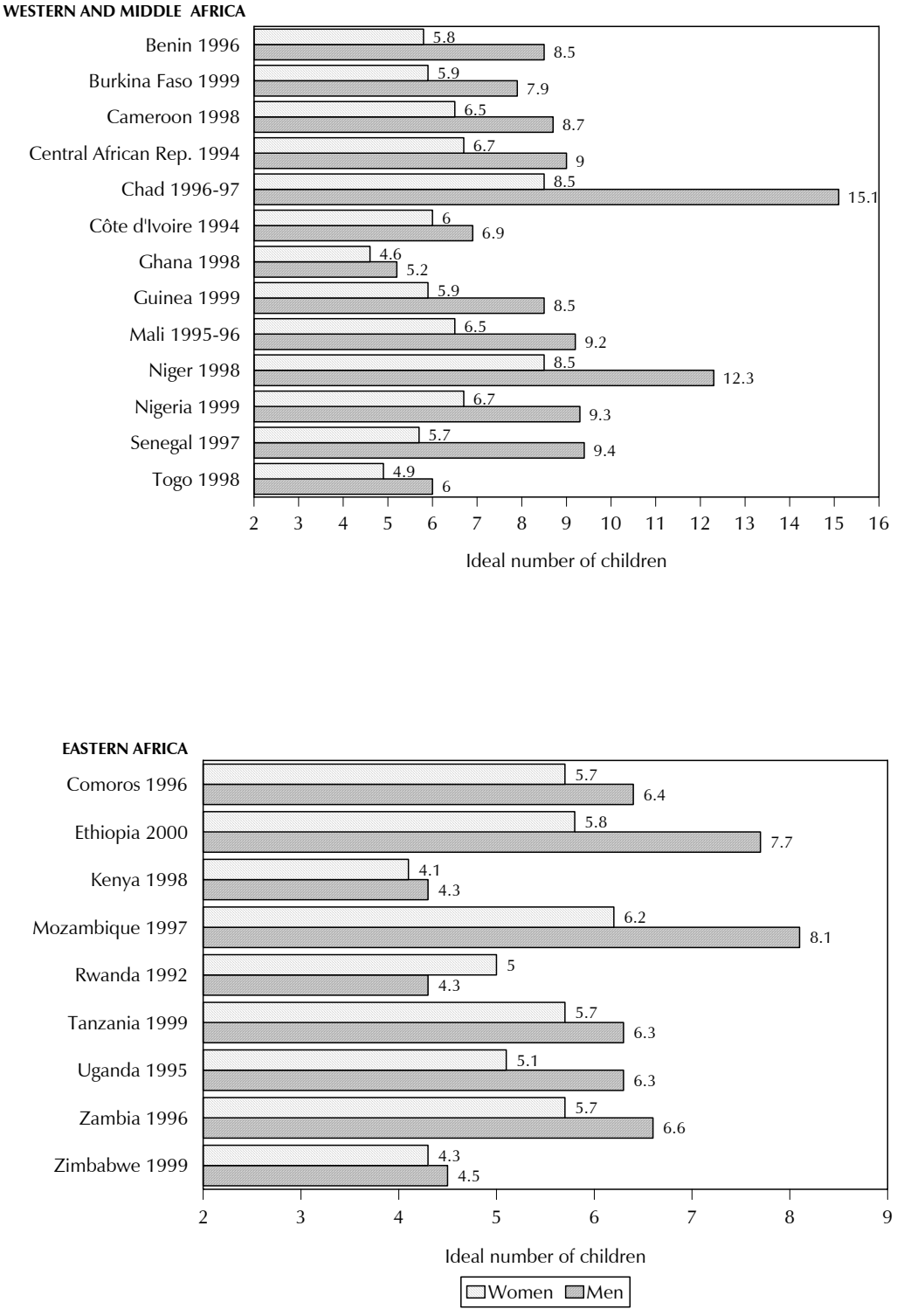
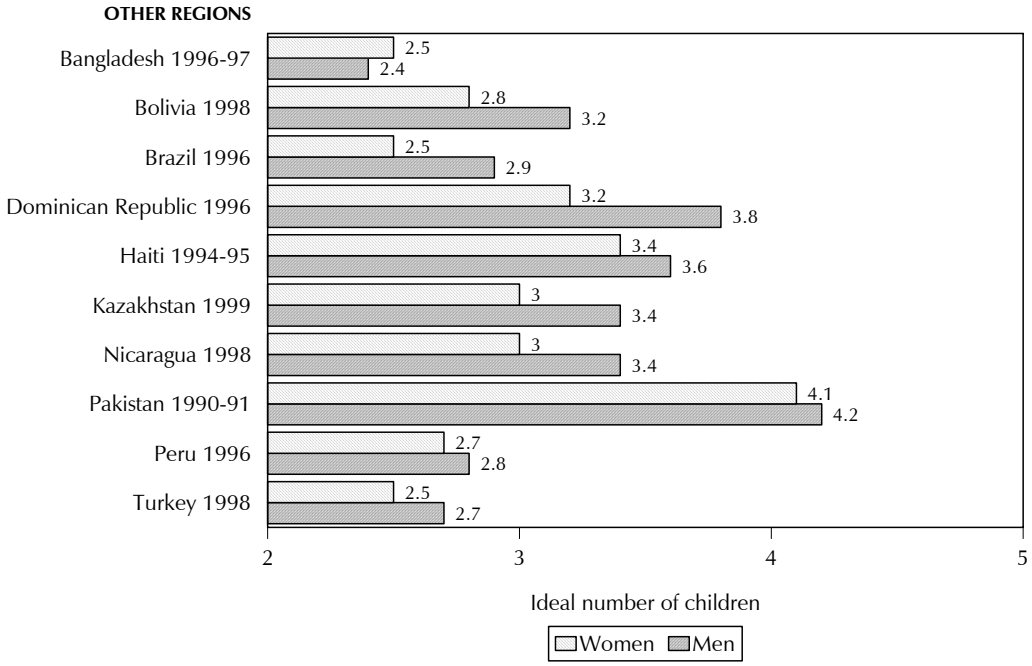


