

5 Reproductive Intentions

5.1 DESIRE FOR ANOTHER CHILD

The proportion of men and women who definitely want another child may be a meaningful predictor of the course of fertility in a country. Table 5.1 shows large regional variations in the proportion of men desiring another child, with the highest numbers recorded in West Africa. In that region, from 60 percent of men in the 1993 Ghana survey to 93 percent in Niger say they want another child. The proportion of men desiring another child is far lower in East Africa (except for Tanzania) and lower still in North Africa and Asia. Only one-third of men in Egypt and Bangladesh and less than one-half in Morocco and Pakistan want another child.

In most of the countries surveyed, men are more likely than women to want another child (Figure 5.1 and Table 5.1). In four surveys (Cameroon, the 1993 Kenya survey, Niger, and Tanzania), the proportion of men desiring another child exceeds the proportion of women by at least 9 percentage points. In Rwanda, men and women are equally likely to desire another child, while in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, and Morocco, women are slightly more likely than men to want another child. Data are available for two points in time for Ghana and Kenya. In Ghana, there were similar declines in the proportion of men and women desiring another child between 1988 and 1993. In Kenya, however, the proportion of men who want another child increased while the proportion of women declined; thus, the gap be-

Table 5.1 Fertility preferences

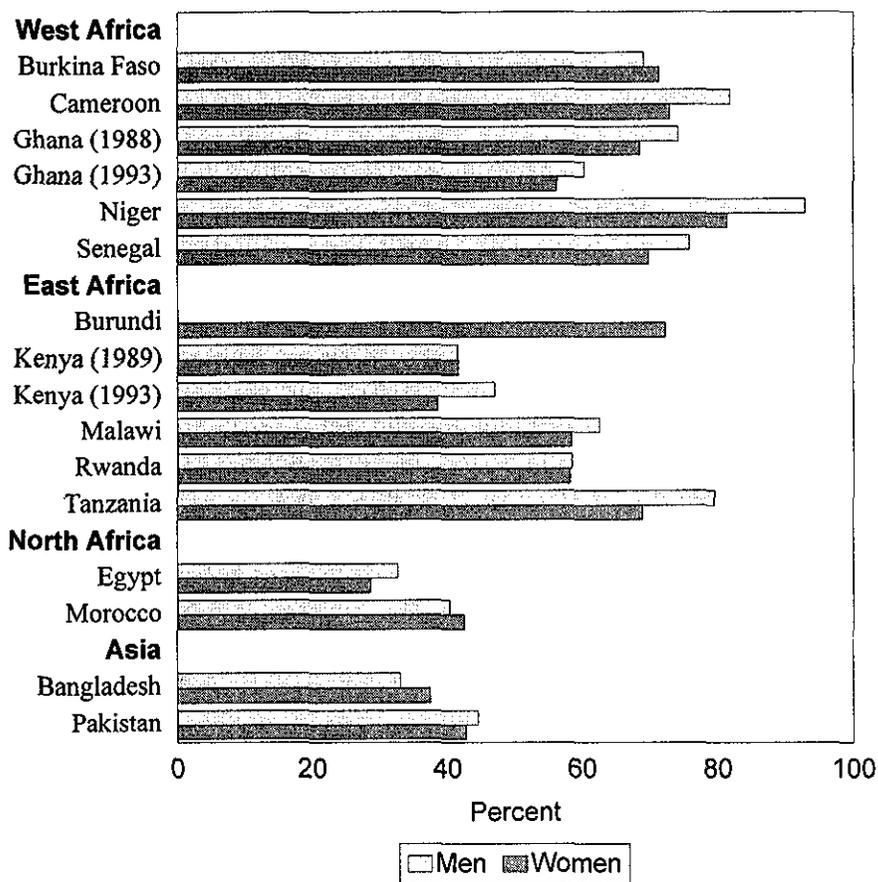
Percentage of fertility preferences for currently married men and women by type of union, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993

