

6 Marriage and Sexual Activity

There are several reasons why examining the marital status of women, the age at initiation of marriage, sexual activity, and any differences thereof, will give an insight into women's status and situation in any country. First, women's current marital status defines the set of persons who are likely to influence the circumstances of their lives, i.e., it defines who the important "others" are in their lives. Also, different marital statuses are associated with different sets of obligations, responsibilities, and rights for women. The relevant "others" and the obligations, responsibilities, and rights of women are likely to vary not only between ever-married and never-married women, but also between ever-married women who are currently married and those who are currently divorced, separated, or widowed.

The difference in status associated with each marital category varies greatly across societies with consequent effects on women's relative access to societal as well as household resources. Only one generalization appears to hold true: not only is "currently married" the most typical marital status for women in the reproductive ages, but in almost all countries, it is the one which is perhaps most accepted and uniformly accorded higher prestige as compared to the other marital statuses for women in the reproductive ages. While the freedom to seek and obtain a divorce is often used as an indicator of higher status for women, not all societies, even if they accord women this right, are as accepting of divorced women as they are of married women or even divorced men. Widows, too, are treated differently in different societies—revered in some, and rejected and ostracized in others. While at the societal level, the proportion of women remaining single through childbearing ages may be seen as an indicator of women's ability to remain autonomous in that society, at the individual level, the treatment of never-married women above a certain marriageable age, both in terms of respect accorded and access to resources, may vary from society to society.

Further, marriage itself is not uniquely defined across cultures, and a given culture may sustain several different "types" of marriages, each with its own degree of social and legal acceptability. These variations in marriages can be evaluated along at least two dimensions: the type of marriage, for example, legalized (through religious or civil ceremonies), consensual or informal; and its nature, i.e., whether

it is monogamous or polygynous. These distinctions are important because the amount of legal and societal recognition and protection for women (and their children) in each type of marriage differs across and within societies (Gage and Bledsoe, 1994). Also, even in societies where polygyny is acceptable, the status of women in polygynous unions may differ, not only as compared to women in a monogamous marriage, but also by their rank within their polygynous marriage (Gage and Bledsoe, 1994; Murphy and Bledsoe, 1986).

In addition, currently married women can also be differentiated in terms of the number of times they have been married. Not all societies are equally accepting of remarriage for women. Consequently, the proportion of women who are remarried in a society indirectly shows the ease with which women can terminate marriages and initiate new ones.

Another aspect of marriage which is often used as an indicator of women's status is the typical age at first marriage for women. At the individual level, a low age at first marriage is positively associated with limited education and early childbearing. These factors are, in turn, likely to negatively affect women's life chances, their autonomy, and their health (Mason, 1986; Bledsoe and Cohen, 1993). At the societal level, a low average age at first marriage implies that women are allowed little autonomy, are expected to remain subject to male authority, have strict controls placed on their sexuality, and are valued mainly for their reproductive capacity and homemaking ability. (Dixon-Mueller, 1993; Papanek, 1989). The difference between age at first marriage and age at first intercourse can be used as an indicator of the degree of control on women's sexuality and the value placed on premarital virginity.

In this chapter, comparative data on several different aspects of marriage are presented. To begin with, a comparison of countries is done according to median age at marriage, and according to the distribution of all women and women in selected age groups by different marital statuses. Then, women in the different marital categories are compared in terms of age, education, employment, socioeconomic status as measured by the API, residential arrangements, and household headship. Further, an examination is

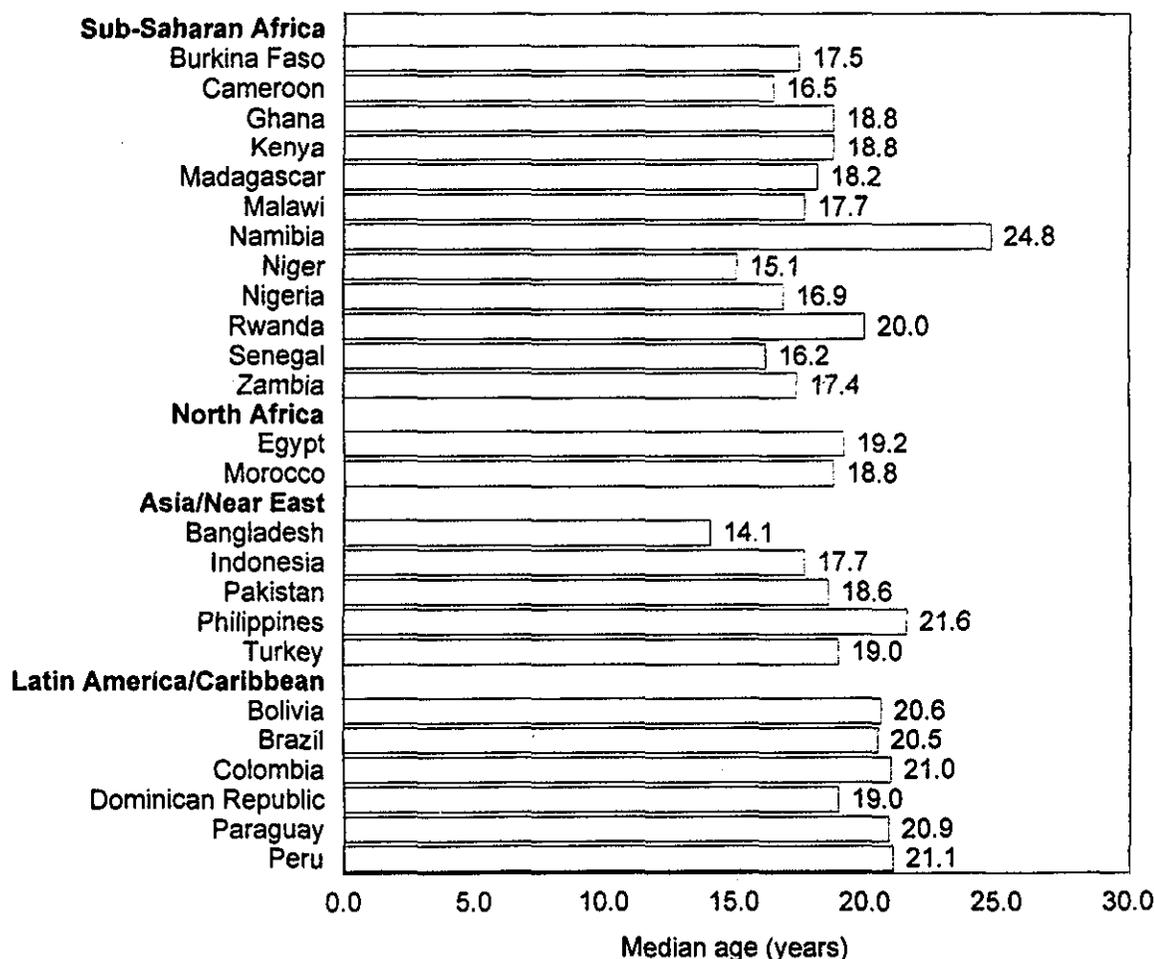
carried out on how countries vary in terms of the proportion of women who have been remarried and those who are in polygynous unions. Finally, the link between sex and marriage across countries is examined.

6.1 AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS

For countries other than Malawi, the median age at first marriage is estimated in the DHS country reports for women age 25-49 years; for Malawi it is estimated for women 20-49. There are only three countries (Colombia, Namibia, and Peru) out of the 25 included in this compari-

son where the median age at first marriage for women is above 21 years (Figure 6.1). The median age at first marriage in Namibia is about 25 years, which is the highest for all countries considered. For most of the remaining countries, the median age at marriage is between 18 and 21 years. Notably, however, there are seven sub-Saharan African countries out of the 12 included, and two Asian countries (Bangladesh and Indonesia) out of the five included, where the median age at first marriage is below 18 years. Indeed, in Bangladesh, it is as low as 14 years, and in Niger it is 15 years. Clearly, in these countries, early marriage greatly restricts women's alternative life opportunities, and if associated with early childbearing, may pose several health risks (Bledsoe and Cohen, 1993).

Figure 6.1 Median age at first marriage for women age 25-49 years, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994



Note: In Malawi, the median age at first marriage is for women age 20-49 years.

In most DHS countries, marital status is categorized as follows: married, living together, widowed, divorced, separated/not living together and never married. Each of these categories is specified as an answer to the question, "Are you currently married or living with a man?" However, no definition is provided to clarify the meaning of either "marriage" or "living with a man," and the women's self-classification into any given category is accepted. Thus, while the proportion of married women is known in most countries, the type of marriage, and consequently, the legal and societal acceptance of the union is not always known. However, it is probably safe to assume that when women classify themselves as "currently living with a man" as opposed to being "married," they are indicating that the relationship is socially and legally less binding than marriage, and consequently, has fewer legal protections built in.

As expected, more than half of the women between the ages of 15-49 years are currently married or living with a man in every country except Namibia (Table 6.1). In Namibia, only 42 percent of women in reproductive ages are either currently married or living with a man compared to over 50 percent who have never been married. As shown later in this chapter and as noted by others (Westoff et al., 1994), the "never-married" marital status for Namibian women does not, in general, preclude either sexual activity or childbearing. The Namibian marital pattern has been explained in terms of extensive labor migration and widespread displacement of population resulting from the long struggle for national independence (Kaitjano et al., 1993). In most other countries, never-married women form the next largest marital category and account for at least one-fourth of the women in reproductive ages.

