Patterns of First Marriage

Timing and Prevalence

United Nations

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United Nations

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NOTE

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The term "country" as used in the text of this publication also refers, as appropriate, to territories or areas.

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PREFACE

This study of patterns of first marriage is a follow-up to an earlier United Nations publication entitled First Marriage: Patterns and Determinants, which focuses primarily on conceptual and theoretical issues. It deals with types of family systems and types of marriage in different cultures, with the terminology and definitions of marital status and with statistical problems encountered in identifying and enumerating different marriage forms in various cultural contexts. Furthermore, a major part of that publication is devoted to an overview of selected theories and hypotheses concerning interrelations between first marriage behaviour and its social, economic, demographic and cultural determinants.

The present study is intended to complement the previous theory-oriented overview with a more empirical analysis of first marriage patterns based on census and survey data. The purpose, scope and content of this study are briefly described below in the Introduction. The objective of this study is threefold. First, it attempts to provide, in a comparative fashion, a quantitative description and analysis of past and current patterns of first marriage in as many countries as the data permit. Secondly, the study provides, in a single volume, a large body of selected indicators of timing of first marriage and of prevalence for most countries of the world (although not all the desired data were at hand). Thirdly, it attempts to provide a cross-cultural interpretation of first marriage behaviour and, in a limited way, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of marriage; this endeavour was necessarily limited mainly because the contextual disciplines could not be scrutinized comprehensively.

The two studies constitute a survey of first marriage practice throughout the world. They constitute an addition to the numerous global demographic surveys undertaken by the United Nations and are also intended to fill a gap in the literature caused by the paucity of relevant information for some countries as well as by conceptual issues and problems arising from the relative accuracy of available data. It is hoped that more detailed analyses of first marriage, as well as studies of remarriages and marriage dissolutions, will be undertaken in the future.

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Explanatory notes

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

Reference to "dollars" ($) indicates United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

The following symbols have been used in the tables:

Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.

An em dash (—) indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.

A hyphen (-) indicates that the item is not applicable.

A minus sign (-) before a number indicates a deficit or decrease, except as indicated.

Use of a hyphen (-) between dates representing years (e.g., 1984-1985), signifies the full period involved, including the beginning and end years. A slash (e.g., 1984/85) indicates a financial year, school year or crop year.

Details and percentages in tables do not necessarily add to totals because of rounding.

The following abbreviations have been used in this volume.

PEM	percentage ever married
SMAM	singulate mean age at marriage
WFS	World Fertility Survey

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to describe the marriage patterns of men and women during the decades following the Second World War. More precisely, the study analyses the timing and prevalence of first marriages of both sexes during the period since the middle of the twentieth century on the basis of available censuses and surveys. It also attempts to fill a gap in nuptiality research and to present a world-wide overview of first marriage behaviour based on comparable available marriage indices. Although the study covers both sexes, particular attention is devoted to first marriage patterns of women because they are the most relevant population subgroup for the understanding of fertility and because they are also those whose age at marriage is most likely to be influenced by social change. In order to present the post-war marriage levels and trends against their proper background, the discussion is preceded by a brief overview of the marriage patterns that prevailed during the first half of the twentieth century.

A corollary of this analysis is to determine whether and to what extent a passage from an early-marriage/high-prevalence pattern to late-marriage/low-prevalence pattern has emerged during the past 30 or 35 years in countries where first marriages of women were previously taking place at very early ages and, in particular, whether a certain convergence in first marriage patterns is found when the patterns of developed and developing countries are compared. Lastly, the study examines a limited number of factors assumed to be associated with early or late marriage. This endeavour to provide insights into the determinants of marriage and to achieve a better understanding of marriage behaviour is based on the conceptual framework developed in the earlier publication on this topic (United Nations, 1988). Not all the relevant factors could be examined, mainly because the pertinent comparable data needed are not readily available for all the countries over the entire period. This is the case both for various socio-economic factors and for cultural factors of marriage formation, such as family type, norms of selection of marriage partner, marriage timing and prevalence norms, dowry and bride-wealth obligations and status of women. These factors are, however, examined whenever information is available, with supporting evidence drawn from existing studies.

For the purpose of the present study, a person is considered married if he or she has so stated in a census or a survey. This assumption is appropriate for most countries of the world, regardless of whether the marriage is established by a formal ceremony, as well as in the absence of proper legal registration of marriages. This approach does not preclude, however, misreporting of marital status by couples who are indeed in a de facto marital union but do not so declare or whose union has been dissolved and the new marital status not properly identified. The study is limited to first marriages. An analysis of all marriages would have encompassed marriage dissolutions and remarriage, for which an adequate data base was not readily available for all countries during the period 1900-1985.

The indices used to measure marriage timing are the percentage ever married (PEM) in age group 15-19 and the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM). 1/ The index of marriage prevalence is defined by the percentage ever married in age group 45-49 or by age 50. This age limit was chosen because by age 50, the great majority of first marriages have already taken place.

Data inaccuracies consist mainly of underreporting of population, age-misreporting and digit preferences common in censuses and surveys. Marriage data, in particular, are also affected by additional reporting errors, such as misreporting or not reporting marital status, as well as unknown marital status. As a result, the level of accuracy of the data varies considerably. Although data errors are acknowledged whenever possible, in notes to the text, it was not possible, in the absence of a reliable standard (such as intercensal vital statistics), to undertake the needed evaluation and adjustments.

This analysis is divided into six chapters. Chapter I presents the historical background and an overview of marriage patterns, covering the years from around 1900 to around 1950 for countries for which pertinent data were readily available. Chapters II, III and IV cover the period from 1950 to 1980-1985 and pertain, respectively, to Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia. Chapter V reviews Northern America, Europe, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the two developed countries of Oceania--Australia and New Zealand--during the same time-span. Each chapter examines the timing and prevalence of marriage on the basis of indices derived from censuses and surveys. Differences between sexes in age at first marriage are also examined. Special sections are devoted to polygyny in Africa and Asia, to consensual unions in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to unmarried cohabitation in Northern America, Europe and Oceania. Chapter VI summarized the findings and discusses number of considerations with respect to the research and policy implications arising from this study.

Two annexes are also included. Annex I provides a number of tables giving the basic marriage indicators used in the analysis, together with their sources for all world regions. Annex II presents the methodology of computation of the singulate mean age at marriage.

A number of limitations of this study need to be pointed out. Changes in national borders and differences in coverage are acknowledged whenever possible. In situations where marriage indicators are drawn from a survey, the possible effect of sampling error should be borne in mind. Comparability problems also arise from differences in national definitions of the criteria studied here. In the case of urban/rural differentials, for instance, national definitions of urban and rural may vary (United Nations, 1979 and 1987). Similarly, educational attainment and criteria for classification of the women's work often differ. Indicators are sometimes derived from truncated cohorts, for whom the derived indicators will not be exactly comparable to those based on complete experience.

Because marriage (defined as any type of conjugal cohabitation) constitutes in most countries the beginning of the period of exposure to the risk of conception, it has a direct bearing on the determination of fertility levels. This notion is particularly relevant in societies where women marry very early and where Governments have adopted population policies directed to

reducing fertility. Indeed, in such societies, there is room for delaying age at first marriage, which in turn could, under favourable conditions, contribute to a decline in fertility. A better understanding of some of the societal conditions leading to early or delayed marriage would provide a substantive basis for the decision to adopt a marriage policy. It would, in particular, ascertain what type of measures could actually influence marriage behaviour and become a component of a population policy.

Note

1/ This indicator is computed according to the formula given by Hajnal (1953) and is based on the proportions single between ages 15 and 54 of a hypothetical cohort taken from one census or a survey. The singulate age at marriage measures the mean age at first marriage only under conditions of constant nuptiality and with specific assumptions as to mortality and migration. Because these assumptions are often not met in the countries studied, the single census SMAMs used here should be interpreted as comparative indicators of marriage timing rather than as a measurement of the mean age at first marriage of a cohort. In Northern America, Europe and Oceania, given the many successive censuses available for all countries, estimates were also obtained by a modified procedure of Hajnal's technique, whereby SMAM is computed from the proportions single taken from two consecutive censuses (Coale, Cho and Goldman, 1982). This approach expresses the experience of a hypothetical cohort during the period between the two censuses. For more information on the methodology, assumptions and rationale of these two estimating procedures, see annex II.

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I. BACKGROUND: FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The importance of the marriage patterns of Western Europe in maintaining low levels of natural fertility during pre-industrial times has been stressed in a number of studies (e.g., Coale, 1973; Sklar, 1974; Bongaarts and Potter, 1983). The specificity of this pattern, compared with the experience of the currently developing countries, was first presented by Hajnal (1953, 1965). For the early decades of the twentieth century, Hajnal identified three distinctive female marriage patterns: one of late marriage and high permanent celibacy, the "Western European" pattern, which characterized the Western European countries of the time; one of early and universal marriage, the "non-European" pattern, which pertains to the less developed regions; and a third with a later marriage timing pattern than the developing countries and high marriage prevalence, the "Eastern European" pattern, found in a number of areas of that subregion.

In this overview of marriage patterns during the first half of the twentieth century, new data for both men and women have been added to Hajnal's material. These new data include a number of new single census estimates of SMAM and PEM at age 50, as well as a number of intercensal estimates, all drawn from historical country studies. Data were also available for several African countries, although not in sufficient number to be representative of either Northern Africa or sub-Saharan Africa. Data for several Latin American and the Caribbean countries are also included, along with additional points in time for a number of European countries.

To allow for flexible categorization of the marriage patterns examined, reference is made to "early-marriage" and "late-marriage" patterns, as well as to "high-prevalence" and "low-prevalence" marriage patterns. There is thus a de facto disaggregation of Hajnal's concepts of pattern of marriage so that timing and prevalence can be examined separately. This approach provides more flexibility in examining marriage behaviour in which patterns of early timing and high prevalence or late timing and low prevalence are not strictly related. In addition, it is quite likely that, as they evolve, the marriage patterns of non-European countries will tend to become late patterns so that the prior geographical classification becomes inappropriate. The specific range of early and late marriage timing varies according to sex, with women having a younger cut-off age. The "intermediate-marriage" pattern refers to Hajnal's Eastern European pattern.

For the purpose of this study, the early-marriage pattern for women refers approximately to SMAMs of 21 years or under, the intermediate to 20-23 years and the late to 23-28 years. Among men, 27 years or over constitutes a late pattern. High marriage prevalence refers to 95 per cent or more ever married at ages 45-49 or 50; intermediate prevalence pertains to percentages of about 90-95 and low prevalence to percentages under 90. Because classifications are generally too rigid to fit the social reality, one should allow for some overlap in categories, particularly for the deviation of certain countries from the general classification of the geographical region to which they belong.

The reliability of the data used could not be ascertained, but it is suspected that estimates for certain countries of Africa and of Latin America and the Caribbean contain errors. For instance, a female marriage prevalence level (all marriage types combined) of 88 per cent in Mozambique in 1944 is unlikely, because it almost reached 98 per cent in 1980. Likewise, the low prevalence observed in Latin America is questionable.

One should also be aware of the heterogeneity of the data of this period. First, geographical regions and subregions are represented by an incomplete number of countries. This is particularly true for the less developed regions. Because of a lack of appropriate data, only a small number of countries from these regions are included. Secondly, there are variations to be considered for countries included in the review: some have older data and others more recent data; and for many countries, the number of censuses or surveys available and the years for which they are available vary considerably. Comparability of census data is hindered by additional difficulties, especially in assessing trends. Territorial changes resulting from wars are often major sources of data inconsistencies. In France, for instance, major border changes took place four times in less than a century--in 1871, 1918, 1940 and 1945 (Chasteland and Pressat, 1962). The map of central and eastern Europe also underwent considerable changes after the First World War.

This overview encompasses: (a) a small number of countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia; (b) Northern America, comprising Canada and the United States of America; (c) most of the European countries; and (d) Oceania, represented only by Australia and New Zealand. For the purpose of simplicity and clarity, all classifications of countries are geographical.

In certain cases, only marriage-timing indices were available; and in other cases, only prevalence indices could be found. When both were available, they were taken into account. In certain cases, these indices are derived from a single census; in others, such as intercensal estimates, they pertain to specified periods of time. Because these two types of marriage indicators are not directly comparable, they are presented separately. The same two indicators are also used subsequently for the assessment of trends. The direction of the trends remains reliable provided it is based on the same type of estimates; the magnitudes of the changes, however, are not comparable between the two types of indicators. On average, it is assumed that overall patterns can emerge when large geographical regions are compared over extended periods of time.

A. Levels and trends in marriage patterns

1. Timing of marriage

Tables 1 and 2 and figure 1 present data for the countries included in this review according to singulate mean age at marriage for each sex and for all years for which data were available during the first half of the twentieth century.