Country	Want more children				Want no more children/ sterilized/infecund				Don't know			
	Men		Women All	All	Men		Women All	All	Men		Women All	All
	Monog- amous	Polyg- ynous			Monog- amous	Polyg- ynous			Monog- amous	Polyg- ynous		
West Africa												
Burkina Faso	70.1	67.4	69.2	71.5	26.8	26.2	26.6	22.5	3.1	6.4	4.3	5.8
Cameroon	81.7	82.4	81.9	73.0	14.2	13.4	14.0	22.5	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.5
Ghana (1988)	73.4	76.8	74.2	68.5	20.1	16.6	19.2	26.3	6.4	6.2	6.4	5.1
Ghana (1993)	60.9	57.7	60.3	56.3	32.3	32.4	32.3	37.7	5.7	9.0	6.1	5.4
Mali	U	U	U	74.5	U	U	U	16.5	U	U	U	9.0
Niger	94.8	87.1	93.0	81.5	3.4	6.9	4.2	12.5	1.8	6.0	2.8	6.0
Senegal	79.0	70.5	75.9	69.9	13.8	17.6	15.2	23.4	7.0	11.6	8.7	6.6
East Africa												
Burundi	U	U	U	72.3	U	U	U	25.6	U	U	U	1.9
Kenya (1989)	41.1	43.2	41.5	41.7	49.9	43.3	48.6	52.0	9.0	13.5	9.9	6.0
Kenya (1993)	46.7	50.6	47.1	38.6	46.0	41.2	45.4	54.8	7.2	8.0	7.3	6.3
Malawi	63.2	56.9	62.6	58.4	33.2	36.3	33.4	32.1	3.6	6.6	3.9	9.4
Rwanda	59.8	47.5	58.5	58.2	39.4	50.8	40.6	39.0	0.8	1.7	0.9	1.8
Tanzania	80.4	75.5	79.6	69.0	17.4	19.5	17.8	27.9	0.8	4.5	1.4	2.8
North Africa												
Egypt	33.0	21.9	32.7	28.7	60.9	71.5	61.2	69.1	6.0	6.6	6.0	2.2
Morocco	40.5	39.6	40.4	42.5	54.5	60.4	54.9	54.4	2.7	0.0	2.5	3.1
Asia												
Bangladesh	33.2	21.0	33.1	37.5	63.9	70.3	64.0	60.1	2.8	8.7	2.9	2.4
Pakistan ^a	44.6	44.5	44.6	42.8	36.1	33.4	36.0	43.1	19.0	20.9	19.1	13.9

U = Unknown (not available)

^a "Want more" responses include wanting another child and belief that Allah decides when. Undecided responses include belief that Allah makes the decision.

Figure 5.1 Desire for additional children among currently married men and women, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993



Note: There is no information on this topic among currently married men in the Burundi survey.

tween men's and women's reproductive intentions widened. Restricting the male samples in the earlier Ghana and Kenya surveys to match the age ranges used in the later surveys changes the outcomes somewhat: it accelerates the decline among men in Ghana and reduces the rate of increase among men in Kenya.

Intention to Stop Childbearing

The proportion of men who definitely want to stop childbearing ranges from less than 5 percent in Niger to more than 60 percent in Bangladesh and Egypt (Table 5.1). Although the proportion of men who desire no more children is inversely related to the proportion who do want another child, one is not necessarily a complement of the other. In some countries, many men (almost 20 percent in Pakistan) are undecided about having another child. Men in West Africa are least likely to say they want no more

children, with the 1993 Ghana survey remaining an exception to the West African model. Levels in East Africa (with the exception of Tanzania) are much higher than in West Africa but lower than in North Africa and Asia. In North Africa, Egyptian men are more likely not to want more children than Moroccan men, while in Asia, Bangladeshi men are almost twice as likely as Pakistani men to want no more children.