Table 6.1 Women's marital status

Percent distribution of women 15-49 years by marital status, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	In union	Currently not in union			Total
	Married/ living together	Widowed	Divorced/ separated	Never married	
Sub-Saharan Africa					
Burkina Faso	83.8	1.6	1.1	13.5	6,354
Cameroon	74.1	2.5	4.8	18.6	3,871
Ghana	70.2	1.7	8.5	19.5	4,562
Kenya	61.4	3.1	5.3	30.2	7,540
Madagascar	59.7	2.4	11.1	26.8	6,260
Malawi	72.0	2.5	9.8	15.7	4,849
Namibia	41.7	1.4	5.5	51.4	5,419
Niger	85.5	1.2	2.8	10.5	6,503
Nigeria	78.4	2.4	2.0	17.2	8,781
Rwanda	57.8	4.1	6.1	32.1	6,550
Senegal	70.5	1.1	3.4	25.0	6,310
Zambia	63.1	2.3	9.2	25.4	7,060
North Africa					
Egypt	65.3	3.6	1.4	29.6	14,015
Morocco	55.3	2.1	3.5	39.1	9,256
Asia/Near East					
Bangladesh	79.4	3.5	2.4	14.8	11,138
Indonesia	68.2	2.8	3.1	25.9	30,933
Pakistan	71.1	1.8	1.0	26.2	8,953
Philippines	59.6	1.8	1.8	36.7	15,029
Turkey	64.6	1.5	1.0	32.9	9,712
Latin America/ Caribbean					
Bolivia ¹	62.1	2.1	5.5	30.4	8,591
Brazil	56.9	1.8	7.4	33.9	6,223
Colombia ¹	52.5	1.7	9.3	36.5	8,481
Dominican Republic	55.8	1.0	13.8	29.4	7,319
Paraguay	61.3	0.7	5.0	32.9	5,827
Peru	55.0	1.5	5.3	38.1	15,882

¹ Excludes 0.1 percent of women with missing information on marital status

Further, there are several countries where a fairly large proportion of women are in unions which are not classified as marriage (Table 6.2, column 1). Indeed, with the exception of Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal, and Zambia, at least 15 percent of women currently in union are not married. In Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Namibia, Peru, and Rwanda, by contrast, between one in three and two in three women are currently in union but not married. Thus, in these countries, women appear to be fairly free (as already noted for Namibia) to form sexual unions not based on traditional notions of marriage. While this reveals a fair amount of sexual freedom, it raises issues about protections and rights available to women in unions that may not be recognized by law.

Table 6.2 Cohabitation and separation status of women

Percentage of women that are "living together" of those grouped as "married or living together," and percentage that are "separated" of those grouped as "divorced or separated," Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Living together status of those classified as married or living together	Separated status of those classified as divorced or separated
Sub-Saharan Africa		
Burkina Faso	U	52.1
Cameroon	15.9	62.1
Ghana	16.5	34.2
Kenya	5.1	49.5
Madagascar	16.2	5.5
Malawi	4.5	30.7
Namibia	34.9	39.7
Niger	U	9.3
Nigeria	9.5	45.6
Rwanda	41.2	U
Senegal	0.2	6.5
Zambia	3.2	24.1
North Africa		
Egypt	U	U
Morocco	U	U
Asia/Near East		
Bangladesh	U	U
Indonesia	U	U
Pakistan	U	74.5
Philippines	8.7	89.4
Turkey	U	23.7
Latin America/Caribbean		
Bolivia	22.1	84.0
Brazil	15.3	23.2
Colombia	38.4	99.8
Dominican Republic	59.7	84.2
Paraguay	23.0	98.6
Peru	32.1	92.6

U = Unknown (not available)

The proportion of women who are widows in any country depends on factors such as differences in age-specific male and female mortality rates, spousal age differences, and the ease and speed with which widows are able to remarry. Low differences in male and female mortality rates, low spousal age differences, and the ability of widowed women to remarry easily and quickly are usually thought to reflect higher status for women and will result in fewer widows in a population, especially in the reproductive ages, at any given point in time. Widows, in general, form a small proportion of all women in reproductive ages in all countries considered (Table 6.1); nevertheless, their share ranges from 0.7 percent of women in reproductive ages in Paraguay, to two to six times as much in most other countries. Widows account for about 4 percent of all women in the reproductive ages in Bangladesh, Egypt, and Rwanda, which is higher than anywhere else.

Although in most countries divorced and separated women form a relatively small proportion of all women in the reproductive ages, there is great variability in their share across countries. On the one end, there are the North African and Asian countries, as well as Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal where divorced or separated women account for 1-4 percent of women in the reproductive ages, and on the other end there is Madagascar with 11 percent of women divorced or separated and the Dominican Republic with 14 percent. A large share of divorced or separated women could imply that marriage is not so binding that women cannot get out of bad marriages. However, without an understanding of personal law in different countries and without information on the circumstances of marriage dissolution, it may be just that the laws make it easy to abandon or divorce women and that divorced women have a difficult time getting remarried.

Further, the factors which govern separation and divorce are likely to be somewhat different. While dissolution of the union underlies both states, a high proportion of separated women is likely to indicate legal, religious, or economic obstacles to marriage dissolution or a high proportion of dissolved consensual unions. While a high proportion of divorced women may indicate ease of legal dissolution of marriage, it could also reflect difficulties in the remarriage of divorced women. The second column in Table 6.2, shows that the percent of women who are separated among those classified as divorced or separated, ranges from 6 percent in Madagascar to almost 100 percent in Colombia. Indeed, in the Philippines and in most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, over 80 percent of women are sepa-

rated among those classified as divorced or separated. This may be due to religious sanctions against divorce in predominantly Catholic countries. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Pakistan are the only other countries where more than half of the women classified as divorced or separated are actually separated.

The proportion of women in each marital status is age dependent. In almost all populations, the proportion of married women rises and the proportion of never-married women falls with age so that, typically, almost all women have been married at least once by the end of the reproductive years. In addition, the likelihood of being widowed typically increases with age. In Table 6.3, women at the two ends of the reproductive age group are studied and the proportions in selected marital statuses are compared. A high proportion

of ever-married women among women who are 15-19 years is an indicator of low women's status. This follows from the fact that ideally women in this age group should be in the process of receiving educational and other skills to empower them for life both inside and outside marriage. Early marriage also exposes women to elevated health risks associated with early childbirth. In addition, the proportion of women age 40-49 years who are not currently married is explored by whether they have never been married or are currently divorced or widowed. A high proportion of never married women in this age group suggests that sustainable options other than marriage exist; however, the relationship between the proportion of single women with women's status is ambiguous and likely to be dependent on the cultural acceptance of single women in the reproductive ages.

Table 6.3 Marital status of women by age

Percentage of women 15-19 years and 40-49 years in selected marital statuses, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	15-19 years			40-49 years			
	Married/ living together	Divorced/ separated/ widowed	Total	Never married	Widowed	Divorced/ separated	Total
Sub-Saharan Africa							
Burkina Faso	44.2	0.4	1,373	0.1	5.7	0.8	932
Cameroon	41.1	3.1	919	0.7	9.9	5.2	576
Ghana	20.0	2.4	803	0.0	5.0	11.3	761
Kenya	14.9	1.3	1,754	2.1	11.0	6.0	1,072
Madagascar	21.4	5.3	1,420	3.0	9.1	14.4	887
Malawi	35.8	5.3	1,082	0.4	5.8	16.4	855
Namibia	6.9	0.8	1,259	16.0	4.4	10.7	864
Niger	56.5	2.1	1,379	0.1	3.8	2.5	933
Nigeria	37.0	1.6	1,612	0.2	8.9	3.7	1,460
Rwanda	8.4	1.4	1,464	0.6	13.3	8.3	1,015
Senegal	28.8	0.8	1,426	0.4	2.5	3.8	960
Zambia	26.5	3.1	1,984	0.1	6.9	13.1	885
North Africa							
Egypt	13.7	0.3	3,037	1.7	13.1	1.9	2,563
Morocco	11.8	0.7	2,145	1.6	9.1	4.5	1,412
Asia/Near East							
Bangladesh	47.7	1.8	2,566	0.5	12.7	1.4	1,534
Indonesia	18.3	1.5	6,281	1.9	10.1	4.0	5,493
Pakistan	24.3	0.6	1,720	2.3	5.1	0.7	1,495
Philippines	7.4	0.3	3,158	5.7	6.2	3.2	2,707
Turkey	13.4	0.1	2,460	1.6	6.0	2.3	1,606
Latin America/ Caribbean							
Bolivia	14.5	1.5	1,794	4.1	7.7	8.2	1,556
Brazil	15.2	1.8	1,395	6.1	6.1	10.7	1,203
Colombia	11.0	2.0	1,779	7.1	5.0	15.3	1,409
Dominican Republic	17.7	5.4	1,711	1.0	5.1	22.2	1,039
Paraguay	14.2	1.3	1,263	5.8	2.8	6.8	1,045
Peru	9.6	1.1	3,477	5.4	4.8	9.4	2,741

There are several countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, where between one-third and two-thirds of women in the 15-19 years age group have already been married. These countries are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Malawi, Niger and Nigeria in sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh in Asia. In Ghana, Indonesia, Madagascar, Pakistan, Senegal, and Zambia, about one-fifth to one-third of women in this age group have been married. In the remaining countries, of Africa and Asia, and in all of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, the proportion married is below 20 percent. The Philippines and Namibia have the lowest percent of ever married women in this age group (7 percent). In most countries, at least 1 percent of the 15-19 year old women have not only been married but have also been divorced, separated or widowed. This proportion is as high as 5 percent in the Dominican Republic, Madagascar, and Malawi.