Table 1. Marriage prevalence and singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, single census estimates, for countries by regions, 1900-1950 a/

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Africa						
Eastern Africa						
Mauritius b/	1944	92.3	91.4	26.9	23.2	3.7
Mozambique	1944	94.8	88.7	21.3	16.7	4.6
Northern Africa						
Algeria c/	1948	95.8	97.8	26.0	20.0	5.9
Egypt d/	1947	97.7	97.1	25.6	19.9	5.7
Tunisia	1946	92.9	95.7	27.8	20.8	7.0
Southern Africa						
South Africa e/	1946	92.2	94.7	27.2	22.9	4.3
Americas						
Latin America						
Caribbean						
Barbados	1946	85.1	63.2	27.9	22.2	5.7
Jamaica f/, g/	1943	77.0	66.1	28.2	24.6	3.6
Puerto Rico f/, g/	1930	89.8	87.3	25.9	20.8	5.1
Trinidad and Tobago g/	1946	81.9	76.2	24.5	18.3	6.2
Central America						
Honduras g/	1946	85.4	80.2	25.9	21.7	4.2
Temperate South America						
Chile	1930	80.5	81.5	28.1	24.9	3.2
	1940	81.5	80.1	28.1	24.7	3.4
Tropical South America						
Brazil	1940	87.4	84.9	26.5	22.6	3.9
Colombia	1938	72.7	67.4	29.8	25.3	4.5
Guyana g/	1946	85.6	81.8	24.8	19.6	5.2
Peru h/	1940	88.8	82.5	26.3	23.0	3.3
Venezuela i/	1941	52.8	46.3	31.3	25.3	6.0

Table 1 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Northern America						
Canada	1911	84.9	88.0	28.6	24.3	4.3
	1921	85.9	88.9	27.3	23.7	3.6
	1931	86.0	89.7	27.8	24.6	3.2
	1941	85.8	88.8	27.7	24.8	2.9
United States of America	1900	88.0	91.4	27.4	23.7	3.7
	1910	88.6	92.7	26.8	23.1	3.7
	1920	87.0	89.9	26.0	22.5	3.5
	1930	88.1	91.0	25.6	22.3	3.3
	1940	88.8	91.4	25.6	22.7	2.9
Asia						
East Asia						
China	1930	..	..	23.3	19.3	4.0
	1940	..	..	..	18.5	..
	1945	..	..	..	18.6	..
Hong Kong	1931	93.9	96.4	25.2	20.8	4.4
Japan	1920	97.7	98.1	24.9	21.1	3.8
	1925	..	98.2	25.1	21.1	4.0
	1930	98.2	98.4	25.7	21.8	3.9
	1935	..	98.5	26.4	22.5	3.9
	1940	98.0	98.4	27.2	23.3	3.9
Republic of Korea	1925	98.3	99.3	20.5	16.5	4.0
	1930	99.0	100.0	20.8	16.5	4.3
	1935	99.3	99.9	21.1	17.1	4.0
South Asia						
South-eastern Asia						
Malaysia j/	1947	98.0	99.0	24.2	18.4	5.8
Myanmar k/	1911	..	..	23.9	20.4	3.5
	1921	..	..	24.1	20.6	3.5
	1931	..	..	23.3	20.3	3.0

Table 1 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Philippines	1903	94.2 l/	92.2 l/	24.9	20.9	4.0
	1939	96.8 l/	94.6 l/	25.1	21.9	3.2
	1948	96.5	93.1	25.0	22.1	2.9
Thailand	1947	96.0	97.0	24.3	21.1	3.2
Southern Asia						
India m/	1901	95.7 l/	99.0 l/	20.1	13.3	6.8
	1911	95.9 l/	98.9 l/	20.3	13.5	6.8
	1921	96.0 l/	98.8 l/	20.8	13.9	6.9
	1931	96.5 l/	99.2 l/	18.9	12.7	6.2
	1941	96.3 l/	99.1 l/	20.0	14.7	5.3
Pakistan n/	1921	96.4	98.9	21.5	13.0	8.5
	1931	96.6	98.8	19.6	12.3	7.3
	1941	96.9	99.0	21.6	14.3	7.3
Sri Lanka	1901	87.1	89.9	24.6	18.3	6.3
	1911	..	..	26.5	20.8	5.7
	1921	..	..	27.0	21.4	5.6
	1946	92.4	96.6	27.0	20.7	6.3
Western Asia						
Turkey o/	1935	96.7	97.5	23.1	19.7	3.4
Europe						
Eastern Europe						
Bulgaria	1900	97.0	99.0	24.2	20.8	3.4
	1910	..	..	..	20.9	..
	1926	..	..	..	21.5	..
	1934	97.3	98.6	3.9	21.6	2.3
Czechoslovakia	1900 p/	..	..	27.8	25.4	2.4
	1910 p/	93.8 q/	91.5 q/	..	..	..
	1921	93.5 q/	91.1 q/	..	..	..
	1930	94.0	94.0	27.3	24.8	2.5
	1947	90.0	90.0	27.4	23.0	4.4

Table 1 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Hungary	1900	95.0	96.0	..	..	..
	1930	94.6	93.7	26.8	23.8	3.0
	1941	93.7	91.4	27.9	23.6	4.3
Poland	1900 r/	93.9 g/	92.2 g/	26.6	23.6	3.0
	1931	95.0 g/	91.8 g/	..	..	..
	1931	95.8	92.9	26.9	24.9	2.0
Romania	1899	95.0	97.0	24.5	20.3	4.2
	1912	..	..	..	21.7	..
Serbia	1900	97.0	99.0	23.0	20.1	2.9
USSR	1897	..	94.9 g/	24.2	21.4	2.8
	1926	97.5 g/	96.4 g/	23.4	20.9	2.5
Yugoslavia s/	1931	95.1	95.3	24.4	21.7	2.7
	1948	94.7	94.2	22.1	22.2	-0.1
Northern Europe						
Norway	1930	85.1	77.4	29.7	26.7	3.0
	1946	83.8	78.2	28.8	24.5	4.3
United Kingdom						
England and Wales	1901	89.0 l/	86.6 l/	27.2	25.8	1.4
	1911	87.8 l/	84.2 l/	27.5	26.0	1.5
	1921	88.0 l/	83.6 l/	..	..	..
	1931	89.2 l/	83.7 l/	27.0	25.7	1.3
	1939	90.5 l/	83.3 l/	..	..	..
Southern Europe						
Greece	1907	91.0	96.0	..	..	..
	1928 t/	92.6	96.2	28.9	24.0	4.9

Table 1 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Italy	1901	89.1 u/	89.1 u/	..	..	..
	1911	90.0 u/	89.4 u/	..	..	..
	1921	89.1 u/	88.8 u/	..	..	..
	1931	90.9 u/	88.1 u/	..	..	..
	1936	90.7 u/	86.9 u/	28.3	25.3	3.0
Spain v/	1900	93.6	89.8	27.4	24.5	2.9
	1910	93.4	89.8	27.8	25.1	2.7
	1920	92.5	89.4	27.9	25.7	2.2
	1930	92.4	88.3	27.2	25.8	1.4
	1940	91.8	86.3	29.4	26.7	2.7
Western Europe						
Austria	1900	89.0	87.0	..	..	..
	1939	90.0 g/	82.0 g/	..	..	..
Belgium	1900	83.9	82.9	27.3	25.4	1.9
	1910	85.4	83.4	27.0	24.8	2.2
	1920	86.8	84.7	27.2	25.3	1.9
	1930	89.5	86.7	25.9	23.6	2.3
	1947	90.9	89.6	26.5	23.4	3.1
Germany	1900	91.8 u/	89.9 u/	27.8	25.5	2.3
	1910	92.1 u/	89.6 u/	27.9	25.3	2.6
	1925	93.6 u/	89.9 u/	27.5	26.1	1.4
	1933	94.3 u/	89.4 u/	28.3	26.2	2.1
	1939 w/	94.2 u/	87.7 u/	28.2	24.5	3.7
Luxembourg	1935	86.0	85.0	28.2	24.6	3.6
	1947	86.0	85.0	28.7	24.6	4.1
Netherlands	1900	87.0	86.0	..	..	..
	1930	89.2	85.1	27.3	25.4	1.8
Switzerland	1900	84.0	83.0	..	..	..
	1910	85.0	82.0	..	..	..
	1930 f/	85.5	81.2	28.7	27.1	1.6
	1941 f/	86.2	79.9	29.2	26.2	3.0

Table 1 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Oceania						
Australia x/	1901	77.6	90.7	..	..	..
	1911	78.0	87.7	..	..	..
	1921	80.7	85.0	..	..	..
	1933	85.3	85.0	28.2	25.0	3.2
	1947	86.7	87.5	25.8	22.5	3.3
New Zealand y/	1936	86.4	86.5	28.3	25.4	2.9
	1945	88.2	86.9	26.8	23.9	2.9

Sources: Mentions of United Nations Demographic Yearbooks refer to the following publications: Demographic Yearbook 1949-50 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.51.XIII.1); Demographic Yearbook 1955 (United Nations publication Sales No. E/F.55.XIII.6)

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Notes for table 1

a/ Data pertain to national borders as of the date stated.

b/ Including Rodrigues.

c/ Age classification based on year of birth rather than on completed years of age.

d/ Excluding nomad population.

e/ At that time called the Union of South Africa.

f/ De jure population.

g/ Including consensual unions.

h/ Not adjusted for underenumeration; excluding jungle population; including consensual unions.

i/ Excluding tribal Indians.

j/ Data refer only to the Federation of Malaya.

k/ Formerly called Burma.

l/ Percentage ever married refers to age group 45-54.

m/ Data for periods prior to 1948 include Pakistan.

n/ Percentage ever married for women refers to age group 35-39.

o/ Excluding Hatay.

p/ The singulate mean age at marriage for 1900 is average for Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, which later became part of Czechoslovakia; the percentage ever married for 1910 pertains to provinces of Austria and Hungary that later became part of Czechoslovakia.

q/ Percentage ever married refers to age group 40-49.

r/ Data for 1900 refer to various provinces of Austria, Germany and Russia that later became part of Poland; singulate mean ages at marriage are unweighted averages for the selected provinces.

s/ Age group 50-54 pertains to ages 50-59.

t/ Excluding Dodecanese.

u/ Percentage ever married refers to age group 50-54.

v/ Percentage ever married refers to ages 46-50.

w/ Including Austria.

x/ Excluding aborigines.

y/ Excluding Maoris.

Table 2. Prevalence of marriage and singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, intercensal estimates for some European countries, 1900-1950

Country	Intercensal period	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Denmark	1930-1935	89.8	86.7	27.9	24.9	3.0
	1935-1940	93.0	92.1	26.9	24.0	2.9
	1940-1945	89.8	89.9	27.2	23.8	3.4
	1945-1950	94.2	95.9	26.6	23.2	3.4
Finland	1930-1935	86.4	84.1	29.5	26.7	2.8
	1935-1940	89.6	85.2	29.3	26.1	3.2
	1940-1945	94.6	91.3	27.6	25.2	2.4
	1945-1950	96.7	93.3	26.6	24.2	2.4
France a/	1901-1905	89.6	88.8	28.0	24.6	3.4
	1911-1915	89.2	88.8	27.8	24.4	3.4
	1921-1925	90.1	88.7	28.0	24.3	3.7
	1931-1935	91.0	89.1	27.5	23.6	3.9
	1941-1945	91.4	87.5	27.2	24.1	3.1
Italy	1901-1905	..	..	27.4	23.8	3.6
	1911-1915	..	..	27.5	23.8	3.7
	1921-1925	..	..	27.5	24.1	3.4
	1931-1935	..	..	27.5	24.3	3.2
	1941-1945	..	..	28.3	24.9	3.4
Ireland	1936-1941	64.8	70.4	32.6	28.1	4.5
	1941-1946	74.4	83.2	32.0	27.6	4.4
Netherlands	1900-1904	87.0	86.0	28.3	26.4	1.9
	1905-1909	..	..	28.2	26.2	2.0
	1910-1914	..	..	28.1	26.2	1.9
	1915-1919	..	..	28.1	26.2	1.9
	1935-1939	..	..	28.0	25.8	2.2
	1940-1944	..	..	28.0	25.8	2.2

Table 2 (continued)

Country	Intercensal period	Percentage ever married among those aged 45-49		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)		Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Men	Women	Men	Women	
Portugal	1930-1935	85.7	80.9	27.2	27.0	0.2
	1935-1940	85.6	80.6	27.5	25.0	2.5
	1945-1950	90.7	87.1	27.2	24.9	2.3
Sweden	1930-1935	82.4	80.2	29.7	26.4	3.3
	1935-1940	88.2	88.6	28.8	25.4	3.4
	1940-1945	90.8	92.9	27.9	24.5	3.4
	1945-1950	89.6	93.4	27.4	24.1	3.3

Sources:

Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Portugal and **Sweden:** N. B. Ryder, "Measures of recent nuptiality in the Western World", in International Population Conference, New York, 1961, vol. II (London, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1963), p. 298, table 3.