There are similar, but smaller, regional variations in women's desire to stop childbearing. In West Africa, the proportion of currently married women who want no more children ranges from 13 percent in Niger to 38 percent in the 1993 Ghana survey. In East Africa, the proportion ranges from 26 percent in Burundi to 55 percent in the 1993 Kenya survey. About 70 percent of Egyptian women do not want any more children compared to 60 percent in Bangladesh, 54 percent in Morocco, and 43 percent in Pakistan.

In most countries, women are more likely than men to say they want no more children. In only five countries more men than women report a greater desire to stop childbearing, and in each case the difference is very small, often less than two percentage points. In contrast, at least five percentage points separates the women from the men in all but one of the 10 countries in which women report a greater desire to stop childbearing than men. Even when polygynous men are excluded from the comparison, women generally report a greater desire to stop childbearing than monogamous men. These findings suggest that, on average, men have higher fertility desires than women. Although the disparity in male and female preferences is not related to a country's overall fertility levels, the gap narrows as increasing numbers of men and women desire to stop childbearing.

Fertility Intentions by Current Parity

Men's and women's fertility intentions frequently are related to the number of surviving children. As Table 5.2 demonstrates, men's desire for another child is negatively related to their number of surviving children. Conversely, the desire to stop childbearing increases with the number of surviving children. West African men with no children are the only exception to these trends: in four of the six countries, childless men are less likely to want more children than men who already have one or two children.

The percentage of men who want more children at a given parity level varies widely from one region to another. Among men who already have three or more children, West African fathers are the most likely to report still wanting more children. In the West African countries, from 64 to 96 percent of men who have three or four children want another child, and more than half of the men with five or more children still want another child, with the exception, as always, of the 1993 Ghana survey. In East Africa, one-half to two-thirds of men with three or four children want another child, and one-quarter to one-half of men with at least five children want another (with the exception of Tanzania, where levels are far higher). In North Africa and Asia, the proportion of men with three or four children who desire another child ranges from less than 20 percent in Bangladesh and Egypt to 25 percent in Morocco and 40 percent in Pakistan. Of men with at least five children, only 4 percent in Bangladesh desire another child and from 10 to 16 percent in the other three countries surveyed.

Women's reproductive preferences follow a pattern similar to that of men. In general, the proportion of women

who want another child declines as the number of their surviving children increases. In a few countries in West Africa, however, childless women report similar desires as women with one or two children. Women in West Africa, like the men, are more likely than their peers elsewhere to desire another child at each parity level. Levels in Tanzania and Burundi, however, are similar to those of the West African countries. In West Africa and in Burundi and Tanzania, from 74 to 84 percent of women with three or four children want another, as do 34 to 60 percent of women with at least five surviving children; the 1993 Ghana survey, where levels are far lower, is the one exception. In the remaining countries of East Africa, from 34 to 57 percent of women with three or four children want another, as do 10 to 26 percent of women with at least five children. Levels are lowest in North Africa and Asia. In Egypt, for example, only 11 percent of women with three or four children and 3 percent of those with five or more children want another.

In 15 of the 17 surveys, women are less likely than men to desire another child at any given parity level (Table 5.2). The only exceptions are childless respondents in the 1993 Ghana survey and respondents with one or two children in Bangladesh. In most countries, the magnitude of the difference between the sexes increases as respondents move from parity 3-4 to parity 5+. In Niger, for example, there is a 12 percentage-point gap between the proportions of men and women desiring another child at parity 3-4 (96 percent versus 84 percent). This widens to 26 percentage points at parity 5+ (86 percent versus 60 percent). Likewise, the difference in the proportions of men and women who want no more children increases from 8 to 19 percentage points as parity increases from 3-4 to 5+.

5.2 APPROVAL OF FAMILY PLANNING

Favorable attitudes toward family planning often are seen as a bridge between contraceptive knowledge and use. Couples who oppose the idea of family planning are less likely to use contraception than those who express a favorable attitude toward it. As described above, men generally report higher levels of contraceptive knowledge and current use than do women; in addition, knowledge and use generally are highest in North Africa/Asia and lowest in West Africa. This section examines whether the same regional and gender patterns hold for attitudes toward the use of contraception. Both men and women were asked: "In general, do you approve or disapprove of couples using a method to avoid getting pregnant?" Table 5.3 presents the results.

