

2 Background Characteristics

Table 2.1 shows the distribution of currently married male respondents by selected background characteristics. The male samples in West Africa are generally older than those in other regions. In the West African surveys, the mean age of currently married men ranges from 38 years in the 1993 Ghana survey to 48 years in Senegal. In contrast, the mean age for the East African surveys falls between 36 and 39 years with the exception of the 1989 Kenyan survey, which has a mean age of 42 years. In North Africa and Asia, the mean age ranges from 38 years in Pakistan to 43 years in Morocco. Surveys which placed an upper age limit on male respondents generally have lower mean ages than those without this restriction. While most surveys did not set a lower age limit for respondents, only 1 percent or fewer of the respondents are under age 20 suggesting a smaller proportion of men marry before age 20 in these countries. Therefore, this analysis combines the youngest respondents with the age group 20-29. While the varying age limits imposed by the surveys affect the number and proportion of men in each age group, they do not influence the distribution of reproductive preferences and behaviors within age groups. Therefore, although the age distributions of men are not comparable across surveys, the preferences and behaviors of men in the same age group can be compared across countries.

The proportion of men residing in urban areas varies widely both within and across regions (Table 2.1). In West Africa, it ranges from 15 percent in Burkina Faso and Niger to 37 percent in Cameroon; in East Africa, from 3 percent in Burundi to 25 percent in Tanzania; in North Africa, from 45 percent in Morocco to 46 percent in Egypt; and in Asia, from 12 percent in Bangladesh to 32 percent in Pakistan. While differences by residence are meaningful in intra-country analyses, they are less useful in explaining differences between countries because each country defines urban areas differently. Urban-rural disparities in dependent variables, such as fertility preferences, may be affected by these country-specific definitions of urban areas. Despite the different criteria used to define urban areas in each country, rural-urban differences within countries do provide useful insights.

As Figure 2.1 shows, the respondents' level of education also varies within and across regions. In most countries of West Africa, about 80 percent or more of the men have no formal education, but this proportion is far lower in

Ghana (29 percent in the 1993 survey) and Cameroon (43 percent). Educational levels are generally higher in East Africa, where the proportion of men with no schooling ranges from 10 percent in Kenya to 30 percent in Rwanda. Although 58 percent of the men in Burundi have no formal education, this figure is not directly comparable to the others because the information was reported by their wives. Of the countries surveyed in North Africa and Asia, educational levels are highest in Egypt, where 29 percent of the men report no education; in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Morocco, 42 percent, 50 percent, and 63 percent of the men, respectively, never attended school. In most countries, relatively few of the men who attended primary school continued on to secondary school or beyond. In Rwanda, for example, 92 percent of men with a formal education attended only primary school; only 8 percent went on to secondary school or beyond. Egypt and Pakistan are the only exceptions where a majority of those with some formal schooling continue beyond the primary level. Cameroon, Ghana, and Kenya show the highest levels of secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.2 show great regional variation in levels of polygyny. Between one-quarter and one-third of the men in West Africa are polygynously married, with the exception of the 1993 Ghana survey in which only 15 percent of male respondents reported a polygynous union. Levels of polygyny are much lower in East Africa than in West Africa. Only about 10 percent of the men are polygynously married in the East African countries, with the exception of Tanzania, where 16 percent of the men are in a polygynous union. Polygyny is even less common in North Africa and Asia; only 1 to 4 percent of the men in these countries are in polygynous unions. Thus, the lowest level of polygyny observed in sub-Saharan Africa is more than double the highest level recorded in North Africa and Asia.

Fertility is high among male respondents: in every country but Bangladesh, the largest segment of currently married men report having five or more children (Table 2.1). The proportion of men with no children ranges from as little as 2 percent in the 1989 Kenya survey to 26 percent in Burundi, while the proportion of men with five or more children ranges from 26 percent in Bangladesh to 59 percent in the 1989 Kenya survey. About half the men in West Africa have five or more children, with the exception of the Ghana (1993) and Niger where approximately one-third

Table 2.1 Background characteristics of male respondents

Percentage of currently married men by age, residence, education, type of union and number of children, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993