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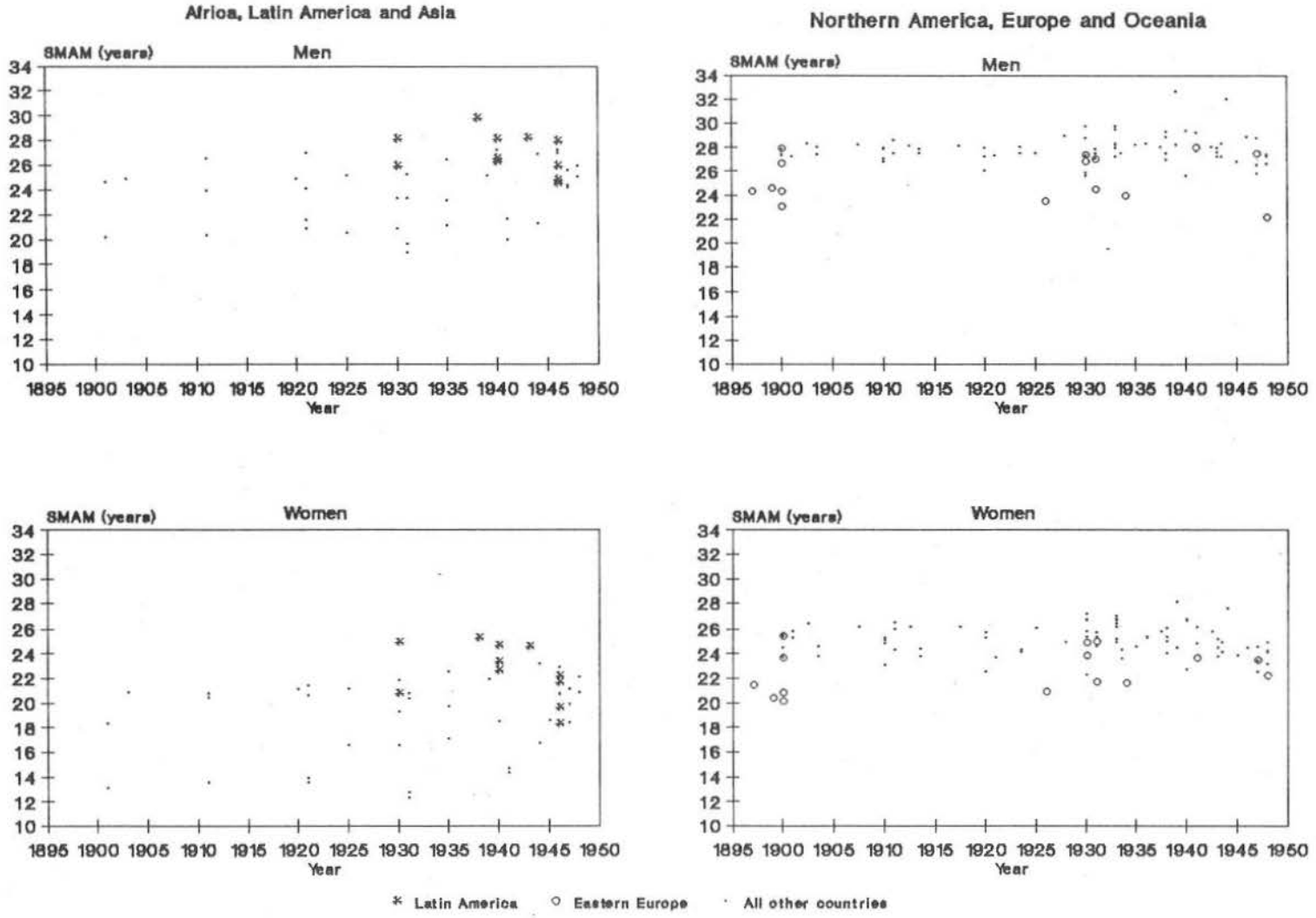
a/ Estimates pertain to a five-year cohort born 50 years earlier; percentages ever married are for exact age 50 and are not comparable to other estimates in the table.

Figure 1. Distribution of countries according to singulate mean age at marriage, selected countries, 1900–1950



Sources: Tables 1 and 2.

Note: SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

Throughout the first decades of the century, male SMAMs and, in particular, female SMAMs conformed to very specific marriage-timing patterns, supporting, with few exceptions, the model proposed by Hajnal. A clear distinction can be made between most of the Asian and African countries (Latin America is examined separately below), on the one hand, and the countries of Northern America, Europe and Oceania, on the other. Asia and Africa were essentially regions of early marriage timing. As concerns Africa, the pre-war data are not entirely sufficient to generalize this conclusion. However, if the African census and survey estimates of the 1950s (annex table A.1) are assumed to reflect a nuptiality situation that also prevailed in the early decades of the 1900s (thus assuming at least constant nuptiality), then Africa, like Asia, was a region with early female marriage and high marriage prevalence.

Among men, most SMAMs were under 27 years and among women, almost all observations were under 22 years. The opposite is observed among the countries of Northern America, Europe and Oceania (figure 1). However, the early-marriage pattern observed in Africa and Asia is far from being uniform. The majority of male SMAMs for these regions varied between 20 and 26 years; but during the 1940s, SMAMs exceeding 27 years were reported in Japan, South Africa, Tunisia and Sri Lanka. For the earlier decades, the 1900s and 1910s, male SMAMs as low as 20 years were observed, notably in India, Korea and Pakistan, and ages even under 20 years were reported in India and Pakistan in the 1931 census (table 1). It should also be noted that there was a tendency towards higher SMAMs as they evolved from the early 1900s towards the mid-century.

Among women, there was a similar pattern of very low SMAMs and a trend towards higher SMAMs from the early 1900s towards the 1940s. SMAMs remained under 22 years over a long period with only slight fluctuations. Until the 1930s, female SMAMs remained between 20 and 22 years in Japan, Myanmar, 1/ the Philippines and Sri Lanka. They remained under 20 years in China (18-19), and in Korea (16-18), and even under 15 years in India and Pakistan. Indeed, the latter two countries had some of the lowest female SMAMs in the world at the time, with a minimum of about 13 years in 1900 and a maximum of about 14.5 in 1941. Only in Japan after the 1930s and in the Philippines in the 1940s did SMAMs exceed 22 years (23.3 in Japan in 1940). In Africa, only in Mauritius and South Africa were female SMAMs over 22 years (table 1).

As concerns Latin America and the Caribbean, the data given in table 1 do not reflect properly the patterns of first marriage, primarily because large proportions of consensual unions, known to be common in many of these countries, were misreported or underreported or were not recorded at all in many early census years. This situation is reflected not only in the comparatively high female SMAMs found in countries of low-level economic development, but especially in the extremely low percentages of men and women ever married by ages 45-49. Most of the marriage prevalence levels recorded fall below the 90 per cent threshold, and even below 80 per cent in some cases. In Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica, where visiting unions are common (United Nations, 1988), prevalence among women was in the 60 per cent bracket. An extreme case is illustrated by Venezuela, where in age group 45-49 only 46 per cent of women and 53 per cent of men were reported ever married in the 1941 census.

It is possible that in some, if not all, of these countries, the population adopted (through traditions and religious customs) the Western European pattern of late marriage. Hence, women's marriage timing was not as early in Latin America as in some of the Asian or African countries, where child marriage customs favoured very early female matrimony. One could even speculate in the light of available data that Latin America could fall in the late-marriage/low-prevalence category like Europe, but given the absence of reliable vital registration and census data on nuptiality, it is evidently not possible to make such a conclusion.

In the countries of Northern America, Europe (excluding Eastern Europe) and Oceania (see figure 1), a pattern of SMAMs opposite to that of Africa and Asia is found. It is seen first that among men, SMAMs exceeded 25 years and among women, 22 years. Secondly, the range of these SMAMs throughout the first decades showed much narrower variation than in the developing countries: SMAMs for men varied from 26 to 28 years; and those for women, from 23 and 26 years.

Exceptions to this general pattern are observed in several countries of Eastern Europe, where some SMAMs were under 25 years among men and 22 among women. These countries were Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, the USSR and Yugoslavia. Their SMAMs for men ranged from 23.0 years in Serbia (1900) to 24.5 in Romania (1899); and for women, from 20.1 years in Serbia in 1900 to 21.7 in Yugoslavia in 1931. As far as timing is concerned, these observations represent an intermediate-marriage pattern. However, some countries of Eastern Europe--namely, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland--conformed to the standard late-marriage pattern observed in the rest of Europe, with male SMAMs exceeding 26 years and female SMAMs of 23 years or over. It also appears that the marriage pattern in the Baltic region of Eastern Europe was more similar to that of Western Europe. Of course, because of border changes subsequent to the First and Second World Wars, the geopolitical concept of Eastern Europe is difficult to reconstitute for the period preceding 1950. On the other hand, the pattern in the Balkan region was closer to the marriage norms of Asia (Sklar, 1974), but without encompassing child marriages. Possible reasons for these differences are examined below in the discussion of determinants of marriage patterns (section B).

In the rest of Europe, in Northern America and in Australia and New Zealand, the late marriage patterns prevailed--not without exceptions--with SMAMs for men ranging between 27 and 30 years and those for women, between 23 and 26 years. During the 1930s and 1940s, means for the United States fell somewhat outside this pattern for both sexes: male SMAMs fluctuated below 27 years; and female SMAMs below 23 years. Australia also reported a female SMAM of 22.5 years in 1947 (table 1). At the opposite end, on the basis of intercensal estimates, Ireland displayed the highest ages at first marriage, with male SMAMs of about 32 years and female SMAMs exceeding 28 years during the period 1936-1941 and 27 years during 1941-1946. Women in Switzerland in 1930 and in Portugal during the period 1930-1935 also had SMAMs exceeding 27 years (table 2). It is also worth noting that there was some overlap in SMAMs of certain countries with different types of marriage patterns: during the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, SMAMs of both sexes were higher in Japan than in the United States (table 1).

Table 3 (panel A) presents trends in female SMAMs based on both single census and intercensal estimates in countries for which indices were available for at least two points in time. 2/ In Latin America, only one country had the required data. Africa is not included in this table because of the lack of data on trends.

For the Asian countries reviewed, trend data suggest that, except for China and Myanmar, age at first marriage increased among women. In India and Pakistan, where SMAMs were at first very low, about 13 years, the increments were 0.04 and 0.07 year per annum, respectively, during the period covered. By 1941, however, SMAMs had not exceeded 15 years.

In the developed countries, during the time-span for which data on trends were available, female age at first marriage declined in all countries except Canada, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain. The countries of Northern Europe had the largest reductions, with annual declines of more than 0.1 year. In Western Europe, the changes were less significant: less than 0.05 year annually. SMAMs declined slightly in the United States and increased somewhat in Canada. In Oceania, however, SMAMs fell sharply, particularly in New Zealand. Thus, the overall trend in the developed countries was towards earlier marriages.

2. Difference between sexes in age at first marriage

Differences between male and female SMAMs constitute distinctive traits of the marriage formation process and especially of the differences in timing norms of men and women. In the present case, these variations characterize somewhat differently the early- and late-marriage patterns observed in the countries reviewed. The general observation is that during the first half of the twentieth century, differences between male and female SMAMs were much larger in the developing countries than in the industrialized countries, regardless of the time period considered (see table 1 and figure 2). For countries with an early-marriage pattern, particularly those where women marry before age 15, the differences were largest: differences of more than six years were reported for India; and they exceeded seven and even eight years during certain time periods in Pakistan (figure 2).

Large differences were also observed in countries where female SMAMs were about ages 18-20, as was the case in Algeria, Barbados, Egypt, Guyana, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, and Tunisia, where differences of from five to six years between male and female SMAMs were observed. In figure 2, these countries appear at the bottom of the pyramid of age differences for the various time periods indicated. Thus, most countries with an early-marriage pattern display, with some exceptions, differences in SMAM between men and women of no less than four years.