Table 5.2 Fertility preferences by number of surviving children

Percentage of fertility preferences for currently married men and women by number of surviving children, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993

Country	Want more children										Want no more children									
	Number of children: men					Number of children: women					Number of children: men					Number of children: women				
	0	1-2	3-4	5+	All	0	1-2	3-4	5+	All	0	1-2	3-4	5+	All	0	1-2	3-4	5+	All
West Africa																				
Burkina Faso	93.1	87.3	76.1	51.9	69.2	89.2	92.7	74.1	38.0	71.5	5.0	11.4	21.3	41.0	26.6	7.6	5.2	19.3	51.0	22.5
Cameroon	95.1	96.6	92.5	67.3	81.9	90.2	89.1	78.1	45.1	73.0	2.6	1.3	4.5	26.7	14.0	7.5	8.3	17.1	47.8	22.5
Ghana (1988)	89.1	97.3	87.4	53.3	74.2	77.4	91.8	73.5	33.8	68.5	2.2	0.9	10.1	35.6	19.2	18.3	5.8	20.4	58.6	26.3
Ghana (1993)	80.3	85.8	63.6	28.8	60.3	82.8	82.7	51.2	19.1	56.3	3.3	8.0	30.5	63.8	32.3	11.1	13.3	41.3	73.8	37.7
Mali	U	U	U	U	U	93.8	89.4	72.3	46.1	74.5	U	U	U	U	U	3.6	5.8	18.0	36.4	16.5
Niger	98.4	97.5	95.6	86.2	93.0	95.6	91.5	83.5	59.5	81.5	1.6	1.2	2.1	8.8	4.2	3.6	5.8	10.1	28.3	12.5
Senegal	90.0	91.3	87.4	63.8	75.9	89.3	90.2	77.8	42.8	69.9	6.7	7.1	7.1	22.4	15.2	7.6	6.0	15.0	47.7	23.4
East Africa																				
Burundi	U	U	U	U	U	94.5	93.8	75.9	40.6	72.3	U	U	U	U	U	4.5	5.5	21.6	56.1	25.6
Kenya (1989)	91.8	82.3	55.2	23.4	41.5	83.4	79.3	50.5	12.8	41.7	3.2	14.8	32.8	65.5	48.6	10.2	16.4	42.5	80.3	52.0
Kenya (1993)	90.8	79.9	49.4	23.6	47.1	85.8	73.9	34.4	10.1	38.6	1.6	15.3	43.4	67.3	45.4	11.0	20.9	56.6	83.6	54.8
Malawi	92.3	80.7	62.5	37.5	62.6	83.1	78.6	56.9	25.6	58.4	2.9	15.9	33.1	58.8	33.4	10.2	14.5	32.0	62.1	32.1
Rwanda	96.6	90.6	66.8	28.7	58.5	95.6	89.2	61.2	24.2	58.2	3.4	9.4	33.2	69.2	40.6	2.6	8.8	36.1	72.2	39.0
Tanzania	99.0	94.2	87.5	60.1	79.6	88.2	89.9	75.5	36.2	69.0	0.0	5.1	11.5	34.6	17.8	10.4	8.8	21.4	58.4	27.9
North Africa																				
Egypt	95.5	58.9	17.2	9.5	32.7	92.6	58.1	11.2	3.1	28.7	3.6	34.2	75.2	85.2	61.2	6.5	39.1	86.4	95.3	69.1
Morocco	93.5	78.5	35.8	13.2	40.4	93.8	76.7	34.1	9.6	42.5	4.2	20.1	59.6	79.8	54.9	5.3	19.9	62.0	87.3	54.4
Asia																				
Bangladesh	96.3	56.2	13.0	4.2	33.1	94.6	60.6	12.1	2.3	37.5	2.3	40.6	83.1	93.6	64.0	4.4	36.6	85.1	95.8	60.1
Pakistan	89.6	75.7	39.9	15.9	44.6	88.8	74.8	37.5	10.6	42.8	3.3	10.0	36.0	61.8	36.0	5.7	12.8	46.0	73.6	43.1