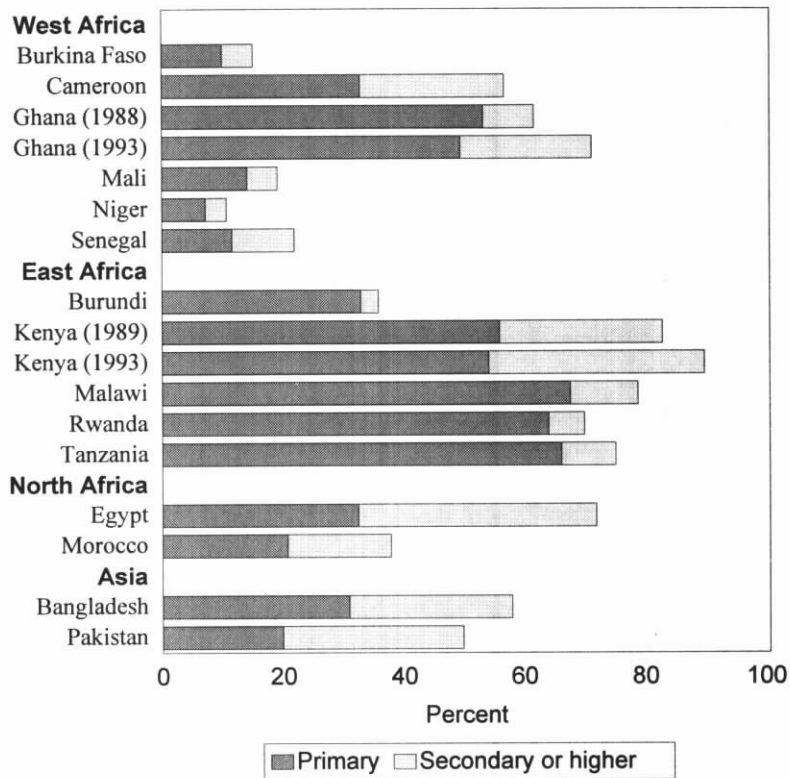
Country	Age group						Mean age	Residence		Education			Type of union		Number of children				Mean children	Total	Number
	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		Urban	Rural	None	Primary	Secondary or higher	Monogamy	Polygyny	0	1-2	3-4	5+			
West Africa																					
Burkina Faso	0.0	17.7	24.5	17.8	17.7	22.2	45.6	15.0	85.0	84.9	10.0	5.1	65.0	34.9	8.3	24.4	21.8	45.4	5.3	100.0	1346
Cameroon	1.0	16.2	30.2	25.6	17.9	9.1	41.5	37.1	62.9	43.3	32.8	23.9	74.2	25.8	6.4	24.1	22.6	46.8	5.1	100.0	814
Ghana (1988)	0.6	16.6	32.4	27.9	14.7	7.6	40.7	24.0	76.0	38.4	53.2	8.4	74.4	25.6	4.9	23.3	26.2	45.6	5.0	100.0	943
Ghana (1993)	0.5	20.4	37.8	22.4	18.8	NA	38.2	33.2	66.8	28.8	49.4	21.8	85.0	14.8	8.1	30.0	29.4	32.4	3.8	100.0	749
Mali	NA	15.1	34.7	35.5	14.7	NA	39.4	24.1	75.9	80.8	14.1	5.0	68.8	31.2	6.1	24.0	19.9	50.0	5.2	100.0	764
Niger	0.6	19.9	29.1	25.0	17.6	7.8	40.4	14.8	85.2	89.3	7.2	3.5	76.5	23.5	10.6	27.5	25.1	36.9	4.1	100.0	1570
Senegal	NA	8.6	25.0	25.0	17.6	23.8	47.9	35.0	65.0	78.1	11.6	10.3	62.4	37.5	6.4	20.8	19.4	53.1	5.6	100.0	941
East Africa																					
Burundi ^a	NA	29.7	36.6	18.9	7.3	7.5	37.4	3.0	97.0	58.3	29.9	2.6	89.6	10.4	26.3	21.8	24.5	27.4	3.1	100.0	542
Kenya (1989)	0.1	12.8	32.7	28.6	18.0	7.8	42.1	13.4	86.6	17.2	55.9	27.0	79.3	20.5	1.7	15.6	23.9	58.5	6.1	100.0	1170
Kenya (1993) ^b	NA	21.5	39.5	29.8	9.2	NA	37.0	23.6	76.4	10.2	54.1	35.7	88.3	11.6	5.7	23.9	24.0	46.3	4.7	100.0	1664
Malawi ^c	NA	30.5	31.9	26.7	10.9	NA	36.0	U	U	21.2	67.6	11.2	90.9	9.0	8.7	31.9	26.6	32.8	3.7	100.0	866
Rwanda	0.7	22.4	39.2	23.3	8.4	5.9	38.1	4.3	95.7	30.0	64.0	5.9	89.1	10.9	5.3	26.6	25.2	42.8	4.6	100.0	598
Tanzania	0.7	22.7	32.2	23.8	19.0	1.5	38.6	25.4	74.6	24.9	66.1	9.0	83.8	16.1	8.1	27.8	25.2	39.0	4.3	100.0	1184
North Africa																					
Egypt	0.3	14.9	35.1	30.7	14.9	4.2	40.2	45.8	54.2	28.2	32.4	39.5	97.8	2.2	8.1	28.1	30.6	33.2	3.6	100.0	2311
Morocco	NA	10.2	34.2	27.0	19.2	9.4	42.7	44.5	55.5	62.6	20.7	17.1	95.0	3.6	9.5	21.7	23.9	45.0	4.5	100.0	939
Asia																					
Bangladesh	0.6	19.1	36.9	22.4	15.8	5.3	39.3	11.5	88.5	42.2	30.9	27.0	98.8	1.2	9.2	34.0	30.8	26.0	3.2	100.0	3284
Pakistan	0.6	23.3	34.6	24.3	14.3	3.0	38.0	31.9	68.1	50.2	19.9	29.9	95.7	3.9	11.7	21.1	30.6	36.4	3.8	100.0	1354