Conversely, in countries of Northern America, Europe and Oceania, which had intermediate- and late-marriage patterns, SMAM differences between men and women were much smaller and varied, mostly between two and four years, regardless of the time period considered. Differences exceeding four years, were observed in the 1940s in two countries of Eastern Europe, as well as in

Table 3. Change in female singulate mean age at marriage and marriage prevalence for countries by region, various periods, 1900-1950

Region, subregion and country	Census years a/	Singulate mean age at marriage: Earliest census (years)	Singulate mean age at marriage: Most recent census (years)	Average change per annum (years)
	A. Singulate mean age at marriage			
Americas				
Latin America				
Chile	1930-1940	24.9	24.7	-0.02
Northern America				
Canada	1911-1941	24.3	24.8	0.02
United States of America	1900-1940	23.7	22.7	-0.03
Asia				
East Asia				
China	1930-1945	19.3	18.6	-0.05
Japan	1920-1940	21.1	23.3	0.07
Republic of Korea	1925-1935	16.5	17.1	0.06
South Asia				
India	1901-1941	13.3	14.7	0.04
Myanmar b/	1911-1931	20.4	20.3	0.00
Pakistan	1921-1941	13.0	14.3	0.07
Philippines	1903-1948	20.9	22.1	0.03
Sri Lanka	1901-1946	18.3	20.7	0.06
Europe c/				
Northern Europe				
Denmark	1930-1935-1945-1950	24.9	23.2	-0.11
Finland	1930-1935-1945-1950	26.7	24.2	-0.17
Ireland	1936-1941-1941-1946	28.1	27.6	-0.14
Norway	1930-1946	26.7	24.5	-0.14
Sweden	1930-1935-1945-1950	26.4	24.1	-0.15
United Kingdom				
England and Wales	1901-1931	25.8	25.7	-0.01
Southern Europe				
Italy	1901-1905-1941-1945	23.8	24.9	0.03
Portugal	1930-1935-1945-1950	27.0	24.9	-0.14
Spain	1900-1940	24.5	26.7	0.06

Table 3 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Census years a/	Prevalence: Earliest census (Percentage)	Prevalence: Most recent census (Percentage)	Average change per annum (percentage points)
Western Europe				
Belgium	1900-1947	25.4	23.4	-0.04
France	1901-1905-1941-1945	24.6	24.1	-0.01
Germany	1900-1939	25.5	24.5	-0.03
Luxembourg	1935-1947	24.6	24.6	0.00
Netherlands	1900-1904-1940-1944	26.4	25.8	-0.02
Switzerland	1930-1941	27.1	26.2	-0.08
Oceania				
Australia	1933-1947	25.0	22.5	-0.18
New Zealand	1936-1945	26.8	23.9	-0.32
B. Percentage ever married at ages 45-49				
Americas				
Latin America				
Chile	1930-1940	81.5	80.1	-0.14
Northern America				
Canada	1911-1941	88.0	88.8	0.03
United States of America	1900-1940	91.4	91.4	0.00
Asia d/				
East Asia				
Japan	1920-1940	98.1	98.4	0.02
Republic of Korea	1925-1935	99.3	99.9	0.06
South Asia				
India	1901-1941	99.0	99.1	0.00
Pakistan	1921-1941	98.9	99.0	0.01
Philippines	1903-1948	92.2	93.1	0.02
Sri Lanka	1901-1946	89.9	96.6	0.15
Europe c/				
Northern Europe				
Denmark	1930-1935-1945-1950	86.7	95.9	0.61
Finland	1930-1935-1945-1950	84.1	93.3	0.61
Ireland	1936-1941-1941-1946	70.4	83.2	2.56
Norway	1930-1946	77.4	78.2	0.05
Sweden	1930-1935-1945-1950	80.2	93.4	0.88
United Kingdom				
England and Wales	1901-1939	86.6	83.3	-0.09

Table 3 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Census years a/	Prevalence: Earliest census (Percentage)	Prevalence: Most recent census (Percentage)	Average change per annum (percentage points)
Southern Europe				
Greece	1907-1928	96.0	96.2	0.01
Italy	1901-1936	89.1	86.9	-0.06
Portugal	1930-1935-1945-1950	80.9	87.1	0.41
Spain	1900-1940	89.8	86.3	-0.09
Western Europe				
Belgium	1900-1947	82.9	89.6	0.14
France	1901-1905-1941-1945	88.8	87.5	-0.03
Germany	1900-1939	89.9	87.7	-0.06
Luxembourg	1935-1947	85.0	85.0	0.00
Netherlands	1900-1930	86.0	85.1	-0.03
Switzerland	1900-1941	83.0	79.9	-0.08
Oceania				
Australia	1933-1947	85.0	87.5	0.18
New Zealand	1936-1945	86.5	86.9	0.04

Sources: For single census estimates, table 1; and for intercensal estimates, table 2.

a/ The years compared are the earliest and most recent (up to 1950) in countries for which at least two indices were available.

b/ Formerly called Burma.

c/ Countries in Eastern Europe were omitted because comparable indices at two points in time were not available for the period under study.

d/ China and Myanmar were omitted for percentage ever married ages 45-49 because comparable data were not available.

Figure 2. Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage, selected countries, 1900–1950

Africa, Latin America and Asia

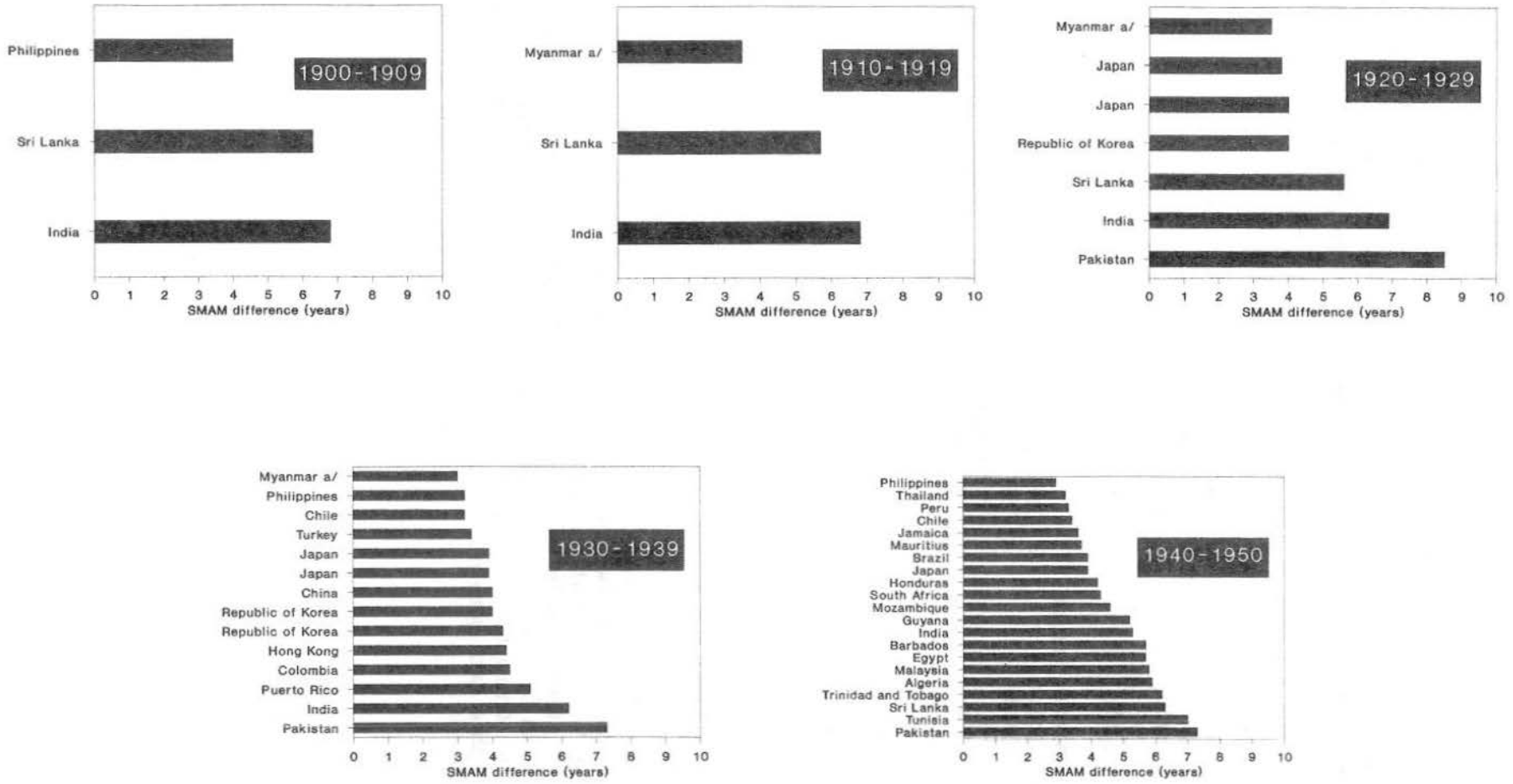
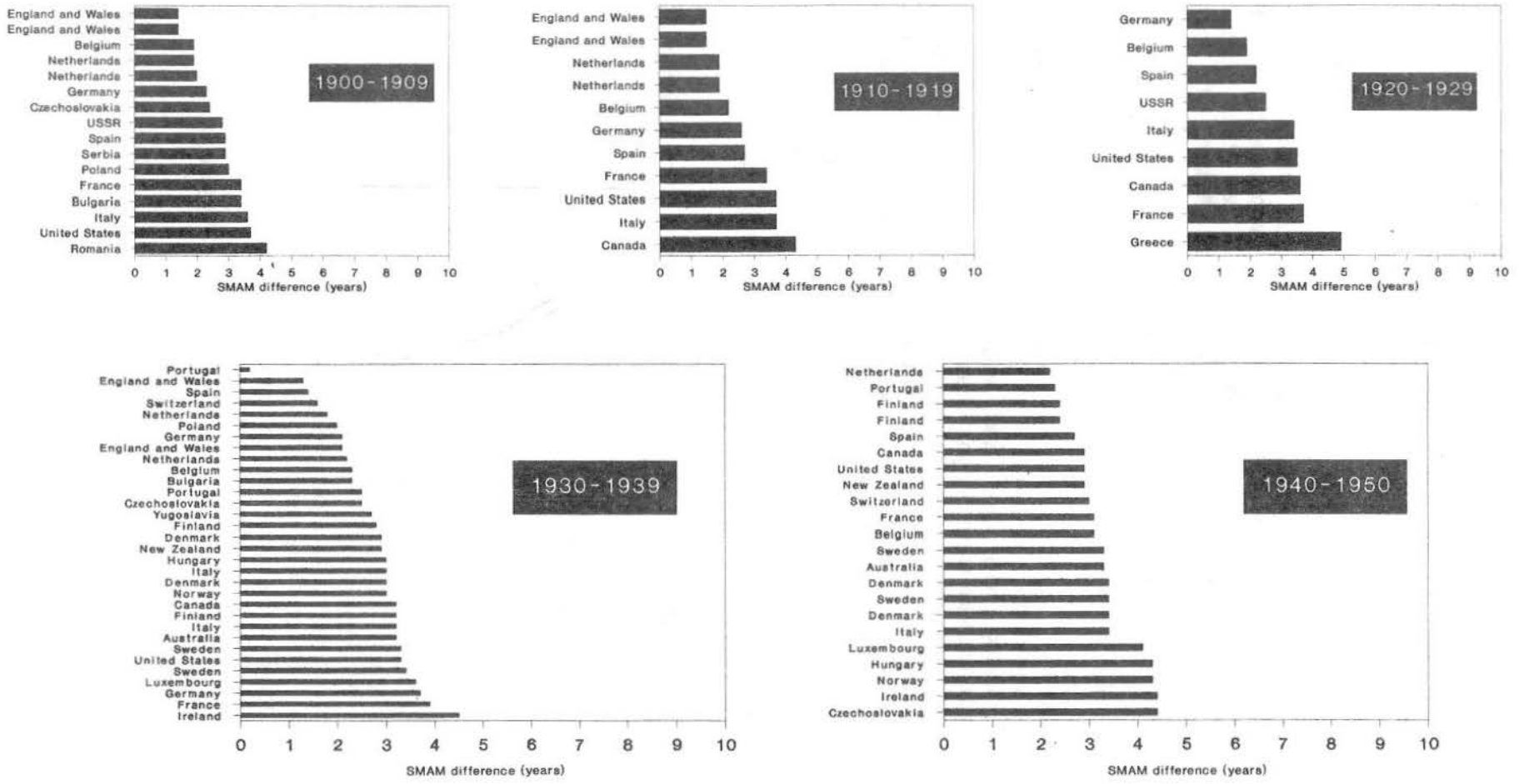


Figure 2 *(continued)*

Northern America, Europe and Oceania



Source: Table 1.

Note: SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

[a]Formerly called Burma.

Ireland, Luxembourg and Norway. The smallest differences--less than two years--were noted in Belgium, England and Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland, in specific census years (table 1).