Figure 8.2 Mean number of children considered ideal by women and men, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2000



Note: Based on numeric responses of currently married women and men

Figure 8.2—Continued



Note: Based on numeric responses of currently married women and men

9 Desire for No More Children

The proportion of women of childbearing age who want no more children is an important predictor of fertility levels and trends. At both the individual and aggregate level, this measure has been found to be a robust determinant of future fertility (Bankole and Westoff, 1998; Bongaarts, 1992; Westoff, 1990). In this section, we examine the proportion of men who want to stop having children (Table 9.1). The results indicate that the desire to stop childbearing is dramatically different among countries and regions of the developing world. The proportion who want no more children ranges from 3 percent in Chad to 71 percent in Brazil. As with the ideal number of children, the difference across regions is substantial. In sub-Saharan Africa, this proportion is lowest in Chad and highest in Kenya (46 percent). With the exception of Comoros, Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, the proportion is less than 30 percent in the region. On the other hand, the desire to limit fertility is well established in many of the countries of other regions included in this report. The proportion is greater than 50 percent in all but two (Haiti and Pakistan) of the ten countries. This proportion reaches 70 percent in Bolivia and Brazil.

The proportion of married men who want no more children varies by type of union and the number of living children. In some of the countries (e.g., Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zambia, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Pakistan) men in monogamous unions are more likely to want no more children than men in polygynous unions. The reverse is the case in some other countries, particularly Comoros, Ghana, Senegal, Togo, and Uganda, while there is no appreciable difference in the remaining countries. As would be expected, the proportion of men who want no more children increases as the number of living children increases. For example, in Kenya, it is 21 percent, 39 percent, and 62 percent, respectively, among men with two, three, and four living children. In Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe half of the men with four children want to stop having children. In regions other than sub-Saharan Africa, this proportion exceeds 60 percent in every country except Pakistan.