As expected, the proportion of women age 40-49 who are never-married is very low in most countries. The only exceptions are Namibia with 16 percent and Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, and the Philippines with 5-7 percent of women age 40-49 who have never been married. The proportions currently widowed are typically below 10 percent in all countries except Bangladesh, Egypt, Kenya, and Rwanda where between 10 and 14 percent of women in reproductive ages are widowed. Notably, the only countries with less than 5 percent of women widowed are Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, and Senegal. Finally, in only some sub-Saharan African and Latin American countries does the percent of women who are divorced or separated exceed 10 percent of all women age 40-49 years. These countries are Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia where currently divorced or separated women constitute 10 to 16 percent of all women in reproductive ages, and the Dominican Republic where one out of every five women in this age group is either divorced or separated. While there are some countries in Asia where the proportion of widowed women is relatively high, there are none where the proportion of currently divorced or separated women is high.

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILES OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS

In this section, women of each marital status are compared on several demographic and socioeconomic indicators with two objectives in mind: first, to explore how women of different marital statuses differ within and across countries,

and second, to focus on divorced and widowed women to better understand what their characteristics are across countries and the circumstances in which they live.

The distributions of women in each of the four marital categories of married/living together, divorced/separated, widowed, and never married across the four age categories 15-19 years, 20-29 years, 30-39 years and 40-49 years are represented in graphical form. The 25 countries included in this report generally reveal two different age distributions with small variations around these patterns. These patterns are represented in Figures 6.2a and 6.2b using the data for the country that best represents each pattern.

The data for Kenya (Figure 6.2a) represent the age distribution patterns of women in each marital status found in the Dominican Republic and in all the sub-Saharan African countries except Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Senegal. Figure 6.2a also represents the age distributions of women in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan for the three marital statuses for which data are available in these countries. Specifically, the age distributions in these countries of currently married and currently divorced women are very similar: for women in both marital statuses, the age group 20-29 accounts for the largest share, and the 30-39 age group accounts for the next largest share; whereas, those 40-49 have a relatively smaller share and the share of those 15-19 is the least. By contrast, the share of each age group rises among the widowed, though not always linearly with age, and falls among the never-married women. Thus, in these countries, a currently divorced or a currently married woman is most likely to be 20-29 years old, whereas, a widowed woman is most likely to be 40-49 years of age and a never married woman will typically be 15-19 years of age. Senegal differs from this pattern only in that, among widows, the share of the 40-49 year old women is slightly lower than the share of the 30-39 year old women.

In the Philippines (Figure 6.2b), the widowed women again have an age distribution which rises with age, and the never-married women have an age distribution which falls with age. However, the age of the typical married or divorced woman is 30-39 years old. Other countries that have age distributions according to marital status similar to the Philippines are Bolivia, Egypt (only marital categories for which data are available), Peru, and Rwanda. In addition, Turkey (which has no data for never-married women) differs from this pattern in that, the share of each age group among the divorced/separated women actually rises with age, i.e., a divorced woman in Turkey is most likely to be

Figure 6.2a Age distribution of women by marital status, Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, 1993

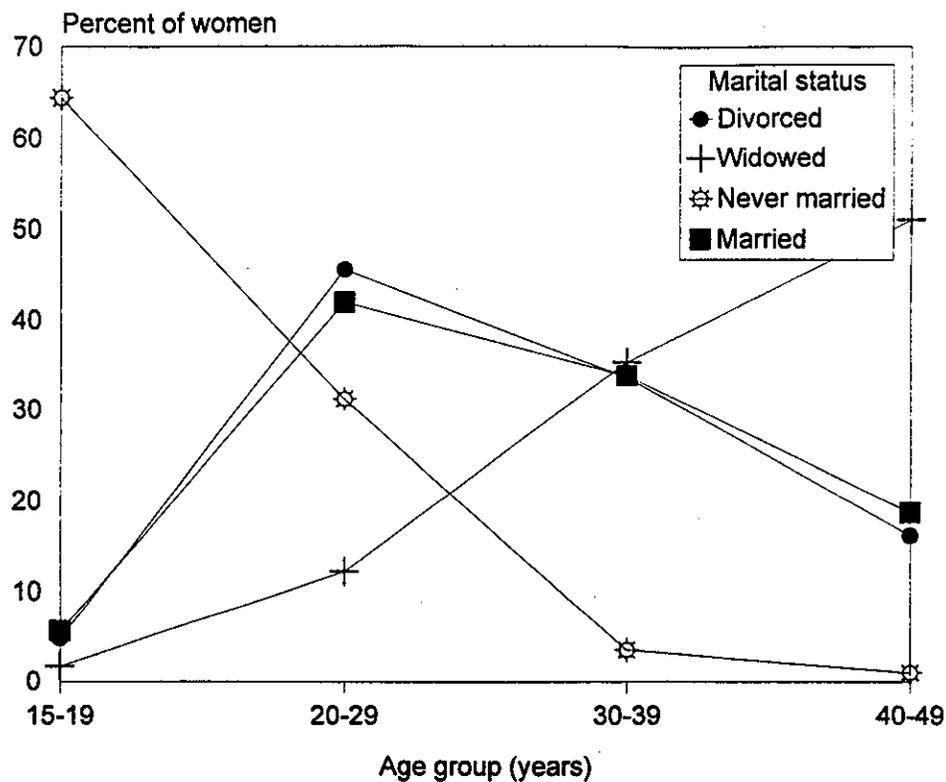
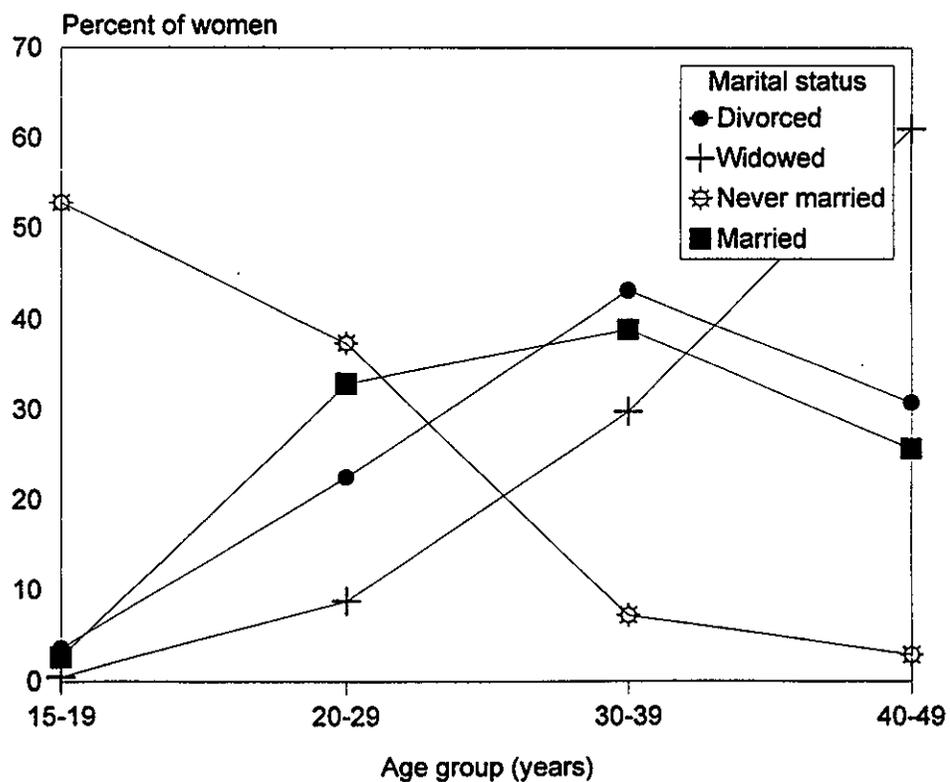


Figure 6.2b Age distribution of women by marital status, Philippines National Demographic Survey, 1993



40-49 years of age. Namibia differs from this pattern mainly in the age distribution of never-married women—the never-married women are slightly more likely to be 20-29 than they are to be 15-19 years of age.

Finally, Brazil, Colombia, Morocco, Nigeria, and Paraguay all vary from these two patterns in that the age distributions of the divorced/separated women and currently married women do not follow each other as closely as the patterns in Figures 6.2a and 6.2b. In these countries, the age group accounting for the largest share of married women and divorced/separated women is either 20-29 years or 30-39 years.