3. Prevalence of marriage

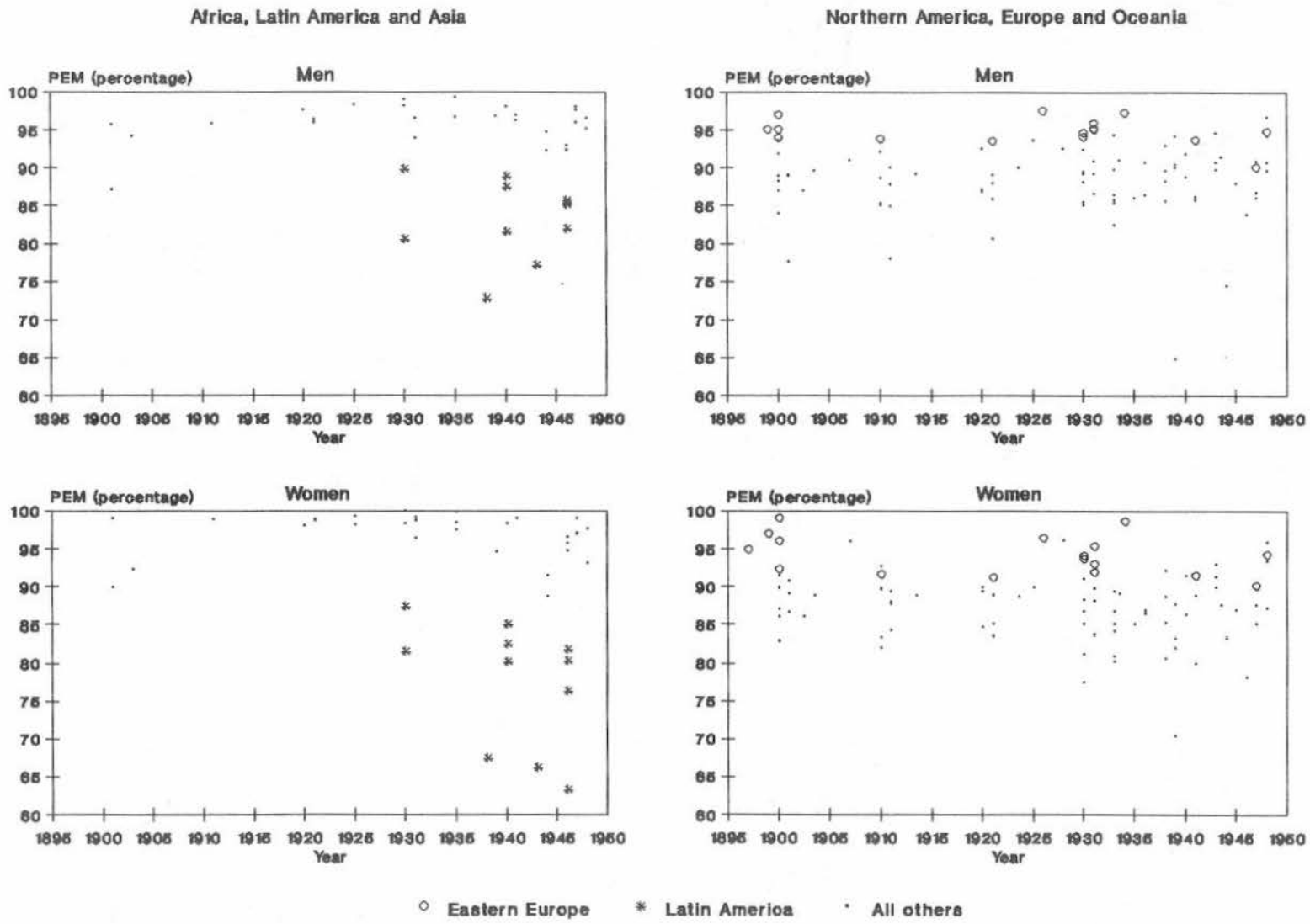
The patterns of marriage prevalence measured by the percentage of men and women ever married among those aged 45-49 are presented in tables 1 and 2 and in figure 3. The data underscore, despite the small number of observations, the considerable differences in prevalence of marriage between the countries of early- and late-marriage patterns, as well as the separate pattern reflected by the Latin American countries and those of Eastern Europe. Marriage prevalences of men and women are often of the same order of magnitude, although differences arise as a result of historical and cultural circumstances, as well as from migrations and changes in natality and mortality which may affect the marriage market.

More specific patterns of marriage prevalence emerge when such percentages are examined within each of the world regions. In Asia, marriage was universal among both men and women in most countries, and in many countries prevalence was over 98 per cent. With few exceptions, throughout the decades of the early 1900s prevalence was usually over 95 per cent ever married, both in countries where many marriages were taking place in early adolescence, such as India and Pakistan, and in those where marriages were relatively late (by Asian standards), such as Japan. The trend in marriage prevalence was and remained high in most of the Asian countries reviewed. Among the exceptions, the most striking pertains to Sri Lanka, where the 1901 census reported prevalence levels below 90 per cent for both sexes. 3/ In the Philippines, also, prevalence among women--from 92.2 to 94.6 per cent ever married--was low, at least by Asian standards. 4/

Lack of data for many African countries, particularly for the early 1900s, considerably hampers any conclusions regarding prevalence. The readings for a few African countries during the 1940s, presented in table 1, show the high prevalence levels implied in the later censuses. When taking into consideration all types of marriages in this region, legal--customary, consensual and religious (United Nations, 1988)--nearly universal marriage could be assumed to prevail in most countries, even though the prevalence shown by the available data falls short of that level.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the problems of underreporting and misreporting of marriages noted previously with respect to the estimation of SMAM also apply here. Although universal marriage to the degree found in Asia (96 per cent or more ever married) may not be the prevailing marriage prevalence norm, it seems unlikely that 30 or even 20 per cent of the men and women of this region were never in a marital union by ages 45-49, had all the consensual and visiting unions been properly enumerated. This is part of the reason that the Latin American prevalence levels, identified by an asterisk in figure 3, display significant deviations from the overall pattern of the other developing countries.

Figure 3. Distribution of countries according to prevalence of marriage, selected countries, 1900–1950



Sources: Tables 1 and 2.

Note: PEM = percentage ever married by age 50.

In Northern America, Europe and Oceania, low marriage prevalence (under 93 per cent) was the major characteristic, except for some countries of Eastern Europe in certain years. The latter countries, Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and the USSR in 1926 and Hungary in 1900, had prevalence levels for both sexes ranging from 96 to 99 per cent. The marriage prevalence of these countries, relatively high by European standards, is quite close to that of some Asian countries. In general, the countries of Eastern Europe, identified by a circle in figure 3, are quite clearly above the cut-off line of 93 per cent ever married for both sexes.

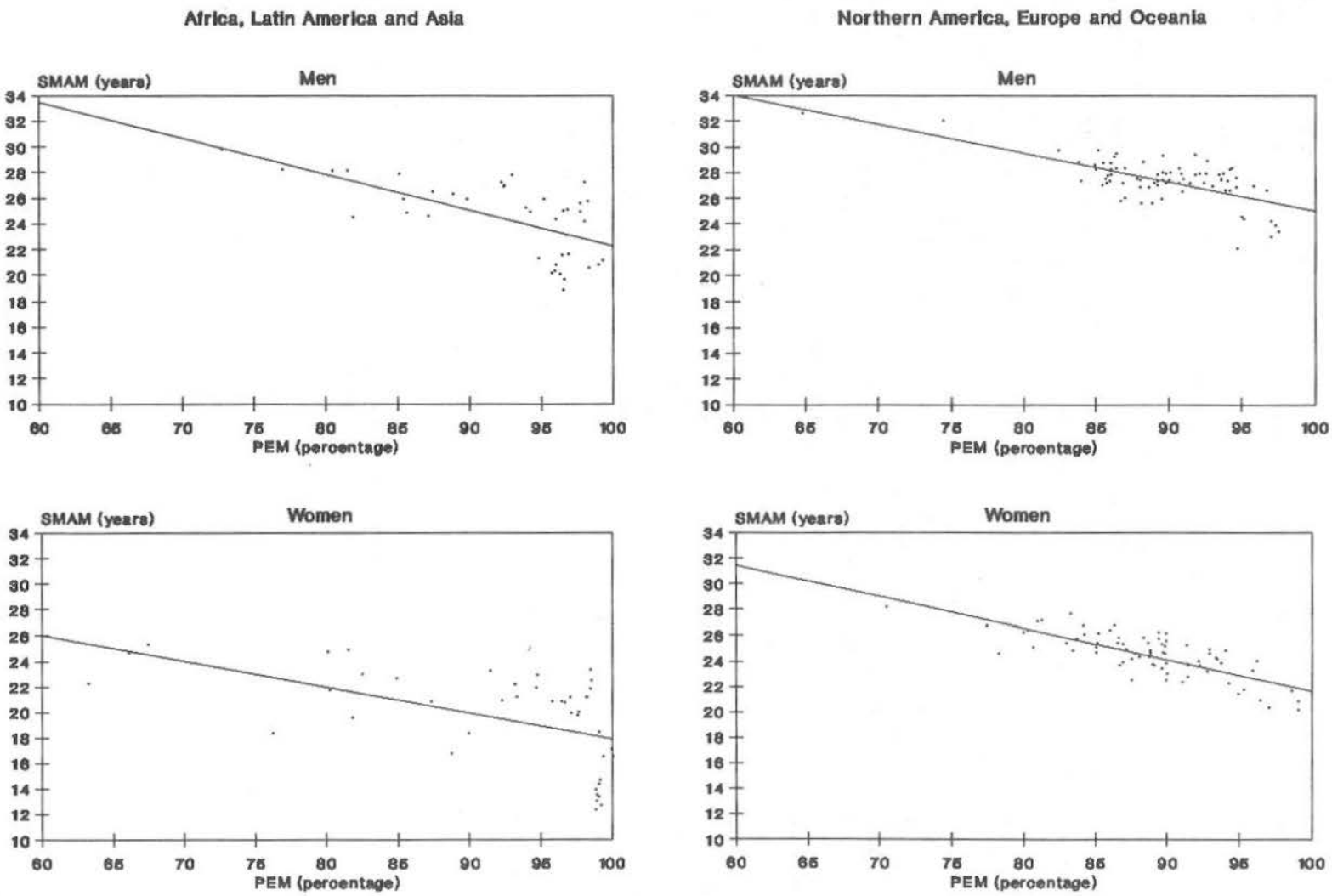
Below this threshold, the rest of the countries with a late-marriage pattern displayed low marriage prevalence. The range is wide, however, for both sexes in most of the early decades of the century. Among men, the range varied around the year 1900 from 77 per cent in Australia to 93 per cent in Spain. During the 1920s, there are only few observations, ranging from 80 per cent in Australia to 93 per cent in Germany. The lowest prevalence levels measured by intercensal indicators were recorded in Ireland (which also experienced the latest marriages), with 64.8 and 74.4 per cent for men and 70.4 and 83.2 per cent for women during the periods 1931-1936 and 1936-1941, respectively (see table 2). Male prevalence of more than 90 per cent was recorded during the 1930s and 1940s in the Mediterranean countries--Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal--as well as in Germany (pre-war borders), where male marriage prevalence exceeded 94 per cent in 1933 and 1939 (see table 1). Intercensal estimates of over 90 per cent among men were also recorded in Denmark, Finland, Portugal, France and Sweden during the 1940s.

Although, theoretically, marriage prevalence levels among men and women tend to be more or less commensurate in the developed countries reviewed here, one finds a consistent pattern of differences in prevalence between the two sexes. Thus, in the two countries of Northern America and the two in Oceania, levels of marriage prevalence of women exceeded those of men, whereas in the European countries, marriage prevalence was almost always lower among women than among men during the period reviewed. Some exceptions include Greece, Ireland and, more recently, Denmark in the 1940s.

With regard to trends in marriage prevalence, the data given in table 3 (panel B) show that for most countries for which estimates of prevalence were available for at least two points in time during the period under review, prevalence of women increased in Asia, Northern America and Oceania, and in most European countries, except in Southern and Western Europe.

The association observed by Hajnal between the timing and prevalence of marriage is examined in figure 4. As can be seen, countries are generally distributed along a diagonal with late-marriage/low-prevalence countries in the upper left corner and early-marriage/high-prevalence countries towards the right corner. There are, however, exceptions which show that a population with a late-marriage pattern is not necessarily associated with high proportions permanently single. This point is illustrated by comparing India with Japan as well as Serbia with Belgium (see table 1).

Figure 4. Relationship between singulate mean age at marriage and prevalence of marriage, 1900–1950



Sources: Tables 1 and 2.