In six of the nine countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Senegal, and Tanzania), there is evidence of an increase in the proportion of men who want no more children (Figure 9.1). The three countries with no observable upward trend are Bangladesh, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

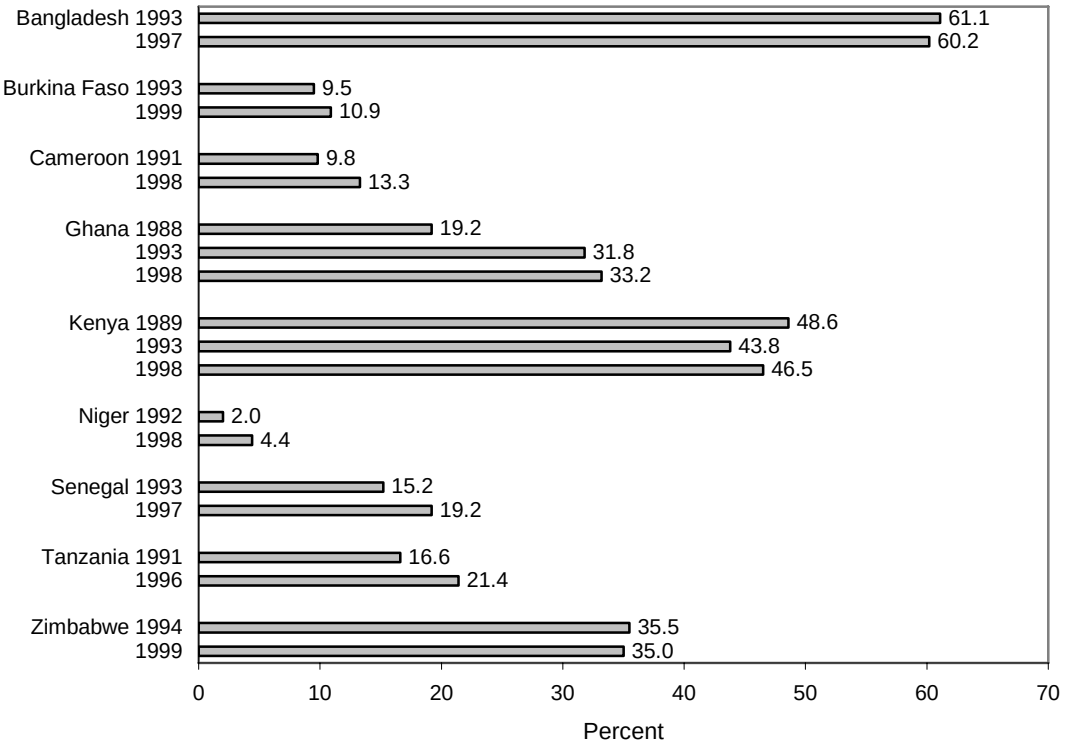
In most of the countries considered here, women are more likely to want to stop childbearing than men (Tables 2.1 and 9.1). The pattern is similar to the gender difference in the ideal number of children discussed above. Whereas the difference is negligible in some of the countries, it is fairly substantial in others. For example, the difference is more than 5 percentage points in 14 of the 29 countries included in the analysis and is at least 10 percentage points in Chad, Guinea, Haiti, Mali, Senegal, and Uganda.

Table 9.1 Percentage of currently married men who want no more children by type of marriage and number of living children, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2000