U = Unknown (not available)

Table 5.3 Approval of family planning by background characteristics

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

Country	Currently married men																Currently married women Total	
	Age group					Residence		Education			Type of union		Number of children					
								None	Primary	Secondary or higher	Monogamy	Polygyny	0	1-2	3-4	5+		Total
	<30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Urban	Rural											
West Africa																		
Burkina Faso	76.7	72.8	71.9	55.3	44.9	72.5	63.0	61.4	74.8	90.3	68.9	56.5	64.4	73.4	65.1	59.3	64.5	69.0
Cameroon	55.6	61.5	40.5	39.7	18.6	64.6	36.6	20.3	49.6	74.7	52.6	35.9	33.5	51.3	47.9	49.0	48.4	60.3
Ghana (1988)	78.7	79.1	79.7	69.1	72.5	83.5	75.2	67.0	80.7	86.8	77.9	76.0	52.6	78.9	79.5	78.2	77.4	74.2
Ghana (1993)	93.9	90.7	86.1	88.8	NA	90.8	89.6	80.0	91.6	97.5	90.6	86.3	94.6	89.7	87.5	91.4	90.0	89.5
Mali	27.6	29.9	14.9	15.0	NA	45.1	14.0	14.9	31.8	83.3	26.1	15.0	30.9	23.8	34.5	16.2	22.8	70.6
Niger	67.6	61.6	62.5	54.6	49.8	67.2	59.7	59.0	70.1	84.5	62.4	56.1	58.8	59.4	59.1	63.8	60.9	70.5
Senegal	61.2	55.9	47.1	35.1	19.2	56.8	35.6	34.6	59.2	78.7	48.2	35.0	44.7	52.4	47.9	38.3	43.5	66.4
East Africa																		
Burundi	96.0	91.0	90.6	74.3	83.6	95.2	90.6	91.0	90.3	98.1	91.5	84.6	92.1	89.7	91.8	89.5	90.7	94.4
Kenya (1989)	97.0	92.8	91.6	91.0	72.9	93.2	91.0	77.9	93.1	95.1	93.5	82.0	82.9	93.0	93.4	90.5	91.3	87.7
Kenya (1993)	95.3	89.9	86.8	80.4	NA	90.5	89.1	69.9	88.5	96.3	90.0	85.3	88.9	93.6	90.7	86.5	89.5	89.2
Malawi	97.9	97.1	95.9	94.9	NA	U	U	96.7	96.6	98.0	97.1	93.9	99.3	96.7	95.9	96.9	96.8	92.4
Rwanda	93.3	95.6	93.1	77.8	89.9	91.4	92.8	92.6	92.9	90.8	93.4	86.8	92.1	92.8	93.8	92.1	92.7	93.5
Tanzania	78.3	80.4	73.9	76.9	77.8	85.8	74.5	65.3	79.3	92.3	77.6	78.8	58.8	83.3	75.9	78.8	77.8	84.6
North Africa																		
Egypt	84.2	86.6	87.5	88.1	82.7	89.7	83.9	81.8	87.1	89.3	86.5	88.3	81.4	87.7	88.5	85.1	86.6	91.2
Morocco	97.1	95.3	89.5	87.5	90.6	93.9	90.7	89.4	95.3	97.9	92.3	90.5	92.8	95.5	95.1	88.5	92.1	U
Asia																		
Bangladesh	94.4	93.5	91.1	88.1	81.8	96.4	91.3	90.0	91.1	95.6	91.9	90.8	94.1	93.3	91.3	89.6	91.9	94.4
Pakistan	82.5	71.7	64.4	63.9	71.5	77.7	69.0	65.8	69.0	81.5	72.0	71.2	78.3	73.0	68.2	72.9	72.0	61.5

NA = Not applicable

U = Unknown (not available)

A smaller percentage of men in West Africa approve of using contraception than in any other region. In Cameroon, Mali, and Senegal, for example, over half the men oppose the idea of family planning compared with just 3 percent of men in Malawi. Ghana is the only country in West Africa where at least three-quarters of the men approve of family planning. In East Africa, over 90 percent of the men approve of family planning in every country but Tanzania, where only about 78 percent of the men approve. Approval levels are also high in North Africa and Asia, except for Pakistan, where only 72 percent of the men approve of family planning.