Notes: PEM = percentage ever married by age 50; SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

B. Some determinants of marriage patterns

Although the data presented here pertain to the first half of the twentieth century, an understanding of the marriage patterns of this period requires a brief assessment of the situation before the twentieth century, because the marriage trends of the early 1900s were to a large extent shaped by the past.

1. Comparative nuptiality conditions prior to 1900

In the context of the family, marriage represents the initial step in furthering group survival and family expansion. There are, however, variations in the timing for entering matrimony, which differ not only between men and women, but also according to cultural traditions, religious customs and socio-economic constraints. In fact, many of the explanations proposed to account for marriage patterns are based on the assumption that age at first marriage is primarily, but not solely, a function of the ability of couples to have an economic basis for supporting their household (e.g., Hajnal, 1965; Watkins, 1981). Thus, marriage timing and prevalence become a function of when and to what extent this pre-condition is met, given the prevailing economic and socio-cultural constraints of society. In other words, there is a fundamental economic requirement that underlies the formation of a first marital union, and this requirement affects marriage patterns differently in diverse socio-cultural and economic contexts. 5/ This point emerges clearly from the contrast between marriage patterns in the countries of currently developing regions and those of pre-industrial Europe. In the African and Asian countries, with their traditional societies and agricultural systems of production, early and universal marriage patterns were prevalent. On the other hand, in pre-industrial Europe, late marriages are reported as far back as the eighteenth century, although at the time these countries were neither industrialized nor urbanized (Hajnal, 1965). The question thus arises as to what were some of the societal differences that favoured early marriage in one region of the world and late marriage in the other, even though both were composed primarily of agrarian societies. Although a full answer to such a question goes beyond the frame of this study, some aspects of differences in the societal context of the two major marriage patterns are examined.

Within the limited scope adopted in this overview, there are numerous difficulties that hinder a proper assessment of marriage conditions in the past (Goubert, 1965). One is the economic and socio-cultural heterogeneity of the regions and societies under study (Drake, 1969). Another is the lack of large-scale, sufficient and reliable information on population characteristics as related to marriage (Henry, 1965). Still another is the fact that even when available, reconstituted nuptiality data are often limited to particular occupational groups or specific social strata or are circumscribed to villages or small regions (Eversley, 1965; Gaskin, 1978). Conclusions are thus valid only for limited areas and well-defined population subgroups; and even then, unique or special cases and circumstances often emerge.

(a) The late-marriage pattern

Little is actually known regarding the timing and the circumstances under which the late-marriage pattern originated in Western Europe (Coale, 1967; Hajnal, 1965) or even when a ceremony to celebrate and record marriages (and

their timing) became popular throughout society (Chauvin, 1984). What seems to emerge from a variety of studies is that in pre-industrial Europe, which was typically an agrarian society, the social, demographic and economic setting favoured the establishment of independent households upon marriage and hence contributed to the formation of the European late-marriage pattern.

Various factors are believed to have played a role in this regard. When mortality was high, as it was in the past, it is assumed that early marriage was favoured, at least in certain social strata. Children from the richer classes could inherit early and could marry and establish their household early. Among the labouring classes, where unemployment was more common, new and more job opportunities appeared earlier as a result of early mortality, thus providing marriage candidates with an opportunity to find work more readily and to establish their household at younger ages (Eversley, 1957; Ohlin, 1961; Smith, 1977). The decline in mortality is believed to have contributed to late marriage not only through delayed inheritance and work opportunities, but also because, in the absence of birth control, greater child survival led to excess parity; and delayed marriage is interpreted as a demographic response which would shorten the women's reproduction span (Davis and Blake, 1956; Matras, 1965; Lesthaeghe, 1980). The historically low level of natural fertility in pre-industrial Europe has been attributed mainly to "nuptiality control" (Coale, 1967; Bongaarts, 1982). Although late marriage did indeed curtail the level of natural fertility in that period, there is no evidence that for individual couples low fertility was the explicit purpose of delaying their marriage (McDonald, 1981). 6/

The nuclear family, assumed to have been quite prevalent in pre-industrial Europe, has been traced as far back as the Middle Ages (Guichard and Cuvillier, 1986; Bresc, 1986; Burguière and Lebrun, 1986); thus, it was co-existing with both the stem and the extended family systems (for definition of family types, see United Nations, 1988). The prevalence and expansion of the nuclear family is seen as a factor in determining the late-marriage pattern, because for a young couple who want to marry, it takes more time to establish an economic basis for living independently or outside the extended family.

It was during the eighteenth century that values giving increasing importance to companionship in marriage, to the role of the mother and the rearing of children became more prominent (Ariès, 1948; Stone, 1979). This development strengthened the formation and expansion of an independent nuclear family (Badinter, 1980). 7/

Delay of first marriage to later ages was further influenced by the prevailing inheritance systems, which were more prevalent in certain regions than in others. European inheritance customs encompassed a wide range of rules. Provisions ranged from the older son inheriting the entire property (primogeniture), which was intended to keep the property intact, to equal division, where the younger sons could receive or claim a share of the property or be compensated according to testamentary or legal provisions, while women's share was often settled through dowry (Connell, 1962; Berkner and Mendels, 1978; Guichard and Cuvillier, 1986). In England, the landowner was allowed almost total testamentary freedom, whereas in France (under the Napoleonic Code), this freedom was limited and in the absence of a will

children were entitled to equal shares (Habakkuk, 1955). The effect of such dispositions on age at marriage varied, however, with degree of parental wealth and type of family system, as well as with social strata. Holders of large estates could theoretically endow their children more easily and allow them to marry young. But this was not necessarily the case. Data show that among English peers, for instance, age at marriage increased from 26.3 to 29.2 years for men and from 20.7 to 25.5 years for women between the periods 1575-1599 and 1775-1799 (Wrigley, 1971), despite their high social position. This institution prevailed in a number of agrarian societies of Europe, notably in Ireland (Berkner, 1972; Wolf, 1988). Among the poor and the landless, nuclear families are assumed to have prevailed.

The magnitude of the impact of inheritance systems on marriage timing is, however, difficult to ascertain. It depended upon local traditions and legal constraints, as well as upon family wealth, family size and especially upon socio-economic conditions (Wedgwood, 1929; Stone, 1979; Wrigley, 1971). For instance, pressure on land appears to have been a major cause of delayed marriages, notably in Finland and in certain regions of Norway (Drake, 1972; Lutz, 1987), whereas readily available land favoured early marriage (Chojnacka, 1976).

The condition of women was somewhat different, but they, too, had to delay marriage until a dowry could be assembled and/or an economically sound marriage partner was available. Dowry customs were complex, differed by social classes and changed through time. In certain cases, daughters of the aristocracy sent to convents for their education were recalled only if they could be married, and unmarriageable daughters were sent to convents (see, e.g., Connell, 1962; Badinter, 1980). Although these circumstances pertain primarily to agrarian societies, it should be borne in mind that not all of Europe was agricultural. Rural industries were not uncommon and examples that show early "proletarization" of the rural population to be associated with younger ages at marriage as early as the eighteenth century are available, notably in regions of Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland (Lesthaeghe, 1977). This may be attributed to the fact that the expansion of rural home industries brought additional income to families, which in turn did not require young couples to delay marriage.

The institution of servants, which was common among the Western European populations where nuclear households prevailed, is also believed to have been an important mechanism of late marriage. Servants were almost always unmarried and worked for long periods as domestics or labourers in agricultural holdings until they had sufficient savings to establish their own household. Such delays were not observed, however, in areas where joint families prevailed. In such families, outside labour was not called upon and children could be married younger because they remained in the family to work on the land (Wrigley, 1971; Hajnal, 1982).

Various other factors with potential but not proved effects on marriage timing are sometimes mentioned, such as taxes on bachelors to finance war (Glass, 1972) and legislation enacted to regulate the fertility of the poor (Knodel, 1967; Stone, 1979).

Migrations, with significant sex differentials, have also affected the marriage markets and delayed marriages (Eversley, 1965). Celibacy of the military and of the clergy was also mentioned as having affected overall marriage prevalence in certain countries (Ariès, 1960; Livi-Bacci, 1968b, 1972; Henry and Houdaille, 1978; Badinter, 1980).

(b) The early-marriage pattern

What is known with regard to the social and cultural conditions of marriage for most African and Asian countries during the pre-war period is generally drawn from anthropological studies undertaken during and after the colonial period but generally limited to specific population groups or small areas. As noted in a previous publication (United Nations, 1988), available research attributes the early-marriage pattern observed in these countries to various interactions between prevailing production systems, demographic conditions, family structure and religious and cultural traditions. The combined outcome of such conditions provides for an immediate economic basis for establishing a new household, high fertility incentives and very early marriage norms, primarily among girls.

The actual mechanisms whereby early marriage was achieved varied from country to country and from culture to culture. In general, the agrarian production system and the family organization appear as major bases of the early-marriage pattern. The extended (joint) family system, characterized by strong common economic and family ties, is able to provide readily the economic support for newly married couples. In this family system, children do not leave the family at marriage; they are integrated into the family production system and acquire immediately an economic basis for establishing their marriage (Wolf, 1988).

It is not clear, however, to what extent the extended family system prevailed in the past in most of the African and Asian countries, whether it lasted during the entire family life cycle and exactly how the conjugal household functioned in the context of extended families (Goode, 1963; United Nations, 1988). It appears that although the extended family was an important type of family organization, nuclear families also were a common feature. Obviously, the enforcement of marriage-timing norms was in direct relation to the power of the extended family, which provided the children with the assistance needed to meet the wedding expenses and dowry or bride-wealth obligations and subsequently with the means of surviving after the marriage. The traditional means of enforcing marriage norms was the custom of arranged marriages (United Nations, 1988).

In India, for instance, strong parental authority and family pressure were the explicit mechanisms for ensuring pre-adolescent and adolescent marriage of girls, as well as for ascertaining the respect of endogamy rules, religious prescriptions about purity and chastity and inheritance provisions (India, 1974). 8/ Among caste Hindus, for instance, pre-adolescent marriages were ideal for both sexes. Between 1860 and 1890, the "proper" age at marriage was "8 for girls and 12 for boys", although the actual singulate mean ages at first marriage reported in the 1891 census were 12.5 and 19.6 years for women and men, respectively (Goode, 1963, p. 232).

In China, pressure towards early marriage was strong even though nuclear families had emerged as early as medieval time, when land allocation to couples, leading to their independence, was practised during a certain period (Goode, 1963; Cartier, 1986). But customs changed over time and varied in different regions. During certain periods, the older son inherited the property; during other periods, this rule was practically abandoned. In general, however, the young married couple was expected to remain in the family's household for an undefined length of time (Goode, 1963; Cartier, 1986); and arranged marriages, which allowed this expectation to be fulfilled, prevailed until the end of the nineteenth century (Goode, 1963).

In Japan, marriage-timing norms also varied greatly with social group and region, and early marriage was not as widespread as in other Asian cultures. Even prior to the twentieth century, fertility had levelled off in certain parts of the country through a process of nuptiality transition not unlike that in Europe. Late marriage for women (between 20 and 24 years and sometimes even exceeding 24 years) was reported as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One assumption is that the presence of the stem family, in which only one son succeeds as the household head while the others leave the family, had the same impact as in Western Europe in delaying marriages of the other younger siblings (Beillevaire, 1986a; Skinner, 1988; Wolf, 1988). There were, however, significant variations and differences related to social class. A village study covering the period 1717-1830 showed that the mean age at first marriage for women was 17.6 years for upper classes, 20.4 for middle classes and 22.6 for lower classes (Smith, 1977, cited in Kobayashi and Tsubouchi, 1979).

Marriage behaviour was also at times affected by legislation. For instance, government regulations at one time prohibited parcelling of land in order to encourage farming on a large scale and to maximize tax revenues; this restriction prevented young couples from acquiring land in order to marry (Hanley, 1977). It is not certain, however, to what extent the late-marriage pattern observed in a small number of village surveys can be generalized. The turning-point in the marriage-timing trend was probably linked to the beginning of modernization (Atoh, 1988; Kojima, 1988). In the absence of pertinent data for that period it is difficult to establish a quantitative association between the modernization process in Japan and age at first marriage. Nevertheless, as is shown in table 1, SMAMs for Japanese women were late by Asian standards.

2. Northern America, Europe and Oceania, 1900-1950

(a) The late-marriage pattern

During the early decades of the twentieth century, the late-marriage pattern which had emerged in the past prevailed in Western Europe and was brought over to Northern America and Oceania. In general, although some of the major factors that sustained the late pattern during the period prior to 1990 still exerted their effects early in this century, they appear to have prevailed in full force mainly in Southern Europe. In the other European subregions, they lost some of their strength and first marriage of women tended to take place earlier than previously.