Country	Survey date	All married men	Type of marriage: Monoga-mous	Type of marriage: Polygy-nous	Number of living children: 2	Number of living children: 3	Number of living children: 4
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA							
Benin	1996	19.5	20.0	18.4	7.4	8.6	21.0
Burkina Faso	1999	10.6	10.6	10.3	2.8	6.3	10.5
Cameroon	1998	12.9	13.8	8.9	6.0	9.4	17.5
Central African Rep.	1994	11.1	11.5	8.1	4.2	3.4	9.4
Chad	1996-97	2.9	3.0	2.4	1.0	1.4	1.4
Comoros	1996	30.9	30.3	33.8	7.0	25.0	25.6
Ethiopia	2000	25.2	26.3	14.2	9.4	17.8	22.5
Ghana	1998	32.4	31.3	39.3	17.4	34.3	51.1
Guinea	1999	7.9	7.4	9.0	2.5	6.6	6.3
Kenya	1998	45.5	45.5	45.5	21.1	39.3	61.6
Mali	1995-96	7.3	7.4	7.1	3.2	4.6	7.1
Mozambique	1997	12.7	13.5	8.8	2.1	7.5	15.0
Niger	1998	4.2	4.3	3.8	2.8	2.6	4.4
Nigeria	1999	18.8	18.7	19.0	4.8	11.1	21.2
Senegal	1997	8.9	7.5	11.6	1.2	5.8	8.2
Tanzania	1991-92	16.4	16.1	18.2	9.5	5.9	12.5
Togo	1998	26.3	24.7	31.2	13.9	15.0	27.1
Uganda	1995	22.8	21.4	30.6	8.3	8.3	23.0
Zambia	1996	21.2	21.9	13.7	7.4	10.1	18.6
Zimbabwe	1999	34.1	34.1	33.9	28.8	38.9	50.2
OTHER REGIONS							
Bangladesh	1996-97	58.2	u	u	63.9	87.0	86.9
Bolivia	1998	70.4	u	u	60.9	78.4	81.7
Brazil	1996	71.1	u	u	77.8	87.3	91.3
Dominican Republic	1996	61.4	62.0	53.2	50.1	67.4	80.7
Haiti	1994-95	42.0	u	u	24.2	48.5	63.3
Kazakhstan	1999	58.8	u	u	70.0	61.0	66.5
Nicaragua	1998	57.1	57.5	52.1	46.9	63.9	71.2
Pakistan	1990-91	32.8	33.2	24.2	16.7	23.7	31.2
Peru	1996	67.9	u	u	64.4	87.0	88.5
Turkey	1998	66.3	u	u	78.8	86.4	90.1

Note: Women who are sterilized (or whose husbands are sterilized) are regarded as wanting no more children.
u = Unknown (not available)

Figure 9.1 Trends in percentage of currently married men who want no more children, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1988-1999



10 Planning Status of the Last Birth Among Men and Couples

In DHS surveys, men were asked to recall their fertility intention before the birth of their last child.[3] In most of the 22 countries for which data are available, the overwhelming majority of men reported that the child was wanted at the time of the birth (Table 10.1). That proportion ranges from 51 percent in Peru to 96 percent in Mali and Guinea and is at least two-thirds in 20 of the 22 countries. In general, unintended fertility (the sum of births wanted later and those unwanted) is lower in sub-Saharan Africa than in other regions. This proportion is less than 20 percent in 11 of the 15 sub-Saharan countries but in only two of the seven countries (the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua) outside of sub-Saharan Africa. The proportion of unwanted births is particularly high in Bolivia and Peru. The difference between sub-Saharan Africa and the other regions can be explained partly by the relationship between the ideal and actual number of children discussed in the previous section. Men in regions other than sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to have realized their desired number of children than men in sub-Saharan Africa.

Most couples in monogamous unions reported their last birth as wanted (Table 10.2), averaging 90 percent in the sub-Saharan countries and 73 percent in the other regions. The consensus of spouses

[3] In some countries, this is defined as the last birth in the last five years, while it is the last birth in the last three years in others.

that the last birth was wanted was lowest in Peru (53 percent) and Bolivia (58 percent). Disagreement between husbands and wives almost invariably takes the form of the husband reporting the birth as wanted and the wife saying that it was unwanted.