Notably, the share of the 40-49 age group among the widowed ranges between a low of 35 percent in Senegal to a high of 72 percent in the Dominican Republic (Appendix Table A.3). However, in most countries, widows who are 40-49 years old account for about one-half of all widows between the ages of 15-49 years. This implies that one-half of widows in the reproductive ages are young—most of them being between the ages of 20 and 40 years. Note, however, that these proportions would undoubtedly change if marital status data for women above the age of 50 years were available.

In Table 6.4, the education and employment of women of different marital statuses are compared. The first two columns for each marital status category show the percent of women in that marital status category that have some education and the percent that are employed for cash. Interestingly, among the countries for which data are available for the never-married women, the percent of women who have some education is always highest among the never-married (except in Burkina Faso) and lowest among the widowed (except in Colombia, Malawi, and Senegal). Also, in most countries, a higher percent of divorced/separated women have some education as compared with currently married women. By contrast, the highest percent employed for cash are found either among the divorced/separated (in 11 countries) or among the widowed (also in 11 countries). Only in Rwanda are married women the most likely to be employed for cash.

Divorced/separated women are most likely to have some education and be employed for cash in 18 of the 23 countries for which these data are available. In another four countries, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, and the Philippines, only widows are more likely than the divorced/separated women to be educated and working for cash. Rwanda,

again, is the exception with never-married and currently married women more likely to be employed for cash and more likely to have some education.

In the last column of Table 6.4, stricter criteria are applied in terms of both education and employment: the percent of women in each marital status that have secondary education and are employed in the modern sector is calculated. First, not surprisingly, the proportion of women who meet these criteria falls greatly across all marital statuses as compared to the percent that meet the more liberal criteria of some education with employment for cash. Secondly, the rankings across marital statuses change again. In about half of the countries, divorced/separated or widowed women are more likely to have secondary education and be employed in the modern sector; in the other half of the countries, either the married or never-married women are equally or more likely to meet these criteria. Never-married women appear to more easily meet educational requirements due to a combination of two factors: 1) they are likely to be younger than women in other marital statuses, and 2) women in younger cohorts are more educated than those in older cohorts due to intergenerational improvements in education.

The finding that widowed and divorced women are more likely in several countries to be working for cash could imply that these women have to work out of necessity. However, the fact that these women also rank high in most countries in combinations involving work and at least some education suggests that divorced/separated women and perhaps even widowed women may indeed be somewhat more empowered.

Table 6.5 gives the percent distribution of women in each marital status across values of the API. In this table, the HIGH and MEDIUM categories of the API are collapsed since a large number of cells in the HIGH API category are empty which makes comparison difficult.

By comparing the share of women by marital status at each level of the API, it is possible to tell which marital status is better represented at the upper and lower ends of the API scale. In every country (except Bolivia and Namibia) where data are available for never-married women, never-married women are more likely to be found in the HIGH and MEDIUM-HIGH API levels than women of any other marital status. However, never-married women are simultaneously least likely to be found in the MEDIUM and LOW API levels in only Cameroon, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal, Zambia, and in most of the Latin

Table 6.4 Women's education and employment by marital status

Percentage of women having different combinations of education and employment according to marital status, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Currently married/living together				Widowed				Divorced/separated				Never married			
	Some education	Employed for cash	Some education and employed for cash	Secondary education and modern sector occupation	Some education	Employed for cash	Some education and employed for cash	Secondary education and modern sector occupation	Some education	Employed for cash	Some education and employed for cash	Secondary education and modern sector occupation	Some education	Employed for cash	Some education and employed for cash	Secondary education and modern sector occupation
Sub-Saharan Africa																
Burkina Faso	13.1	51.7	7.4	0.9	12.8	62.8	9.4	1.0	46.0	64.6	27.5	3.4	40.0	37.8	9.7	0.6
Cameroon	52.0	47.8	23.3	2.9	42.9	67.0	25.5	3.3	69.0	56.0	37.1	5.1	90.5	16.5	13.6	1.9
Ghana	57.6	69.9	43.5	2.5	50.0	84.6	41.0	3.8	73.3	75.9	54.9	3.4	89.0	22.1	19.3	2.1
Kenya	77.1	44.7	36.1	5.2	47.1	50.2	28.7	2.3	78.6	57.9	44.8	3.2	96.3	26.1	24.4	3.5
Madagascar	78.2	72.0	56.7	3.1	71.7	87.2	63.5	2.7	72.1	77.1	58.0	2.3	89.7	56.8	50.4	1.4
Malawi	48.0	23.2	14.0	1.0	53.2	39.6	28.7	1.2	47.7	31.8	16.5	0.9	78.5	19.5	15.3	1.2
Namibia	77.5	34.2	28.6	12.3	74.0	37.3	34.4	7.7	77.7	40.2	33.6	9.4	93.2	21.0	19.4	6.3
Niger	7.7	38.4	3.0	0.5	3.5	45.1	1.5	0.4	18.7	38.6	8.7	0.9	32.3	28.3	6.7	1.1
Nigeria	33.0	51.1	17.3	1.9	25.0	51.4	14.1	1.0	58.2	52.6	28.5	4.1	88.3	20.4	15.4	5.7
Rwanda	53.9	60.8	33.8	1.5	43.6	54.5	25.2	1.0	50.0	57.3	29.6	0.4	81.3	52.1	41.4	1.2
Senegal	16.1	44.7	6.7	0.9	30.9	41.2	13.2	5.9	39.0	57.7	23.9	5.2	55.7	29.8	15.2	1.3
Zambia	80.6	47.5	40.1	4.1	69.2	62.4	48.7	8.0	81.4	59.3	50.2	6.6	93.0	24.9	23.2	3.5
North Africa																
Egypt	52.3	15.2	11.4	9.2	41.1	27.7	12.3	5.3	46.2	26.4	15.6	9.5	U	U	U	U
Morocco	23.1	12.7	6.0	3.5	15.8	26.0	7.1	1.5	34.9	33.6	14.3	4.0	57.1	18.8	11.9	3.1
Asia/Near East																
Bangladesh	43.2	12.8	4.7	0.6	24.2	32.9	7.1	0.5	23.3	36.2	7.4	0.4	U	U	U	U
Indonesia	81.7	U	U	3.9	64.1	U	U	2.4	76.2	U	U	1.7	U	U	U	U
Pakistan	20.7	12.0	2.4	1.0	18.9	29.5	2.1	0.0	28.0	24.7	6.0	0.1	U	U	U	U
Philippines	97.3	38.6	37.8	8.3	95.9	62.9	60.6	9.3	97.0	60.5	58.9	9.0	98.9	35.4	35.0	9.8
Turkey	73.0	U	U	3.9	59.3	U	U	2.8	84.1	U	U	14.6	U	U	U	U
Latin America/Caribbean																
Bolivia	84.2	43.2	37.7	7.5	67.7	76.4	56.7	9.0	90.3	75.1	67.8	14.3	96.4	34.0	32.6	6.8
Brazil	75.4	42.3	32.4	6.7	59.2	60.9	33.4	5.0	73.8	67.3	49.4	7.8	93.0	42.6	39.6	8.2
Colombia	94.3	33.2	31.7	10.4	97.0	46.9	45.9	6.5	94.1	61.1	57.3	12.8	98.4	36.9	36.2	11.4
Dominican Republic	92.2	37.4	35.2	9.1	89.5	50.6	44.2	15.1	93.2	50.2	47.3	10.4	98.8	31.2	31.0	13.0
Paraguay	96.9	31.6	31.0	6.3	(94.9)	(65.4)	(64.3)	(14.4)	97.4	69.1	67.4	7.9	98.2	37.9	37.4	8.1
Peru	90.8	43.6	40.4	14.6	84.1	70.3	59.7	13.8	93.3	72.2	67.5	19.2	98.9	39.9	39.5	16.2

Note: Modern sector occupations include all professional, technical, managerial, and clerical occupations. Figures in parentheses are based on 25-49 cases.
 U = Unknown (not available)