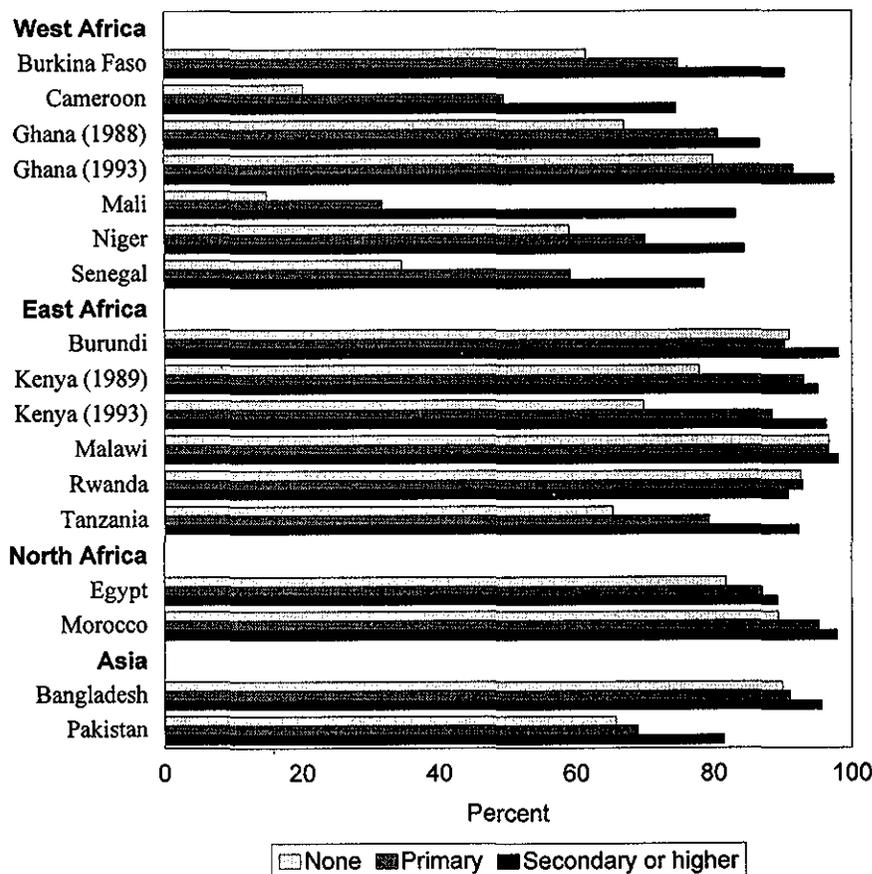
Within each country, women are more likely to favor family planning than men. In West Africa, women's approval levels exceed the men's by 4 percentage points (Burkina Faso) to 23 percentage points (Senegal), except in Ghana where men are slightly more likely than women to approve of contraceptive use. While the disparities between men and women are smaller in East Africa, women are more likely to favor family planning than men except in the 1989 Kenya survey and in Malawi. Women also hold more favorable attitudes than men in Bangladesh and Egypt, but in Pakistan

men's approval levels exceed those of women by fully 10 percentage points. Women's lower fertility desires may partly explain why, in most countries, they hold more favorable attitudes toward using contraception than men despite their lesser knowledge of contraceptive methods.