Table 10.1 Percent distribution of last births by planning status among currently married men, Demographic and Health Surveys 1994-1999

Country	Survey date	Planning status at conception: Wanted then	Wanted later	Wanted no more children	Total
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA					
Benin	1996	91.0	6.0	3.0	100.0
Cameroon	1998	94.4	4.7	1.0	100.0
Central African Republic	1994	88.1	9.8	2.2	100.0
Chad	1996-97	93.6	5.8	0.6	100.0
Comoros	1996	72.2	20.3	7.5	100.0
Ghana	1998	71.9	20.6	7.5	100.0
Guinea	1999	95.7	3.1	1.3	100.0
Kenya	1998	79.9	12.0	8.1	100.0
Mali	1995-96	96.3	2.7	0.9	100.0
Mozambique	1997	80.2	16.2	3.7	100.0
Niger	1998	94.9	4.8	0.4	100.0
Nigeria	1999	86.5	10.4	3.1	100.0
Togo	1998	80.6	15.2	4.2	100.0
Zambia	1996	85.1	11.6	3.3	100.0
Zimbabwe	1994	76.8	15.7	7.5	100.0
OTHER REGIONS					
Bangladesh	1996-97	72.5	16.3	11.2	100.0
Bolivia	1998	60.5	14.9	24.5	100.0
Brazil	1996	70.1	19.1	10.8	100.0
Dominican Republic	1996	80.2	14.7	5.2	100.0
Nicaragua	1998	83.8	11.9	4.4	100.0
Peru	1996	50.8	15.4	33.8	100.0
Turkey	1998	79.3	7.7	13.1	100.0

Table 10.2 Percent distribution of monogamous couples by planning status of their last birth, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1994-2000

Country	Survey date	Both wanted child	Neither wanted child	Only husband wanted child	Only wife wanted child	Total
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA						
Benin	1996	91.9	0.9	5.2	2.0	100.0
Burkina Faso	1999	89.2	0.1	1.4	0.4	100.0
Cameroon	1998	93.8	0.5	5.2	0.5	100.0
Central African Republic	1994	90.1	0.8	7.4	1.7	100.0
Chad	1996-97	98.6	0.0	1.1	0.3	100.0
Comoros	1996	77.6	3.5	15.4	3.5	100.0
Ethiopia	2000	78.9	4.4	13.3	3.4	100.0
Ghana	1998	88.3	2.9	4.5	4.3	100.0
Guinea	1999	96.3	0.2	2.5	1.0	100.0
Kenya	1998	82.5	2.1	10.3	5.1	100.0
Mozambique	1997	94.7	0.2	2.5	2.6	100.0
Niger	1998	98.6	0.0	0.8	0.6	100.0
Nigeria	1999	96.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	100.0
Togo	1998	90.7	0.7	5.7	3.0	100.0
Zambia	1996	88.3	0.6	8.5	2.7	100.0
OTHER REGIONS						
Bangladesh	1996-97	80.7	4.5	8.5	6.3	100.0
Bolivia	1998	58.4	14.3	18.5	8.9	100.0
Brazil	1996	70.9	4.2	18.6	6.3	100.0
Dominican Republic	1996	83.7	1.0	11.7	3.6	100.0
Nicaragua	1998	80.5	1.4	15.5	2.6	100.0
Peru	1996	53.4	19.1	16.4	11.1	100.0
Turkey	1998	82.1	0.0	11.3	6.5	100.0

11 Couples' Reproductive Preferences

Wives and husbands frequently have different reproductive preferences. The literature suggests that men tend to be more pronatalist than women (Bankole, 1995; Bankole and Singh, 1998). In this section, we examine the reported ideal number of children and fertility desires of married couples. The patterns observed in all but four of the 31 countries for which data are available indicate that the mean ideal number of children is higher for husbands than for wives (Table 11.1). However, this is much more evident in sub-Saharan Africa than in the other regions. The difference between the average number of children desired by husbands and wives in sub-Saharan Africa ranges from 0 in Rwanda to 7.3 in Chad. The difference is more than one child on average in 13 of the 21 sub-Saharan countries as noted earlier in the comparison of men and women in general. In western and middle Africa, the average difference is much greater (3.3) than in southern and eastern Africa (0.9). On the other hand, in countries from other regions included in this analysis, the difference between the mean ideal number of children for husbands and wives is negligible in all countries (0 to 0.5).