Table 6.5 Women's marital status according to API level

Percent distribution of women age 15-49 within each marital status by the Amenities and Possessions Index (API) level, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Marital status	API level			Total
		High/ Medium- High	Medium	Low	
Sub-Saharan Africa					
Burkina Faso	Married/living together	6.0	91.6	2.4	100.0
	Widowed	6.7	93.3	0.0	100.0
	Divorced/separated	17.6	82.3	0.0	100.0
	Never married	19.0	79.1	1.8	100.0
Cameroon	Married/living together	19.5	75.7	4.8	100.0
	Widowed	11.7	80.1	8.1	100.0
	Divorced/separated	20.3	74.7	5.0	100.0
	Never married	34.9	63.3	1.8	100.0
Ghana	Married/living together	15.0	78.4	6.6	100.0
	Widowed	10.1	88.6	1.3	100.0
	Divorced/separated	9.5	85.1	5.4	100.0
	Never married	25.4	71.1	3.5	100.0
Kenya	Married/living together	6.5	84.5	9.0	100.0
	Widowed	3.2	78.4	18.4	100.0
	Divorced/separated	5.8	88.6	5.5	100.0
	Never married	12.9	82.2	4.9	100.0
Madagascar	Married/living together	5.1	63.1	31.8	100.0
	Widowed	3.9	57.8	38.3	100.0
	Divorced/separated	2.6	57.9	39.4	100.0
	Never married	9.5	65.3	25.1	100.0
Malawi	Married/living together	1.5	95.3	3.2	100.0
	Widowed	1.3	93.1	5.6	100.0
	Divorced/separated	0.3	94.2	5.5	100.0
	Never married	3.1	92.6	4.2	100.0
Namibia	Married/living together	27.4	65.3	7.2	100.0
	Widowed	19.8	73.7	6.6	100.0
	Divorced/separated	19.6	67.7	12.6	100.0
	Never married	24.1	70.9	5.0	100.0
Niger	Married/living together	4.1	94.4	1.5	100.0
	Widowed	4.1	92.1	3.8	100.0
	Divorced/separated	9.0	89.5	1.6	100.0
	Never married	14.0	85.1	0.9	100.0
Nigeria	Married/living together	15.2	74.3	10.4	100.0
	Widowed	9.8	69.5	20.7	100.0
	Divorced/separated	21.3	66.1	12.6	100.0
	Never married	32.0	60.6	7.4	100.0
Rwanda	Married/living together	0.9	95.5	3.6	100.0
	Widowed	0.5	88.8	10.7	100.0
	Divorced/separated	0.5	89.3	10.2	100.0
	Never married	2.5	94.1	3.4	100.0
Senegal	Married/living together	18.2	81.0	0.9	100.0
	Widowed	29.4	69.1	1.5	100.0
	Divorced/separated	28.9	70.5	0.5	100.0
	Never married	38.8	60.9	0.4	100.0
Zambia	Married/living together	11.3	77.6	11.2	100.0
	Widowed	10.3	81.8	7.9	100.0
	Divorced/separated	8.3	80.5	11.3	100.0
	Never married	21.9	71.5	6.7	100.0

Table 6.5—Continued

Country	Marital Status	API level			Total
		High/ Medium- High	Medium	Low	
North Africa					
Egypt	Married/living together	67.1	32.8	0.1	100.0
	Widowed	51.7	48.1	0.1	100.0
	Divorced/separated	53.7	46.2	0.0	100.0
	Never married	U	U	U	NA
Morocco	Married/living together	47.8	49.6	2.6	100.0
	Widowed	42.1	52.8	5.1	100.0
	Divorced/separated	56.1	41.2	2.8	100.0
	Never married	58.7	39.6	1.7	100.0
Asia/Near East					
Bangladesh	Married/living together	5.4	93.8	0.8	100.0
	Widowed	5.0	93.9	1.1	100.0
	Divorced/separated	6.1	92.7	1.3	100.0
	Never married	U	U	U	NA
Indonesia	Married/living together	22.9	72.1	5.0	100.0
	Widowed	19.1	74.8	6.1	100.0
	Divorced/separated	25.9	66.8	7.3	100.0
	Never married	U	U	U	NA
Pakistan	Married/living together	20.3	75.8	3.9	100.0
	Widowed	24.6	74.9	0.5	100.0
	Divorced/separated	21.4	76.3	2.2	100.0
	Never married	U	U	U	NA
Philippines	Married/living together	24.5	70.5	5.1	100.0
	Widowed	27.7	68.7	3.5	100.0
	Divorced/separated	35.8	61.5	2.7	100.0
	Never married	43.7	54.2	2.1	100.0
Turkey	Married/living together	80.5	19.3	0.1	100.0
	Widowed	76.2	23.8	0.0	100.0
	Divorced/separated	85.4	14.6	0.0	100.0
	Never married	U	U	U	NA
Latin America/ Caribbean					
Bolivia	Married/living together	41.8	54.5	3.7	100.0
	Widowed	34.2	59.8	6.0	100.0
	Divorced/separated	57.6	41.1	1.3	100.0
	Never married	55.1	42.2	2.8	100.0
Brazil	Married/living together	48.3	49.1	2.7	100.0
	Widowed	46.7	50.9	2.3	100.0
	Divorced/separated	55.4	41.4	3.2	100.0
	Never married	62.4	35.7	1.9	100.0
Colombia	Married/living together	70.6	28.9	0.5	100.0
	Widowed	66.1	33.9	0.0	100.0
	Divorced/separated	73.3	26.0	0.7	100.0
	Never married	82.0	17.9	0.1	100.0
Dominican Rep.	Married/living together	53.2	45.2	1.7	100.0
	Widowed	66.0	32.7	1.3	100.0
	Divorced/separated	62.2	36.5	1.3	100.0
	Never married	72.4	27.1	0.5	100.0
Paraguay	Married/living together	61.2	38.9	0.0	100.0
	Widowed	(62.4)	(37.7)	(0.0)	100.0
	Divorced/separated	65.9	34.2	0.0	100.0
	Never married	68.7	31.3	0.1	100.0
Peru	Married/living together	58.6	38.1	3.3	100.0
	Widowed	52.6	37.8	9.6	100.0
	Divorced/separated	61.1	35.4	3.5	100.0
	Never married	77.6	21.5	0.9	100.0

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on less than 50 cases.

U = Unknown (not available)

NA = Not applicable

American and Caribbean countries. Thus, only in these countries do never-married women unequivocally have a higher socioeconomic living standard than women in other marital statuses.

Widows are economically worse off than women in other marital statuses. They are most likely to be found in the LOW category of the API in nine countries. Divorced/separated women are worse off in the same sense in only two countries: Namibia and Zambia. In addition, in Madagascar and Malawi, both widowed and divorced/separated women are worse off than married and never-married women.

Interestingly, there are several countries where a higher proportion of divorced/separated women have a better living standard than not only widowed women but also married women. This appears to be mostly true of women in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Paraguay, the Philippines, and Turkey, and partially true of women in Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, and Peru.

Finally, in Table 6.6, women in different marital statuses are compared in terms of their living arrangements, whether they have a child of their own under age 10 living with them, and whether they are household heads. The liv-

Table 6.6 Living arrangements and household headship by women's marital status

Percentage of women 15-49 years who are regular household residents in terms of living arrangements and household headship by marital status, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Currently married/ living together				Widowed				Divorced/Separated				Never married			
	Living arrangement		Has child		Living arrangement		Has child		Living arrangement		Has child		Living arrangement		Has child	
	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head
	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head	Alone	with less than 10 years	House- hold head	House- hold head
Sub-Saharan Africa																
Burkina Faso	0.2	0.9	81.6	2.0	0.5	12.8	75.6	43.4	13.8	2.1	48.6	26.2	0.1	0.6	3.2	1.0
Cameroon	0.7	1.2	72.3	4.0	9.5	15.6	52.0	66.7	10.5	10.7	55.1	34.7	2.0	1.3	15.3	5.0
Ghana	2.2	18.1	81.3	27.6	9.0	39.7	58.2	89.7	10.7	40.4	64.5	71.9	9.8	2.2	5.7	12.6
Kenya	0.5	10.7	83.2	19.7	4.1	24.4	71.4	82.8	9.1	14.6	64.9	46.9	3.5	2.0	17.0	7.3
Madagascar	0.3	1.8	77.4	3.8	2.8	21.9	60.3	75.2	6.3	19.1	66.1	45.4	1.8	2.1	17.8	6.1
Malawi	0.6	5.4	76.1	8.7	4.0	36.8	75.6	77.1	5.4	29.5	67.3	59.5	0.7	1.3	8.4	3.7
Namibia	0.2	2.3	71.7	9.7	0.0	8.6	66.1	38.9	1.6	4.4	56.2	30.2	1.0	1.8	32.3	7.8
Niger	0.2	1.1	75.4	2.3	0.7	14.6	65.8	47.4	4.8	7.9	53.1	21.9	0.4	0.1	5.8	0.7
Nigeria	0.2	1.4	78.7	2.9	4.5	28.2	61.4	71.7	6.7	19.5	57.4	45.6	3.3	0.7	3.2	5.4
Rwanda	0.1	1.9	87.2	4.0	2.0	30.3	78.6	90.3	1.0	16.4	70.5	34.8	0.2	0.9	7.3	1.7
Senegal	0.1	0.7	80.3	4.6	3.1	7.7	63.2	27.7	1.5	3.4	60.3	15.2	0.2	0.1	9.5	0.7
Zambia	0.0	0.4	78.5	1.8	1.4	10.4	71.4	57.8	3.5	13.4	59.7	39.8	0.6	0.9	16.0	3.0
North Africa																
Egypt	0.0	0.1	78.6	0.5	3.0	14.8	40.6	72.5	2.4	3.6	33.4	23.8	U	U	U	U
Morocco	0.1	1.0	78.0	3.1	3.1	10.8	40.9	68.7	7.4	4.8	35.0	26.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.9
Asia/Near East																
Bangladesh	0.0	1.7	75.4	3.7	4.2	20.5	35.5	52.5	1.7	8.7	38.3	18.2	U	U	U	U
Indonesia	0.1	0.3	71.4	1.0	5.8	10.2	34.9	69.4	5.5	8.9	33.7	34.1	U	U	U	U
Pakistan	0.1	1.1	78.7	2.8	0.1	16.2	59.4	43.3	0.0	0.5	52.3	6.5	U	U	U	U
Philippines	0.0	0.3	77.9	2.5	1.6	13.3	45.7	67.5	1.6	10.2	54.0	35.6	0.5	0.2	0.8	2.6
Turkey	0.0	0.3	66.1	1.2	4.3	10.8	32.5	73.6	1.3	8.4	32.5	39.9	U	U	U	U
Latin America/ Caribbean																
Bolivia	0.2	2.5	82.3	4.1	3.5	28.8	56.9	84.9	3.3	21.5	62.2	53.3	1.9	1.7	9.4	5.9
Brazil	0.1	1.4	72.9	3.0	0.7	18.5	50.5	91.6	3.9	18.5	59.2	46.6	0.9	0.7	6.0	3.2
Colombia	0.2	1.1	72.6	3.6	2.2	13.6	49.7	63.3	1.8	15.7	55.2	46.4	1.0	0.6	8.3	4.0
Dominican Republic	0.3	1.7	67.0	6.7	0.5	9.8	15.6	83.0	3.2	11.3	51.3	39.1	0.1	0.3	1.9	1.7
Paraguay	0.0	0.3	79.1	1.1	(3.1)	(18.9)	(44.9)	(79.1)	1.8	13.4	61.6	42.2	0.9	1.3	12.8	4.3
Peru	0.0	0.6	78.9	1.8	1.3	19.7	49.2	70.4	1.6	13.2	60.3	44.9	0.6	0.4	5.5	2.2