Younger men are more likely to approve of contraceptive use than older men in every country but Egypt, although in some countries the differences are slight (Table 5.3). Approval levels are also higher among urban than rural men, with the exception of three surveys (Ghana 1993, Kenya 1993, and Rwanda) where the differences are small. The difference between urban and rural approval levels is most pronounced in West Africa, where it peaks at 31 percentage points in Mali. In the other regions, the difference remains less than 10 percentage points except in Tanzania.

Of all the background characteristics examined, education shows the greatest influence on men's attitudes toward family planning. In nearly all countries, contraceptive approval increases with male education, with the greatest differentials observed in West Africa (Figure 5.2). Approval levels of the least and best educated men in West Africa dif-

Figure 5.2 Approval of family planning among currently married men by education, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993



fer by at least 25 percentage points in every country but Ghana. The gap is greatest in Cameroon and Mali, where it reaches 54 and 68 percentage points, respectively. In contrast, the difference in approval levels between uneducated men and those with a secondary or higher education in East Africa ranges from less than 2 percentage points in Malawi to 27 percentage points in Tanzania. Educational differentials in North Africa and Asia are less than 10 percentage points, except in Pakistan where there is a gap of 16 percentage points in the approval rate of uneducated men and those with secondary and above levels of education.

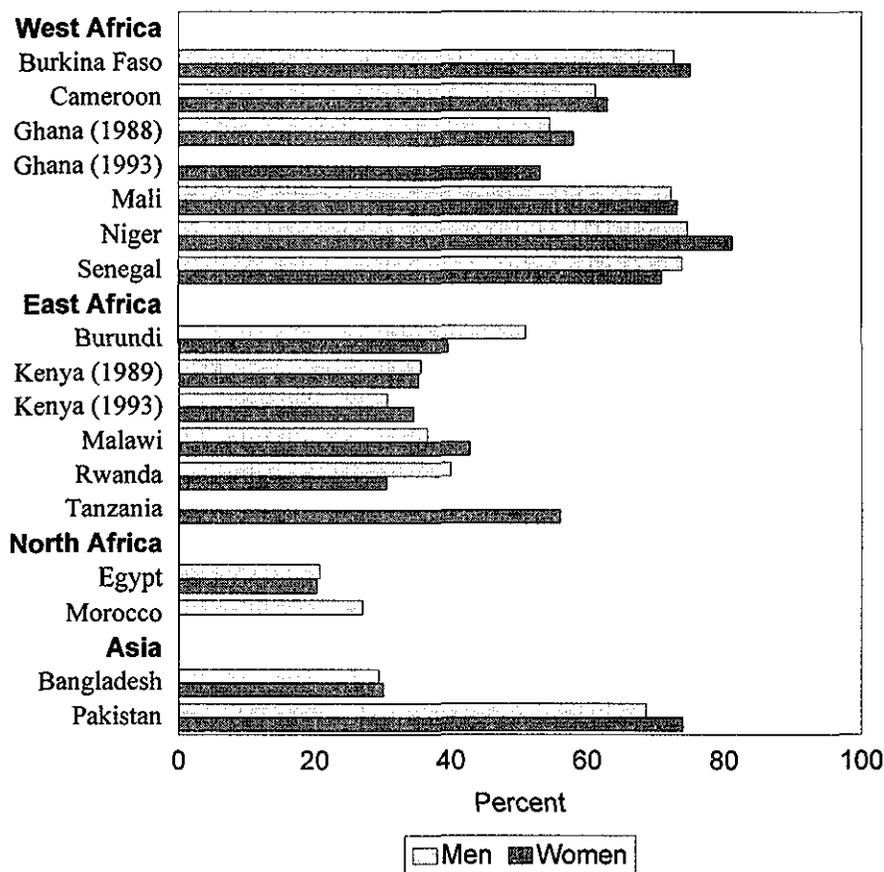
Monogamous men are more likely to approve of family planning than polygynous men everywhere but in Tanzania and Egypt, although the difference is small in some countries. Approval levels among both monogamous and polygynous men are lower in West Africa than in other regions (with the exception of Ghana), but the differentials are generally wider. While less than three-quarters of monogamous

men in all West African countries but Ghana approve of using contraceptives, more than 90 percent of monogamous men in East Africa, Bangladesh, and Morocco approve (excluding, of course, Tanzania where only 78 percent approve). Approval levels among monogamous men are somewhat lower in Egypt (87 percent) and Pakistan (72 percent). Approval levels do not vary consistently with the number of surviving children.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FAMILY PLANNING