Polygyny has a major influence on husbands' and wives' ideal number of children in sub-Saharan Africa. The proportion of polygynous marriages in that region ranges from 10 percent in Ghana and Zambia to almost 50 percent in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal (see last column of Table 11.1). Husbands in polygynous marriages report an ideal number of children that is about five children greater than the number reported by their wives. In contrast, husbands in monogamous marriages want an average of only 1.4 children more than their wives. The difference in reproductive preferences between the two types of marriage is due to polygynous husbands wanting substantially more children than their wives.

Table 11.1 Mean ideal number of children for husbands and wives, by type of marriage, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2000

Country	Survey date	All couples			Monogamous couples			Polygynous couples			Percentage of marriages that are polygynous
		Husband (1)	Wife (2)	Difference (1) – (2)	Husband (1)	Wife (2)	Difference (1) – (2)	Husband (1)	Wife (2)	Difference (1) – (2)	
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA											
Benin	1996	10.1	5.8	4.3	7.5	5.7	1.8	13.0	5.9	7.1	47.8
Burkina Faso	1999	8.8	5.9	2.9	6.9	5.7	1.2	11.1	6.0	5.1	49.9
Cameroon	1998	9.8	6.8	3.0	8.0	6.5	1.5	15.6	7.7	7.9	29.4
Central African Republic	1994	9.5	6.9	2.6	8.6	6.7	1.9	12.7	7.5	5.2	22.7
Chad	1996-97	16.0	8.7	7.3	13.5	8.7	4.8	21.0	8.8	12.2	37.1
Comoros	1996	6.4	5.5	0.9	6.0	5.6	0.4	8.1	5.3	2.8	19.0
Côte d'Ivoire	1994	7.3	6.2	1.1	6.3	6.0	0.3	9.9	6.5	3.4	49.3
Ethiopia	2000	7.7	5.8	1.9	6.9	5.6	1.3	15.3	7.4	7.9	29.1
Ghana	1998	5.8	4.8	1.0	5.0	4.7	0.3	9.8	5.4	4.4	9.9
Guinea	1999	9.5	6.0	3.5	7.6	5.7	1.9	11.5	6.3	5.2	16.8
Kenya	1998	4.5	4.1	0.4	4.2	4.0	0.2	6.6	4.8	1.8	11.3
Mozambique	1997	8.4	6.1	2.3	7.8	6.1	1.7	10.3	6.2	4.1	23.3
Niger	1998	13.0	8.5	4.5	11.7	8.4	3.3	15.6	8.6	7.0	37.4
Nigeria	1999	10.1	6.8	3.3	8.9	6.5	2.4	12.6	7.3	5.3	35.8
Rwanda	1992	4.3	4.4	-0.1	4.1	4.4	-0.3	5.7	4.5	1.2	10.9
Senegal	1997	10.0	5.7	4.3	8.0	5.6	2.4	13.1	5.9	7.2	46.7
Tanzania	1999	6.5	5.6	0.9	6.2	5.5	0.7	8.6	6.0	2.6	13.9
Togo	1998	6.7	5.0	1.7	5.5	4.9	0.6	8.8	5.3	3.5	38.7
Uganda	1995	6.3	5.7	0.6	6.1	5.7	0.4	7.5	5.8	1.7	18.1
Zambia	1996	6.6	5.6	1.0	6.3	5.5	0.8	9.3	6.6	2.7	10.3
Zimbabwe	1999	4.9	4.1	0.8	4.4	4.1	0.3	8.2	4.4	3.8	12.0
OTHER REGIONS											
Bangladesh	1996-97	2.4	2.5	-0.1	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Bolivia	1998	3.2	2.8	0.4	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Brazil	1996	2.9	2.6	0.3	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Dominican Republic	1996	3.8	3.4	0.4	3.7	3.4	0.3	4.1	3.1	1.0	6.3
Haiti	1994-95	3.7	3.7	0.0	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Kazakhstan	1999	3.4	2.9	0.5	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Nicaragua	1998	3.4	3.1	0.3	3.4	3.1	0.3	3.0	2.8	0.2	6.7
Pakistan	1990-91	4.2	4.2	0.0	4.2	4.2	0.0	4.5	5.1	-0.6	4.5
Peru	1996	2.8	2.6	0.2	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Turkey	1998	2.7	2.5	0.2	u	u	u	u	u	u	u

u = Unknown (not available)