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on 25-50 cases.
U = Unknown (not available)

ing arrangements considered are "living alone," "living alone with children," and (the category omitted from the table) "living with other adults with or without children."

As expected, a very small percentage of currently married women are living alone or with children only. Nevertheless, it is notable that almost one in five currently married women in Ghana and one in ten in Kenya are living alone with children. Indeed, most women whether divorced/separated, widowed or never-married do not live alone or alone with children. Ghana is the only country where more than 50 percent of divorced/separated women live alone or with children; and, also in Ghana, more than half of widowed and never-married women live with other adults with or without children.

However, if divorced/separated and widowed women are not living with other adults then they are living alone with children. Only in Burkina Faso where 14 percent of divorced/separated women live alone and in Morocco where about 7 percent of divorced women live alone do more divorced women live alone than with children only. The percent of divorced/separated women living only with children ranges from over 40 percent in Ghana to less than 1 percent in Pakistan. In most countries other than the Asian and North African ones, more than 10 percent of divorced women live only with children.

The percent of widowed women living alone never rises above 10 percent in any country. However, the percent of widowed women living only with children ranges from a high of about 40 percent in Ghana to about 8 percent in Senegal with about 10 or more percent of widows in all countries other than Namibia and Senegal living only with children. Notably also, a higher proportion of widowed than divorced/separated women live only with children except in Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, and Zambia.

In Table 6.6, the third column under each marital status gives the percent of women who have at least one child under age 10 living with them. Currently married women are more likely than women in any other marital status to have a child less than 10 years old living with them. However, at least 50 percent of currently divorced/separated and widowed women have a young child living with them in most countries. Thus, although widowed and divorced/separated women are less likely than currently married women to have a young child living with them, in the majority of countries they are more likely to have a young child living with them than not.

Notably, in Namibia, about one-third of all never-married women have a child less than 10 years living with them. Also, the percent of never-married women with a child less than 10 living with them is between 15 and 20 percent in Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, and Zambia, and between 5 and 13 percent in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Malawi, Niger, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, and Senegal. This implies that a fairly significant proportion of never-married women in most countries, other than those of Asia and North Africa, have young children residing with them.

Finally, widowed women, perhaps as a function of having a higher average age, are much more likely than women of any other marital status to be household heads. The proportion of widows that are household heads ranges from about 28 percent in Senegal to 92 percent in Brazil and exceeds two-thirds of all widows in 17 countries. Divorced/separated women are also more likely than currently married or never-married women to be household heads. The percent of divorced women that are household heads ranges from 72 percent in Ghana and 60 percent in Malawi to a low of 7 percent in Pakistan. However, in the majority of countries, between 25 and 50 percent of divorced women are household heads.

6.3 PROFILES OF WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE

The data on the number of times women have been married is gathered using a single question in the marriage section of the DHS core questionnaire as follows: "Have you been married or lived with a man only once or more than once?" All women who say they are married or living with a man currently or have ever been married or ever lived with a man are asked this question. In general, no information is available on the number of earlier marriages or on the reasons why earlier marriages ended.

Countries vary greatly in terms of the proportion of ever-married women that have been married more than once. Note that the proportion of women married more than once reflects not only the level of marital dissolution, but also the feasibility of remarriage. Pakistan and Turkey, with less than 3 percent of ever-married women married more than once, have the lowest percent of women who have been remarried followed closely by Bangladesh, Egypt, Kenya, and the Philippines (last column of Table 6.7). While most other countries have between 10 and 30 percent of ever-married women who have been married more than once, in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, and Malawi, about one-

Table 6.7 Women who have been married more than once by selected characteristics

Percentage of ever-married women who have been married more than once by residence, age, current marital status, education, and employment, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Residence		Age (years)				Current marital status			Education			Current employment status			Total
							Married/ to- gether	Wid- owed	Di- vorced/ sepa- rated	None	Pri- mary	Sec- ond- ary or more	Working,			
	Working, but not for cash	Working, but not for cash	Not work- ing													
Sub-Saharan Africa																
Burkina Faso	14.7	15.3	5.0	10.8	20.1	23.9	15.1	13.6	26.8	15.4	15.2	12.7	16.8	16.0	12.9	15.2
Cameroon	25.9	26.5	15.1	22.5	32.1	32.6	26.0	21.1	33.9	33.1	19.7	21.0	28.8	25.0	23.5	26.3
Ghana	32.9	30.9	6.7	20.1	38.1	47.4	30.7	32.9	38.1	27.7	36.1	22.0	34.7	23.3	24.6	31.6
Kenya	7.4	7.6	4.7	5.5	7.8	12.0	7.0	13.0	10.9	11.1	7.8	2.6	7.6	7.1	7.6	7.5
Madagascar	24.0	30.7	11.6	23.6	34.7	39.7	28.4	24.1	36.4	43.5	28.6	17.1	30.5	36.7	23.0	29.5
Malawi	U	U	9.6	24.1	39.0	48.3	30.9	35.0	38.2	37.3	27.1	9.6	33.3	39.9	31.2	31.9
Namibia	19.9	19.4	4.6	16.7	19.9	24.5	18.8	17.8	26.3	25.3	21.4	13.0	18.8	18.0	20.2	19.6
Niger	31.5	29.2	10.5	25.4	37.5	42.0	29.2	35.4	37.9	30.3	22.4	16.3	32.4	24.7	28.1	29.6
Nigeria	11.7	15.9	3.4	11.5	18.7	21.0	14.9	17.4	16.3	18.2	9.8	6.6	16.8	12.8	13.4	15.0
Rwanda	15.4	17.5	12.0	11.2	19.2	24.8	14.5	33.4	33.7	20.3	15.7	6.9	16.5	19.1	11.0	17.4
Senegal	25.0	19.8	2.1	14.2	26.9	34.5	21.1	30.9	28.6	22.7	16.6	15.8	24.2	24.5	19.1	21.6
Zambia	16.5	27.3	3.1	15.6	29.2	39.4	21.6	22.0	26.3	32.2	22.9	10.0	23.2	27.2	20.5	22.2
North Africa																
Egypt	5.0	5.7	0.7	3.4	5.7	8.4	4.9	8.5	19.2	7.5	5.2	1.8	5.3	5.1	5.5	5.4
Morocco	12.0	13.4	2.2	7.5	14.1	19.1	11.7	26.2	22.7	14.9	6.7	5.3	15.7	13.8	12.2	12.8
Asia/Near East																
Bangladesh	5.3	7.5	3.7	7.0	9.1	7.9	6.7	13.4	17.1	9.5	5.5	1.8	10.2	22.3	6.5	7.3
Indonesia	12.4	17.6	4.2	9.4	17.2	27.6	15.4	23.4	25.6	25.6	17.0	4.3	17.8	U	14.8	16.1
Pakistan	2.0	2.5	0.2	2.0	2.3	3.5	2.3	3.7	3.8	2.5	1.1	1.9	3.8	1.8	2.1	2.3
Philippines	4.8	5.8	1.6	2.8	5.3	8.6	5.2	5.4	8.8	10.5	7.8	3.3	5.7	6.7	4.9	5.3
Turkey	2.4	2.9	0.5	0.9	3.1	4.5	2.3	5.6	13.0	3.7	2.1	2.3	2.9	U	2.4	2.6
Latin America/ Caribbean																
Bolivia	8.6	6.5	1.0	4.6	9.1	11.3	7.1	8.9	14.8	8.7	9.2	5.8	9.7	5.8	6.2	7.7
Brazil	15.3	10.7	2.4	11.9	15.5	15.6	12.5	13.6	21.7	19.9	12.6	7.0	14.3	4.4	13.3	13.6
Colombia	12.3	17.5	4.0	11.7	14.2	17.8	12.6	18.3	19.4	28.3	16.5	9.0	13.3	23.5	13.8	13.7
Dominican Republic	33.4	34.4	16.0	29.1	38.7	40.4	31.9	40.5	40.4	51.2	38.9	21.3	36.3	23.3	32.5	33.7
Paraguay	8.6	7.6	5.4	6.5	8.5	10.5	7.2	7.4	20.1	9.9	9.9	4.0	9.5	8.0	7.4	8.2
Peru	9.0	8.8	1.1	5.7	10.4	12.2	8.4	9.3	14.8	13.9	10.7	6.9	10.9	8.1	7.1	9.0

U = Unknown (not available)

third of all ever-married women have been married more than once.