The trend towards younger marriages is assumed to be the result of the final phase of a shift in the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century from an agricultural-rural society to an industrialized-urbanized society (Heeren, 1973; Smith, 1977; Watkins, 1981; Lesthaeghe, 1980). In other words, it is assumed that, under the impact of the Industrial Revolution and economic development:

> "The prudential restraint on marriage had been disrupted, ... the age at marriage was no longer subject, in anything like the same degree to custom or calculation, and had become merely a matter of impulse, ... the whole mechanism whereby population growth was linked to resources via the age at marriage had broken down under the strain of rapid social transformation." (Habakkuk, 1971, p. 45)

In other words, declining family authority, greater job independence, associated with greater job opportunities and decline of the large landholdings permitted couples to achieve their social and economic independence earlier and hence to marry earlier (Hofstee, 1988, cited in Heeren, 1973). Although this model has been justly questioned because it is too general to fit all situations (Lesthaeghe, 1977), it is used here merely as a hypothetical framework to derive some of the mechanics of these changes. As noted earlier, its interest lies in the fact that during a specific phase of the process of economic development, the age at first marriage of women tended to decrease, whereas the opposite occurred in the societies of the third world when they underwent industrialization.

The occupational composition of the population was probably one of the first social structure components to be affected by the changes resulting from industrialization. Increased demand for employment, notably demand for non-agricultural labour, allowed the expanding lower-level occupations to gain better income and encouraged more women to become part of the labour force. Women in particular appear to have benefited from these changes because they could seek more domestic service employment in urban settings or compete with men for urban and industrial occupations (Hofstee, 1954, cited in Lesthaeghe, 1977; Drake, 1969; Habakkuk, 1971; Chesnais, 1986). As a result, women could marry earlier because "men were more ready to marry girls or young women who were themselves earning money" (Habakkuk, 1971, p. 43). 9/

Population movements towards industrialized areas also reduced the proportion of the rural population that traditionally tended to marry late, thus bringing down the overall mean age at first marriage. Scattered information shows that in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for instance, early urbanization was associated with reduced ages at marriage for women as early as the mid-nineteenth century (Habakkuk, 1971; Crafts, 1978), and early marriages were also observed in manufacturing towns in the United Kingdom and later in France (Chesnais, 1986).

The family system also underwent radical changes. Industrialization is believed to have strongly favoured the expansion of the nuclear family, 10/ and under conditions of increasing income and declining family authority, the nuclear family became compatible with early marriage (Kooy, 1963-1964; Goode, 1963-1964).

Mortality and fertility conditions began to change between the late 1800s and the early 1900s (Knodel and van de Walle, 1979; Chesnais, 1986) and also contributed to the changing marriage norms. The decline in mortality, which in most European countries preceded the fertility decline, generated population pressure and two major adjustment mechanisms: birth control within marriage; and oversea migrations (von Mises, 1949; Sutter, 1960; Habakkuk, 1971). The first factor is believed to have permitted earlier marriage among women because with the availability of birth control, delaying marriage for reproductive purposes (assuming this element played a substantial role) became obsolete. The second, migration, was a response not only to population pressure but to rural unemployment, as well as to expectations of better opportunities, higher wages and faster upward social mobility. This response resulted in both rural-urban migration and oversea emigration. Internal migrations probably occurred first; the large flows of oversea migration came later when unemployment at home rose and opportunities abroad increased. 11/ In Western and Northern Europe, mass migrations began in the late nineteenth century, but in Southern Europe, they did not begin until the early twentieth century (Wrigley, 1971; Chesnais, 1986), which made this latter subregion somewhat different from the other countries of Europe.

These changes were accompanied by the widespread dissemination of values that evolved in the late eighteenth century and reflected secular individualism and pursuit of the welfare of the family. These new values provided increased attention to the importance of children in terms of not only labour force or even military strength but better education and better health (e.g., Habakkuk, 1971; Badinter, 1980; Lesthaeghe, 1983). In population subgroups where the push for social mobility was strong, the utility of large families was reduced because of the cost of rearing and educating them; hence, the desire for smaller families arose (Lesthaeghe, 1980; Ariès, 1980); and with birth control available, reduction in family size became compatible with early marriage. On the other hand, in families where employment of children became a source of income--indeed, at the time large segments of the labour force in certain economic sectors were children--there was neither an inducement to adopt birth control nor an incentive to defer marriage to avoid children; there, too, motivation to marry late receded (Bairoch, 1963; Habakkuk, 1971).

Major economic and political upheavals also exerted an effect on the timing and prevalence of marriage, although their impact differed among men and women. The First World War, the economic depression of the 1930s and the oversea migrations are assumed to have affected significantly the age at first marriage through family income depletion or sex imbalance of the marriageable population, hampering temporarily the trend towards earlier matrimony. The depression delayed marriages during the period of low trade and high unemployment, but this trend was reversed when economic conditions improved. The extent of this pattern varied, however, from country to country. Likewise, the First World War, like other wars, had opposite effects: it precipitated marriages just before the hostilities and delayed them during the war; and the trend towards early marriage resumed when peace and employment returned (United Nations, 1988). Despite influences in opposing directions, all these changes appear to have yielded, on balance, a context favourable to earlier marriages, mainly in Northern and Western Europe. 12/

The roles played by different determinants and the varying magnitudes of their individual impact remain, however, difficult to assess. For instance, the very late marriage timing and particularly low marriage prevalence in Ireland are commonly attributed to the succession laws and the land ownership system, as well as to famine and emigration (Connell, 1962; McKenna, 1974). But although much has changed since the nineteenth century and women's marriages have tended to occur earlier, these factors seem to have established deep-rooted marriage norms. Thus, by the period 1941-1946, Ireland still experienced the highest SMAMs in Europe: 32.0 years for men and 27.6 for women, from two to three years above the average for Northern Europe (see table 2). In France, the impact of the First World War on the downward trend in age at first marriage was small; a comparison of the birth cohorts of 1821-1825 with those of 1921-1925 shows that ages at first marriage declined about two or three years for each sex, from around 28.5 to 26 years among men and from 26 to 23 years among women for this 100-year span (Chasteland and Pressat, 1962). The impact of losses during the First World War on nuptiality in France was much less significant than expected, due to other factors, such as immigration, increased male nuptiality and changes in the differences in ages of the spouses at marriage (Henry, 1966).

In Belgium, differences in nuptiality patterns were observed between rural and urban areas and between different occupational categories; sex differential migration also had an impact on age at marriage (Lesthaeghe, 1977). In Finland, in the early 1900s, emigration is assumed to have caused a decline in age at first marriage of women not because male emigration yielded a marriage market favouring women's earlier marriage but because many young migrants tended to marry earlier so that their wives could accompany or join them abroad (Chambliss, 1957).

The evidence available to account for the upward trend in women's age at first marriage in Southern Europe during the period examined (table 3) is only partially satisfactory. In Italy, the stability of the opportunity to marry (Perricone, 1971), and "the persistence of the traditional system regulating the process of choice, courtship and marriage" (Livi-Bacci, 1977, p. 99) are considered factors favouring the late-marriage norms. 13/ In Spain, likewise, it is reported that "whatever factors determined the level of nuptiality in the 18th century were evidently still at work at the beginning of the present century" (Livi-Bacci, 1968a, p. 217). 14/ In Portugal, however, a downward trend in SMAM is observed. 15/

Because the Industrial Revolution and the demographic transition, took place later in Southern Europe than in the northern and western regions, they are also believed to have delayed the trend towards earlier marriage in the south. In Italy, for instance, although home industries had been initiated late in the nineteenth century in certain southern regions, industrialization received its strongest impetus in these regions only in the second decade of the twentieth century (Livi-Bacci, 1977; Chesnais, 1986). Portugal continued to be an agrarian society and, until rather recent times, an urban centre of medium size could not be considered urban "since the prevailing organization of society and the way of life are predominantly rural and their economy is based on agriculture" (Livi-Bacci, 1971, p. 50). Spain also remained a rural society for a long period and experienced a late industrialization (Livi-Bacci, 1972), compared with the countries of Western and Northern

Europe. Because industrialization is assumed to have favoured lower ages at first marriage, it is also assumed that the decline in age at marriage did not take place in Italy and Spain because industrialization had not yet been completely achieved as in the other European regions. In the case of Portugal, which did experience lower women's age at first marriage, the industrialization factor does not appear to have played a role.

It is not clear how the trend towards secularization which swept over Europe affected the three Southern European countries, where adherence to Catholic values was traditionally strong. 16/ Moreover, the impact of war losses associated with the First World War, both military and civilian, may have affected the marriage market (Perricone, 1971). In Spain, however, there were changes favourable to earlier and more marriages, such as the elimination of caste and class obstacles to marriages, the decline of secular and regular religious orders (Livi-Bacci, 1968a) and the crisis of the institution of primogeniture (Livi-Bacci, 1972). The late-marriage pattern observed is thus again the balance of opposing influences.

The countries of Northern America and Oceania have in common the fact that all were at first countries of English socio-cultural and religious background and of large-scale immigration. 17/ In parts of the United States, the timing of marriage probably evolved towards early marriage for both men and women as early as the late nineteenth century, as suggested by small studies of the eastern United States (Monahan, 1951a; Norton, 1971; Osterud and Fulton, 1976). One factor of early marriage was the abundant availability of farmland (Landale, 1989). During the early twentieth century, this downward trend is attributed mainly to favourable economic conditions, although the strength of this relationship varied in time and place (Thomas, 1925; Galbraith and Thomas, 1941; Ogburn and Thomas, 1922). There were, however, considerable fluctuations, the causes of which are not readily identified but which are attributed to the combined effect of immigration waves, the depression, the wars and birth trends (Stouffers and Spencer, 1936; Festy, 1973; Kirk, 1960; Hauser, 1956).

Similar conditions prevailed in Canada, where large influxes of migrants during the 1880s and between 1900 and 1930 consisted predominantly of young male adults and caused ratios as high as five men to two women in certain cases (Keyfitz, 1950; George, 1974; Norland, Siggner and Wargon, 1974). The excess of marriageable men favoured earlier and more marriages for women. The fertility decline, which also affected the marriageable population of the early twentieth century, contributed to this trend (Festy, 1973). A birth cohort analysis confirms that the fall in age at marriage was only temporarily interrupted by the depression (Festy, 1973). The higher marriage prevalence of women than men supports the assumption of a marriage squeeze in both countries.

In Australia, lower marriage prevalence among men in the early twentieth century is attributed, in part at least, to the large numbers of unmarried male immigrants and the favourable marriage market situation for women (McDonald, 1974). The increase in marriage prevalence among men and the decrease among women during the first half of the twentieth century cannot be readily attributed only to a more balanced marriage market. Likewise, the late age at first marriage inherited from the preceding century, and

attributed to difficult economic conditions rather than to the desire to postpone fertility (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978), also declined for both sexes between 1901 and 1947. Evidence from such estimates as the medium age of all marriages (McDonald, 1974) and census estimates of SMAM (see table 1) confirms this trend. But the interactions of the factors that determined the main trends in marriage timing and prevalence in Australia are complex and multiple.

Many societal determinants were at work in shaping this trend and although various factors are involved--migration movements, decline in births, economic conditions, 18/ the First and Second World Wars, 19/ the depression of the 1930s--their specific impact cannot be readily untangled (Spencer, 1969 and 1971; McDonald, 1974; Caldwell, McDonald and Ruzicka, 1982). It is also difficult to ascertain to what extent the late marriages and the high percentages never married were primarily determined by marriage norms inherited from the United Kingdom or resulted from Australian circumstances, 20/ such as excess unmarried migrant males, 21/ which affected the marriage market, or the depression of the 1890s, which disrupted the ability to establish a household in Australia (McDonald, 1974). In New Zealand, a cohort analysis suggests various similarities with the Australian situation (Festy, 1973).

(b) The intermediate-marriage pattern

The distinctive intermediate age pattern of marriage observed only in certain areas in Eastern Europe arises mainly from their particular cultural, economic and historical circumstances. In the Balkan region of Eastern Europe, where low levels of economic development prevailed along with the practice of arranged marriages, girls married young. The preference for early marriage lies in the closeness of the nuclear family to the kinship group, quite common in this region (Romania and Yugoslavia, for instance) and is assumed to have been inherited both from years of Turkish Muslim rule and from the absence of significant land pressure (Goode, 1963; Sklar, 1974; McKenna, 1974; Chojnacka, 1976; Kerblay, 1986).