12 Couples' Fertility Desires

There are substantial differences in the fertility desires of married couples across countries and regions (Table 12.1). In sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of Kenya and Zimbabwe, the majority of couples want more children. This proportion ranges from 39 percent in Kenya to 90 percent in Niger and exceeds two-thirds in 10 of the 18 sub-Saharan countries examined. On the other hand, the proportion of couples who want more children is much lower in the countries of the other regions included in this analysis. It is lowest in Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru and highest in Pakistan (50 percent).

The proportion of couples in which both spouses want to stop having children ranges from 1 percent in Chad and Niger to 69 percent in Brazil. Consistent with the pattern of the ideal number of children among couples, husbands are more likely than wives to want more children. In every country, couples in which the wife wants to stop childbearing while the husband wants more children are more numerous than the opposite combination.

Spouses in polygynous unions are typically less likely to agree to want no more children than those in monogamous unions in most of the countries for which data are available (Table 12.1). When spouses disagree, the husband is less likely to want no more children than the wife in both types of union. However, in some of the countries, the difference between the proportion of couples in which the husband wants no more children and the proportion in which the wife wants no more children is greater in polygynous unions than in monogamous unions.

Disagreement between marital partners about future fertility is substantial in some countries. With the exception of Niger, the proportion of couples in which one spouse wants more children and the other does not is greater than 10 percent in the countries included in this analysis. In 13 of the 28 countries, this proportion exceeds 20 percent. Disagreement is greater between partners in polygynous unions than those in monogamous unions in most of the countries.

Table 12.1 Percent distribution of fertility desires of couples by type of marriage, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-2000