NA = Not applicable

U = Unknown (not available)

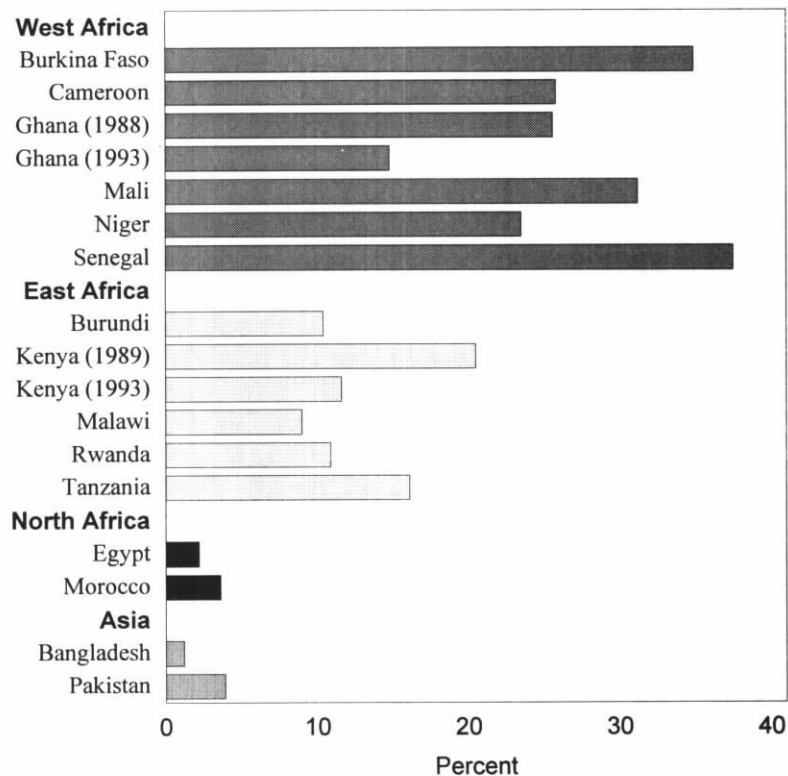
^a Information on husbands' education was collected in the female questionnaire^b The age group 50-59 includes only men aged 50-54^c Information on rural/urban differences not available

Figure 2.1 Level of education among currently married men, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993



Note: In Burundi, estimates of male education are based on the wife's report of her husband's education

Figure 2.2 Polygyny among currently married men, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993



report having five children or more. The mean number of children varies by region. In West Africa, it ranges from 3.8 in the 1993 Ghana survey to 5.6 in Senegal; in East Africa, from 3.1 in Burundi to 6.1 in the 1989 Kenya survey; in North Africa, from 3.6 in Egypt to 4.5 in Morocco; and in Asia, from 3.2 in Bangladesh to 3.8 in Pakistan. The prevalence of polygyny affects the mean number of children: in every country with a mean of five or more children, at least 25 percent of the men are polygynously married. As noted earlier, comparisons between countries may be suspect because some surveys do not specify whether the number of children refers to surviving children or children ever born.

Differences in the surveys' age limits affect the mean age of the respondents, the proportion who are polygynous, and the mean number of surviving children. All these measures increase with age, so that their values generally will be higher in countries without upper age limits on respondents. This is particularly true for Burkina Faso and Senegal where more than one-fifth of the respondents are age 60 years and older. When the sample in Senegal is restricted to men age 20 to 54, the size of the sample is reduced from 941 to 623 currently married men, the mean age falls from 48 years to 39 years, polygyny levels decrease from 38 to 28 percent, and the mean number of surviving children decreases from 5.6 to 4.3. For most countries, however, the impact of age

limits is far smaller, because less than 10 percent of respondents are age 60 and over. In Ghana and Kenya, for example, where age limits were imposed on respondents in the second but not in the first male survey, restricting the sample in the earlier survey to match the age limits of the later survey has little impact on aggregate estimates. In Ghana, for example, placing age limits on the 1988 sample reduces mean age by two years (from 41 to 39 years), mean surviving children by less than half a child (from 5.0 to 4.6 children) and the proportion polygynous by 2 percentage points (from 26 to 24 percent).

Figure 2.3 shows the trends in the mean number of children for currently married men in Ghana and Kenya between the two DHS surveys. To ensure that the data for the two surveys in each country is comparable, the mean number of children was calculated for the same age groups in subsequent surveys (age 15-59 in Ghana and age 20-54 in Kenya). Both Ghana and Kenya show a substantial decline in the mean number of children from 1988 to 1993. In Ghana, the mean number of children declined from 4.6 to 3.8, while in Kenya it fell from 5.4 to 4.7 children. Whether this change is taking place among men elsewhere will only become evident as further rounds of men's surveys are conducted in other countries.

Figure 2.3 Trends in mean number of surviving children among currently married men, Ghana and Kenya, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1988-1993