Discussion of family planning by married couples may be seen as a measure of the acceptability of family planning in a population and of the strength of the conjugal unit. Therefore, it is generally associated with greater contraceptive use and small family size values (Mitchell, 1972; Beckman, 1983). As Figure 5.3 and Table 5.4 show, currently married men and women in West Africa are less

Figure 5.3 Proportion of men and women who did not discuss family planning with their partner in the past year, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1987-1993



Note: There is no information on this topic for men in the Tanzania and Ghana (1993) surveys and for women in the Morocco survey.

Table 5.4 Frequency of discussion of family planning with spouse

Percent distribution of currently married men and women by reported frequency of discussion of family planning with spouse, Demographic and Health Surveys 1987-1993

Country	Never discussed		Once or twice		More often	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
West Africa						
Burkina Faso	72.7	75.1	10.9	10.4	16.2	14.3
Cameroon	61.2	62.9	12.5	12.0	25.7	25.0
Ghana (1988)	54.4	57.9	18.9	19.5	26.6	22.4
Ghana (1993)	U	53.1	U	20.1	U	25.9
Mali	72.3	73.2	13.8	17.2	14.0	9.3
Niger	74.7	81.2	13.4	10.9	11.7	7.8
Senegal	73.9	70.9	11.2	14.1	14.5	14.9
East Africa						
Burundi	51.0	39.5	16.8	28.9	30.4	28.9
Kenya (1989)	35.5	35.0	13.6	31.6	50.9	33.0
Kenya (1993)	30.6	34.5	20.3	30.7	48.4	34.5
Malawi	36.5	42.7	24.7	32.4	38.7	24.1
Rwanda	39.9	30.5	8.6	16.9	51.3	51.6
Tanzania	U	56.0	U	25.6	U	18.1
North Africa						
Egypt	20.7	20.3	59.1	58.6	20.2	21.0
Morocco	27.0	U	24.0	U	48.5	U
Asia						
Bangladesh	29.4	30.1	32.8	38.9	37.8	31.0
Pakistan	68.6	74.0	18.2	21.0	12.8	5.0

U = Unknown (not available)

likely than those in other regions to have discussed family planning with their spouses in the past year. About three-quarters of West African respondents have not had a single discussion on family planning with their spouses in the past year; the exceptions are Ghana and Cameroon, where the proportions are about one-half and two-thirds, respectively. In most countries of East Africa, less than 40 percent of men and women report never discussing family planning over the past year; men in Burundi and men and women in Tanzania and Malawi are the exceptions. In Bangladesh, Egypt, and Morocco, all but 20 to 30 percent of men and women have discussed family planning with their spouses. The situation is far different in Pakistan, however, where over two-thirds of the men and three-quarters of the women report no such discussions.

Men and women report remarkably similar levels of discussion. The reported difference is less than 5 percentage points in most countries; only in Burundi does it exceed 10 percentage points, with men more likely than women to report no discussions on family planning.

Of those men and women who have discussed family planning with their spouses, most have discussed the subject frequently, that is, more than twice within the past year (Table 5.4). Only in Egypt, Niger, and Pakistan are respondents more likely to report just one or two discussions rather than three or more. Men and women in West Africa are least likely to have discussed family planning frequently (less than one-fifth of the respondents) except in Cameroon and Ghana, where about one-quarter reported frequent discussions. In East Africa, between 30 percent and 51 percent of men have frequently discussed family planning with their spouses in the past year. Frequent discussions are least likely in Pakistan, where only 13 percent of men and 5 percent of women report having them. In most countries, men and women are equally likely to report frequent discussions of family planning. In East Africa, however, men report frequent discussions more often than women.