Country	Survey date	All couples				Monogamous couples				Polygynous couples			
		Both want more children	Both want no more children	Only husband wants no more children	Only wife wants no more children	Both want more children	Both want no more children	Only husband wants no more children	Only wife wants no more children	Both want more children	Both want no more children	Only husband wants no more children	Only wife wants no more children
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA													
Benin	1996	71.5	11.1	6.0	11.4	72.7	12.9	5.9	8.5	70.1	9.1	6.1	14.7
Burkina Faso	1999	79.0	5.3	4.0	11.8	80.1	7.0	3.2	9.8	77.9	3.6	4.7	13.8
Cameroon	1998	77.1	6.6	5.5	10.8	75.7	8.0	6.0	10.3	80.7	3.1	4.2	12.0
Central African Republic	1994	81.6	4.8	4.0	9.7	81.5	5.5	3.5	9.5	81.8	2.2	5.8	10.2
Chad	1996-97	88.7	1.2	1.4	8.7	89.9	1.6	1.5	7.1	86.7	0.6	1.3	11.4
Comoros	1996	53.9	21.9	11.6	12.6	55.0	21.9	11.2	12.0	49.2	22.0	13.6	15.3
Ethiopia	2000	59.3	16.8	7.9	16.1	58.7	17.2	8.1	16.0	65.2	12.6	5.3	17.0
Ghana	1998	58.4	25.2	7.3	9.0	57.6	25.9	7.6	9.0	62.6	21.6	6.3	9.5
Guinea	1999	77.5	3.6	4.1	14.8	80.6	3.4	4.1	12.0	74.3	3.8	4.1	17.9
Kenya	1998	39.1	37.2	6.5	17.2	38.6	38.6	5.7	17.1	43.0	26.6	11.0	17.5
Mozambique	1997	76.0	8.7	4.1	11.3	76.6	9.6	4.3	9.6	74.0	5.7	3.6	16.7
Niger	1998	89.8	1.3	2.6	6.4	90.6	1.6	2.4	5.4	88.4	0.7	3.0	8.0
Nigeria	1999	73.7	9.8	7.0	9.5	74.1	11.0	6.7	8.2	73.0	7.6	7.6	11.8
Senegal	1997	70.1	5.8	2.9	21.1	73.8	5.6	2.7	18.0	65.8	6.1	3.2	24.9
Togo	1998	63.9	15.9	8.3	11.9	65.9	16.3	7.5	10.3	60.8	15.2	9.6	14.4
Uganda	1995	60.6	15.0	7.6	16.7	61.7	15.2	6.6	16.6	56.0	14.1	12.4	17.5
Zambia	1996	66.7	16.2	4.1	13.0	65.9	17.2	4.1	12.7	73.8	6.9	4.2	15.1
Zimbabwe	1999	49.9	23.0	10.4	16.7	50.0	24.7	8.7	16.7	49.4	10.7	23.5	16.5
OTHER REGIONS													
Bangladesh	1996-97	32.0	53.5	6.6	7.9	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Bolivia	1998	19.3	60.2	8.3	12.3	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Brazil	1996	18.7	69.2	3.8	8.4	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Dominican Republic	1996	27.7	57.5	4.6	10.3	27.5	58.5	4.3	9.8	30.5	43.3	8.0	18.2
Haiti	1994-95	31.8	38.6	8.2	21.5	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Kazakhstan	1999	29.4	50.3	7.7	12.6	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Nicaragua	1998	26.2	49.3	7.2	17.2	25.9	50.0	7.1	17.0	30.9	39.5	8.7	20.9
Pakistan	1990-91	49.7	26.8	7.1	16.4	48.8	27.3	7.2	16.7	69.3	15.0	5.0	10.7
Peru	1996	19.0	60.3	9.3	11.3	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u
Turkey	1998	23.5	60.5	6.8	9.1	u	u	u	u	u	u	u	u

u = Unknown (not available)

13 Summary and Conclusions

This report reviews the reproductive attitudes of women and men in as many as 56 countries of the developing world in the last decade of the twentieth century. The focus is on the average number of children considered ideal, the proportion who want no more children, and the proportion of wanted and unwanted births. The DHS program has now conducted repeat surveys in many of these countries, which permits analysis of trends in reproductive preferences.

One of the most striking and persistent contrasts is between these attitudes in sub-Saharan Africa and other regions of the developing world, which mirrors the well-known differences in the comparative pace of the fertility transition. However, there is considerable diversity in each region, which reflects differences in social and economic development. It is clear that preferences for fewer children generally distinguish southern and eastern Africa from western and middle Africa. Significant increases in the desire to stop having children are evident in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, as well as in South Africa, which shows the highest proportion of women who want no more children and the lowest ideal number of children (3.3).

Continuing declines in the number of children desired are evident in other regions of the developing world and are reflected in declines in actual fertility. Dramatic declines in both wanted and unwanted fertility over short periods of time are documented for Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. In both Guatemala and Haiti, there are also indications of declines in the number of children desired but little evidence in Haiti that fertility itself has yet been affected. In general in Latin America, the fertility decline features reductions in both the wanted and unwanted components, while in Asia the recent declines, for example, in India, seem mainly concentrated in the number of children wanted. Similar changes have occurred in Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen.

The inclusion of men in the DHS program, mainly in the sub-Saharan countries, has provided the opportunity to compare men's and women's attitudes toward family size, as well as those of husbands and wives. Men clearly prefer more children than women do, especially in western and middle Africa, although in eight of nine countries in which trends can be assessed, the number desired is also declining among men. The association of polygyny in Africa with reproductive attitudes reveals that men in such marriages are much more likely to prefer high fertility. In the few countries in Asia and Latin America where surveys of men have been conducted, men in general also tend to prefer more children than women, but the differences are smaller.

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