In most countries, the extent of remarriage does not differ by area of residence. Only in Colombia, Indonesia, Madagascar, and Zambia does the share of remarried women among ever-married rural women exceed by more than 5 percentage points their share among urban ever-married women. In Brazil and Senegal, the difference in the share of remarried women is also about 5 percentage points by residence, but remarried women constitute a higher proportion of urban than rural ever-married women.

Furthermore, as expected, in all countries the share of remarried women rises with age. Remarriage by the age of 40-49 years is most common among the countries in sub-Saharan Africa. With the exception of Kenya, where only 12 percent of women in this age group are remarried, in all other sub-Saharan African countries, the percent of remarried women age 40-49 ranges from 21 percent in Nigeria to 47 percent in Ghana. By contrast, less than 10 percent of women in this age group have remarried in Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Turkey. The only Asian country where remarriage appears relatively common is Indonesia, where 28 percent of women in the 40-49 year age group have been married more than once. In

most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, 10-20 percent of women are remarried in the oldest age group; the only exception is the Dominican Republic, where 40 percent of ever-married women in this age group have been married more than once.

Interestingly, women who have been remarried account for a higher proportion of currently divorced/separated women than currently married women in every country. Even widowed women are more likely to have been remarried than currently married women in most countries. This implies that women who are currently married tend to have been married only once as compared to women who are currently divorced/separated or widowed. This finding may be due, in part, to the fact that the question on number of marriages includes not just marriage but also living with a man (without marriage). Everything else being the same, divorced/separated and currently widowed women are likely to have a greater opportunity provided by the dissolution of their marriage to have lived with a man after their marriage ended. Further, there may be formerly married women who are currently living with a man who answer "divorced/separated" or "widowed" to the question on marital status because of what they perceive their current *marital* status to be; yet, when answering the question on number of times married or living with a man, they count the fact that they are currently living with a man. This anomaly may also increase the proportions of women who report being married more than once among currently divorced/separated and widowed women as compared to currently married women.

In most countries, the share of remarried women varies inversely with education so that remarriage appears to be more common among those with no or low education than among those with secondary or higher education. Only in Cameroon, Pakistan, and Turkey is remarriage higher among women with no education and higher education than it is among women with primary education. Nonetheless, even in these countries, women with no education are more likely to have been remarried than women with higher education. Bolivia and Ghana are the only countries where remarriage is highest among women with primary education. This overall negative association of remarriage with education may be a spurious result via the association of both variables with age. Since remarriage rises with age, and education is lower among those who are older, remarriage and education may appear to be negatively related.

Finally, in 13 countries remarried women make up a higher share of ever-married women working for cash than

those either not working or not working for cash. In an additional eight countries, remarried women comprise a higher proportion of all women working without cash earnings than women working with cash earnings or those not working at all. Thus, in general, remarried women are more highly represented among women who work than among those who do not.

These data do not tell anything conclusive about the status of remarried women. On the one hand, in most countries, working women are more likely to be remarried than nonworking women, suggesting greater autonomy for such women; on the other hand, women working without cash are also the ones more likely in several countries to have ever remarried as compared with nonworking women. Also remarriage appears more common among women with low rather than high education. These latter two factors are likely to negatively affect the status and autonomy of remarried women.

6.4 PROFILES OF WOMEN IN POLYGYNOUS UNIONS

Table 6.8 presents data on women who are in polygynous unions for countries where information on polygyny is available. Polygyny is most prevalent in Burkina Faso where over 50 percent of currently married women are in polygynous unions. Nigeria and Senegal have at least 40 percent and Cameroon and Niger have over one-third of women in such unions. Polygyny is least common in Madagascar, Morocco, and Pakistan where 5 percent or less of currently married women are in polygynous unions.

Polygyny is more of a rural than an urban phenomenon in all countries except Niger. The percent of women who are in polygynous unions rises with age so that older women are more likely to be in polygynous unions than younger women in all countries except Madagascar. Education is also negatively associated with being in a polygynous union: in several countries, the share of women in polygynous unions among currently married women with no education is at least twice as high as among those with secondary and higher education.

In all countries except Madagascar, Morocco, and Namibia, women in polygynous unions account for a higher proportion of working than nonworking women; however, in half of the countries where polygyny is practiced, women in polygynous unions constitute a higher proportion of

Table 6.8 Women in polygynous unions by selected characteristics

Percentage of currently married women in polygynous unions by residence, age, education, and employment, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Residence		Age				Education			Current employment status			Total polygynous
	Urban	Rural	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	None	Primary	Secondary or more	Working, but not for cash	Not working		
Sub-Saharan Africa													
Burkina Faso	31.0	55.3	34.6	45.4	59.6	61.1	54.6	35.4	12.7	51.9	56.8	48.7	51.1
Cameroon	31.5	42.6	26.5	33.4	43.7	49.5	49.8	33.4	18.1	41.4	50.5	29.1	38.4
Ghana	21.4	30.6	16.8	20.5	31.1	38.1	35.7	22.4	17.5	27.5	34.9	22.1	27.7
Kenya	13.5	19.9	16.2	13.2	20.8	29.1	33.2	16.3	10.3	19.7	19.9	18.0	18.9
Madagascar ¹	3.2	3.8	4.3	4.0	3.7	2.6	5.1	3.3	3.1	3.6	2.6	4.3	3.7
Malawi	U	U	9.7	17.0	23.4	29.6	22.4	19.1	9.3	20.9	18.7	20.4	20.5
Namibia ¹	6.7	17.6	8.0	12.5	13.5	15.2	19.0	14.9	7.5	10.2	14.5	15.1	13.4
Niger	40.2	35.3	13.3	31.3	45.7	50.3	36.2	35.6	25.3	40.2	35.7	33.2	36.0
Nigeria	33.6	43.0	27.1	34.8	47.5	49.7	47.9	29.8	21.0	44.0	38.1	37.7	41.0
Rwanda	8.5	14.6	11.7	9.0	15.3	22.4	17.8	11.9	5.9	14.6	14.0	10.4	14.3
Senegal	40.4	50.9	24.9	38.0	53.5	65.2	50.7	32.2	28.7	51.9	50.0	43.6	47.5
Zambia	9.2	25.1	9.2	13.8	22.6	25.8	24.9	17.7	10.3	18.2	23.2	16.5	17.7
North Africa													
Morocco	5.1	5.2	1.2	3.9	5.2	7.4	5.6	4.1	3.3	4.8	3.4	5.3	5.1
Asia/Near East													
Pakistan	2.8	4.9	2.9	3.9	4.1	5.6	4.7	3.7	1.9	3.7	8.2	4.1	4.3

¹ Women with missing information or who do not know whether their husband has other wives are 3.0 percent of ever-married women in Madagascar and 13.8 percent of ever-married women in Namibia. However, in Namibia, 92 percent of those with missing information are those who do not know whether their husband has another wife.
U = Unknown (not available)

women who work without cash than women who work for cash. Thus, even though polygyny is positively related to the probability of being employed, it is generally more common among low educated and less urbanized women, and among women who work without cash.

6.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST MARRIAGE, SEX, AND CHILDBIRTH

In this section, the link between marriage and sex is examined across countries. Cultures vary greatly in terms of the amount of control on female sexuality and the premium placed on female virginity at the time of first marriage (Caldwell et al., 1989). The age at first intercourse and the age at first marriage is expected to more or less coincide in such cultures. A lack of overlap between the timing of first sex and first marriage would suggest greater sexual autonomy for women and weaker societal controls on female sexuality.

However, an early age at marriage or at first sex is likely to result in an early age at first birth in societies where contraceptive use is low or nonexistent. The disassociation of marriage and sex in such societies may actually have negative consequences for women if unwed mothers are not accepted in society. Under such circumstances, women who have a child when they are very young are likely to be disadvantaged on two counts: 1) early childbirth is likely to limit their own life chances and have consequences for their own health and the health of their child, and 2) they may be rejected by society for also being unwed mothers (Bledsoe and Cohen, 1993).

Thus, in this section, the disassociation of marriage and sex is explored by asking two separate though related questions: first, to what extent are sex and marriage disassociated across countries, and secondly, how common is early childbirth (where early is defined as childbirth before the age of 20 years) and to what extent is it taking place outside of marriage.

Information on age at first intercourse is available in only 19 of the 25 countries included in this report. For countries where it is available, the median age at first intercourse and the difference between the median age at marriage and the median age at first intercourse are calculated for women age 25-49 years (except for Ghana where the difference is calculated for women age 20-49 years). In most of the countries for which data are available, with the sole exception of the Philippines, the median age at first sex for women age 25-49 is below age 20 (Table 6.9). This implies that at least half of the women who are now between the ages of 25 and 49 years had sexual intercourse before they were 20.

Table 6.9 Comparison of the timing of first intercourse and marriage for women

Indicators of the extent to which the timing of first intercourse is disassociated from that of marriage for women in selected age groups, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Women age 25-49		Women age 15-49	
	Median age at first intercourse	Median age at first marriage minus median age at first intercourse	Percent of ever-married women who had sex before marriage	Percent of never-married women who have had sex
Sub-Saharan Africa				
Burkina Faso	17.3	0.2	20.9	22.6
Cameroon	15.8	0.7	28.0	57.0
Ghana ¹	17.0	1.9	55.6	58.0
Kenya	16.6	2.2	57.0	49.9
Madagascar	16.7	1.5	50.0	49.0
Namibia	19.1	5.7	53.7	62.8
Niger	14.9	0.2	2.8	9.5
Nigeria	16.2	0.7	17.2	41.0
Rwanda	19.7	0.3	12.5	11.9
Senegal	16.0	0.2	6.6	18.8
Zambia	16.2	1.2	39.2	52.2
Asia/Near East				
Indonesia	17.7	0.0	4.3 ^a	NA
Philippines	21.5	0.1	8.0	1.6
Latin America/Caribbean				
Bolivia	18.8	1.8	43.2	21.7
Brazil	19.4	1.1	24.7	15.3
Colombia	19.9	1.1	28.4	22.1
Dominican Republic	18.9	0.1	14.4	7.0
Paraguay	19.3	1.6	35.1	35.2
Peru	19.4	1.7	50.1	20.0

¹ Median age at first intercourse calculated on sample of women age 20-49

^a Based only on currently married women
NA = Not applicable

Also in half of the countries, the median age at first sex is less than one year earlier than the median age at first marriage. Thus, for women in these countries, first marriage and first sex tend to take place at about the same time. However, in the remaining countries, first sex occurs on average at least one year before first marriage. Specifically, in Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Zambia, and all the Latin American countries except the Dominican Republic, first sex, on average, precedes first marriage by one to two years, and in Namibia the difference between median age at first marriage and first sex is almost six years.

Another way of examining the disassociation of sex and marriage is to examine the proportion of never-married women who have had sex and the proportion of women who had sex before marriage. This information is available for all women (except in Indonesia where it is available only for currently married women) between the ages of 15-49 years in countries where a question on age at first sex was asked in the DHS. The information is presented in the last two columns of Table 6.9.

In Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, and Peru, there is no clear link between first marriage and first sex: indeed, in these countries, women are as likely to have their first sexual intercourse before marriage as after marriage. Additionally, in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Zambia, more than one in three ever-married women had sex before marriage, and in Brazil, Cameroon, and Colombia, about one in four did so. Also, in half of the sub-Saharan African countries—Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, and Zambia—about half or more of the never-married women between the ages of 15 and 49 years have had sex. As compared to these countries, marriage and sex appear to be more closely linked in the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Niger, the Philippines, and Rwanda.

Finally, in Table 6.10, information is provided on the percent of women among those currently age 15-19 that have had a birth, and the percent of those currently age 20 or more who had their first birth before age 20 by current age. In addition, for each age group, the percent that were not married when they had their first birth is also given.

With the exception of Colombia, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, and Rwanda, at least one in 10 women currently age 15-19 years have had a birth, and in Egypt and all of the Asian countries except the Philippines, this ratio is almost one in two. Except in the Asian and North African countries, and the Dominican Republic, Niger, and Nigeria, at least one in 10 women who have had a birth in this age

Table 6.10 First birth before age 20 by current age and marital status

Percentage of women who had their first birth before the age of 20 years and whether the birth took place before their first marriage, by current age, Demographic and Health Surveys, 1990-1994

Country	Women currently age 15-19 years who have had a birth		Women currently age 20 and over who had a birth before the age of 20							
	Total	Not married at first birth	Total		20-29		30-39		40-49	
			Total	Not married at first birth	Total	Not married at first birth	Total	Not married at first birth	Total	Not married at first birth
Sub-Saharan Africa										
Burkina Faso	24.2	10.7	61.6	10.4	62.9	10.6	63.1	11.2	55.7	8.2
Cameroon	29.7	23.3	64.7	21.6	66.1	23.1	64.8	21.9	60.8	17.1
Ghana	18.6	22.1	48.1	13.6	47.7	13.5	48.1	14.0	48.9	13.2
Kenya	16.8	56.0	57.9	34.6	54.9	42.3	62.0	31.8	58.6	20.3
Madagascar	24.6	41.6	56.4	24.5	53.1	29.5	58.8	21.3	60.4	19.0
Malawi	27.3	18.7	62.2	15.0	64.5	15.9	65.5	14.5	52.9	13.4
Namibia	17.7	76.7	39.6	67.5	40.4	72.2	42.3	64.8	33.8	59.6
Niger	31.1	5.8	70.6	4.0	74.6	3.4	69.9	4.7	61.2	4.4
Nigeria	23.5	7.5	52.8	12.3	53.7	11.1	54.0	13.6	48.9	13.0
Rwanda	8.2	31.8	29.6	8.7	26.1	13.2	29.0	5.9	38.7	5.6
Senegal	20.1	19.9	55.7	11.4	54.2	14.7	58.8	9.6	53.8	7.2
Zambia	27.2	37.0	67.1	19.1	62.8	25.2	73.5	16.2	68.6	8.1
North Africa										
Egypt ¹	53.7	0.0	43.5	2.1	45.9	1.8	41.2	2.2	43.4	2.4
Morocco	4.9	0.0	29.3	2.1	21.1	1.2	32.1	2.1	42.2	3.0
Asia/Near East										
Bangladesh ¹	55.3	0.0	76.2	0.6	74.1	0.4	75.7	0.6	82.8	1.0
Indonesia ¹	45.8	0.7	52.7	1.9	54.1	1.4	52.3	2.3	51.4	2.1
Pakistan ¹	49.0	0.0	43.6	0.0	49.5	0.0	41.6	0.0	36.4	0.0
Philippines	5.3	3.5	25.0	7.1	22.6	5.9	26.8	7.9	26.8	7.5
Turkey ¹	45.8	0.0	43.6	1.4	41.8	1.1	45.4	1.4	43.3	1.6
Latin America/Caribbean										
Bolivia	14.3	29.0	38.4	24.4	38.2	23.4	40.4	24.3	35.7	26.7
Brazil	11.0	19.7	35.5	14.0	36.8	14.9	36.6	15.6	31.9	10.1
Colombia	9.6	23.5	32.3	17.9	30.8	18.5	31.5	16.5	36.8	18.5
Dominican Republic	13.4	7.2	41.0	4.9	35.0	5.6	43.4	4.1	52.2	4.7
Paraguay	14.1	33.9	34.8	26.5	36.5	26.1	32.6	28.2	34.9	24.9
Peru	9.0	22.4	33.1	20.8	29.7	22.7	36.0	20.3	35.9	18.1

¹ Ever-married sample

group have had it outside of marriage. In Kenya and Namibia, between one-half and three-fourths of 15-19 year-old women who have had a birth were unmarried at the time of the birth, and in Madagascar, Paraguay, Rwanda, and Zambia, over 30 percent of such women were unmarried. However, these proportions underrepresent the experience of the 15-19 age cohort since this cohort has yet to reach the age of 20 years. Thus, turning to the experience of women who have reached 20 years of age, the proportion who had their first birth before age 20 and were unmarried at the time is examined.

In every country listed, at least one in four women currently between the ages of 20 and 49 years had a birth before they were age 20. This ratio is between one-half and three-fourths in several countries, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa. However, at least three-fourths of these women who had a first birth before age 20 did so while married in all countries except Kenya, Namibia, and Paraguay.

On examining the experience of women currently in different age groups, no consistent reduction over time in the proportion of women having births before age 20 is observed across countries. Such a trend would imply that

women in the youngest age group are the least likely to have first births before the age of 20 years. The only countries where there appears to be a decline from older to younger ages in the proportion of women with early births are Bangladesh, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, the Philippines, and Rwanda. In Brazil, Cameroon, Indonesia, Niger, and Pakistan, the percent of women who have had a birth before the age of 20 years actually decreases with age.

Simultaneously, in about half of the countries being considered, the percent of women who have had a birth before age 20 outside of marriage is higher among those currently 20-29 years and 30-39 years than those currently 40-49 years of age. Further in nine countries, the percent of women that had their first birth outside of marriage before the age of 20 clearly increases moving from the older to the younger age group. The only countries where there is a clear decline in the proportions of very young women having births outside marriage are Bangladesh, Bolivia, Egypt,

Morocco, and Turkey. In all five of these countries, however, the share of women having births before marriage is, in any case, very low.

The one country where the share of women having premarital births is exceptionally large is Namibia. Not only do over two-thirds, on average, of the 30 to 40 percent of women having births before age 20 have their first births premaritally, but this share of women has risen from 60 percent among those currently age 40-49 to 72 percent among those currently age 20-29.

Thus, in a large part of the world, first sex and first birth appear to be disassociated from marriage. There is no clear trend towards the reduction of the proportion of first births taking place before the age of 20. Also, there is evidence for several countries that a larger share of first births which take place before the age of 20 are increasingly taking place outside of marriage.