In the Baltic region (Poland and certain parts of Russia) and in Czechoslovakia, where later marriage was observed, different socio-cultural conditions prevailed. Family control over marriage was less constraining (the Church saw marriage as a sacrament based on mutual consent), and nuclear families are reported to have been economically and residentially more independent than those of the Balkan region, thus making couples less likely to marry young under family pressure (Lebrun, 1986; Burguière, 1986). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the socio-demographic conditions of economic development may have strengthened rather than weakened existing incentives to delay marriage. It is assumed that as a result of increasing child survival and population pressure, employment became difficult to find and resources had to be shared by more people, making economic independence for young couples harder to achieve (Goode, 1963; Sklar, 1974; Chojnacka, 1976).

In European Russia, a wide range of marriage patterns was observed in the past. Evidence is unfortunately insufficient and too heterogeneous to allow examination of marriage determinants (Coale, Anderson and Härm, 1979), but available records suggest that early and universal marriage of women prevailed in south and central Russia (Chojnacka, 1976; Coale, Anderson and Härm, 1979;

Kerblay, 1986). Indeed, most of this region was agrarian, and nuclear families were deeply imbedded in the extended families which held all household property jointly. One of the reasons for early universal marriage was the abundance of land, which readily allowed an economic basis for early marriage, and another was the custom of providing land to peasants according to the amount of labour available in the family. In fact, marriage was often a pre-condition to land entitlement rather than the opposite; and in certain areas, estate owners even saw to it that their serfs were married early in order to increase the serf population (Chojnacka, 1976; Czap, 1983). Not much is known about the impact of industrialization, increased education, the emergence of new marriage norms and the family legislation which followed the 1917 Revolution. 22/

3. Africa, Latin America and Asia, 1900-1950

It is assumed here that the traditional African and Asian marriage norms still existing today (see chapters II and IV) and strongly favouring early marriage for women and universal marriage for both sexes (Goode, 1963; Burguière, 1986, vol. 1; United Nations, 1988) resulted from social customs and religious traditions inherited from a more remote past. Therefore, this section deals primarily with countries of these regions that deviate from the general early and universal marriage pattern. These countries include Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand, whose timing pattern could for certain years fit the intermediate pattern of high prevalence and delayed marriage found in Eastern Europe (assuming reliable data).

The case of Japan is difficult to analyse in the absence of reliable marriage data. 23/ The onset of modernization of Japan coincided with the Meiji restoration. Socio-cultural, economic and demographic changes included State-supported development, emergence of family industries, adoption of new technologies, mortality decline and increased population pressure, as well as abundant manpower (Chesnais, 1986; Beillevaire, 1986b). 24/ However, contrary to what happened during the industrialization of Europe, where age at marriage fell, in Japan modernization, with the help of the State, strengthened the traditional family system and enhanced conditions for delayed marriages (Wolf, 1988). A new Civil Code (1898), by strengthening the power of the household head, extended to all social classes the succession of family headship to the eldest son only (Kumagai, 1986; Beillevaire, 1986b), thus making it more difficult for the other children to marry. It was especially effective in certain social classes and in certain regions of Japan, where marriage restrictions already existed or where it was already customary for women to marry after age 20 (Hanley, 1977; Hanley and Yamamura, 1977). In addition, military conscription is also assumed to have delayed marriages (Kobayashi and Tsubouchi, 1979). Modernization is also assumed to have played a role through the longer time spent in school to achieve the education required by modern industries, through contractual arrangements with employers specifying that employees could not leave to marry during the contractual period; and through the commitment of poor girls who found work in industries and delayed marriage to assist their families with their earnings, as was the case in the silk and cotton industries (Kobayashi and Tsubouchi, 1979). Co-residence in the stem family remained, however, a prevailing living arrangement of the married elder

son during the early twentieth century (Kojima, 1988). The magnitude of the impact of all these factors is difficult to assess; and although the overall trend was towards delayed marriages, especially for women, the mechanism of this relationship is far from elucidated (Goode, 1963; Taeuber, 1958).

In the Philippines, with its colonization experience, and its highly varied ethnic, cultural and religious composition, socio-cultural conditions were greatly diversified. Nevertheless, age at first marriage was already comparatively high by Asian standards by the end of the nineteenth century, except on the island of Mindanao, which is largely inhabited by a Muslim population (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 1978). Cultural differences, as reflected in marriage norms, were significant. As early as 1903, female SMAMs were 20.3 years for the Malay and 23 years for the mestizos and the Chinese (ESCAP, 1978). Modernization is assumed to have been a determinant of delayed marriages among women there as well (Flieger and Smith, 1975). Indeed, the late-marriage pattern seems to have emerged primarily as a result of substantial internal population migrations, which occurred in response to variations in economic and social change and job opportunities. One consequence was rural-to-rural migration flows away from densely populated areas. This migration was dominated during the pre-war period by single men seeking land. Another effect was a rural-to-urban female migration movement consistent with the pace of urbanization and the availability of female employment in urban areas (Flieger and Smith, 1975; ESCAP, 1978). In both situations, sex imbalances in the local marriage market are likely to have ensued.

A recent comparison between Indonesia and the Philippines shows that SMAM in Indonesia in 1976 (19.9 years) was still below the level achieved by the Philippines seven decades earlier (Smith, 1982). Not all provinces of the Philippines, however, experienced late marriages. Between 1903 and 1933, a declining age at marriage was experienced in 20 out of 45 provinces, even though the national average trend was upward (Flieger and Smith, 1975; ESCAP, 1978). Here, again, one finds complex interactions of the age, sex and marital status and ethnic structure of the migrants, and the sex ratio of the marriageable population in the areas of departure and arrival. The net result at the national level of these interactions was, relatively speaking, a late-marriage pattern.

Sri Lanka also has a highly varied ethnic and religious composition characterized by relatively late marriage. It is not entirely clear, however, what factors produced female SMAMs exceeding 20 years when traditional social norms required that a girl should be married as soon as she attained puberty, and there was no minimum legal age at marriage for girls who married under Kandyan or Muslim law (ESCAP, 1976). What then accounts for the late timing pattern and the rising trend in age at marriage of women in the early decades of this century?

One may look to certain factors assumed to favour delayed marriage in other developing countries (United Nations, 1988). Early economic development was initiated during the colonial period, but mainly by means of plantation industries, which did not accelerate significantly the urbanization phenomenon, a factor that could favour delayed marriages. The percentage of urban population increased only from about 10.0 in 1881 to 13.9 in 1931, an increase deemed too limited to affect the national mean age at first marriage.

On the other hand, plantation industries initiated large manpower immigration, mainly of Indian Tamils (ESCAP, 1976). During the intercensal period 1871-1881, it was found that 66 per cent of the total population increase was due to immigration, and this proportion was still 34 per cent in 1901-1911 (ESCAP, 1976). Migration could have been a factor that delayed marriages through an imbalance of the sex ratio in the marriage market. But available data do not indicate a sex imbalance unfavourable to women in the marriageable population in the early 1900s, at least at the national level. It is still possible, however, that a sex imbalance is not apparent because of age misstatements in the early censuses (Fernando, 1975; ESCAP, 1976), 25/ or an imbalance may have emerged at the regional or local level, as was the case in Korea, 26/ and was not reflected at the national level. Education could be another determinant of delayed marriage, but the dual school system developed at the time in Sri Lanka was apparently not sufficient to provide the appropriate training to create modern job opportunities, especially for women (ESCAP, 1976). Additional analyses are thus needed to identify and better understand the factors influencing marriage patterns in this country.

C. Concluding remarks

This overview of marriage timing and prevalence confirms the existence of the three types of marriage patterns identified by Hajnal, and the data added support his model, especially as concerns women.

Asia remains characterized, with some exceptions, by an early-marriage/high prevalence pattern; and the changes that occurred prior to the 1950s raised slightly the age at first marriage but had little effect on the prevalence level. No new African data were available for the period studied to permit conclusions about the marriage patterns of this region. However, the early-marriage/high-prevalence pattern deduced from the most recent censuses and surveys of the 1950s strongly support the view that Africa also experienced the same pattern observed in Asia.

For Latin America, data for the 1930s and 1940s are unsatisfactory. It is suspected that many non-legalized unions were not properly recorded or classified. Thus, women's age at first marriage ranges from about 20 to 23 years and fits the intermediate-marriage pattern for women. Prevalence, however, is particularly low, in general under 90 per cent, so that if data are taken at face value this region emerges with a low-prevalence pattern.

In Europe, around the 1900s, women's marriages were late, with SMAMs in the range of from 24 to 27 years. Prevalence was also low, usually under 90 per cent and quite similar to the pre-industrial marriage pattern experienced in earlier centuries. There are, however, exceptions, notably in several countries of Eastern Europe, where mean age at first marriage varied from 20 to 22 years in certain countries and from 23 to 25 years in others. The data therefore suggest that some countries of the eastern subregion were of the intermediate pattern and some were of the late timing pattern. In terms of prevalence, the intermediate pattern is common, with proportions of ever married exceeding 90 and sometimes even 95 per cent. With SMAMs under 23 years, the United States and Australia also appear to fall in the intermediate-pattern category as concerns marriage timing of women at the end of the period.

The time-series show (with some exceptions) that as marriage timing and prevalence evolved from the early 1900s towards the middle of the twentieth century, women generally (but not always) married earlier and marriage prevalence increased. The exceptions are certain countries of Eastern and Southern Europe, which had declining prevalence and rising SMAMs. The evolution of marriage timing and prevalence among men sometimes differs from that of women. In Europe, male prevalence often exceeds female prevalence, but the opposite pattern is observed in Northern America and Oceania. Despite earlier marriage, especially among women, most countries are still considered to conform to the late-marriage pattern.

Notes

1/ Formerly called Burma.

2/ Because of the uncertainty about the quality and comparability of the data available for certain countries, trends in marriage timing and prevalence should be viewed with caution. Moreover, the length of the period reviewed differs from country to country. Although the indices of change presented in table 3 are not always sufficiently precise to guarantee that small changes are genuine, these indices do reflect adequately the direction of the trend.

3/ The low prevalence shown for Sri Lanka in table 1 is only for 1901. It is not clear whether data quality or special circumstances, or both, account for this low level. In the Sri Lankan censuses of 1911 and 1921, enumerators tended to classify unmarried couples as single, so that the percentages single were grossly overestimated and marriage data from these two censuses could not be reliably used (Fernando, 1975). The low prevalence at ages 45-49 suggests that underestimation may also be considerable in the 1901 census.

4/ Considerable population movements are reported to have occurred in the Philippines at the turn of the century and in the early decades of the century, and these movements may have affected marriage prevalence by causing imbalances in the marriage market, particularly in view of the multi-ethnic composition of the Philippine population (Smith, 1975).

5/ Indeed, although marriage norms arise from and are imbedded in the family system prevailing in a culture, the family system itself is part of a large social structure which sets, usually through marriage norms, the conditions under which the economic basis for marriage can be met at a given time of a person's life cycle. It may be in the interest of the social groups to achieve early economic independence of the young, and early marriage can then occur. Or the social setting may result in delaying this economic condition for marriage, or simply ignore it and leave the young couple the responsibility to meet their needs independently (United Nations, 1988). One way or the other, social constraints, not always noted in the discussion, are always present in determining the timing and prevalence of marriage. It should also be borne in mind that different economic requirements exist in different social strata, ethnic or religious groups for the formation of the family; hence, the timing and prevalence of marriage as measured at the country level are the result of many subnational components.

6/ The interrelationship between mortality, marriage and fertility control remains a complex and often controversial issue. How does society change marriage norms in order to ensure a demographic response to new fertility conditions? What other factors are involved to allow such a change to be successful? Lack of quantitative and qualitative information does not permit a straightforward answer to such questions.

7/ The marriages most subject to delay were those for which economic independence remained most difficult to achieve, notably those of artisans, traders and others who had to wait for the end of their apprenticeship or training or for an opening in the profession. Unfortunately, sufficient information on age at first marriage by occupation for historical populations is not readily available.

8/ It was suggested that in the past in certain regions of India, for instance, the incineration of surviving widows may have affected the marriage market by not providing sufficient marriage possibilities and consequently favoured the very early unions of girls. For example, in 1789, in Uttar Pradesh, it was reported that the sex ratio varied, according to region, from 150 to 300 (Lardinois, 1986). However, other countries which did not have such a custom were also characterized by early marriages of women.

9/ In the initial stage of industrialization, women were commonly employed in the manufacturing of textiles, often in rural areas (Chesnais, 1986). Later, rural textile work was overtaken by urban mechanized industries which created rural unemployment (Bairoch, 1963; Lesthaeghe, 1977). Thus, women migrated to urban or industrialized areas where they could find work in textile industries or domestic service. Those who settled in regions of mining and heavy industries, which were sectors of predominantly male labour, also found themselves in a favourable situation to marry earlier because of the sex imbalance of the marriageable population (Wrigley, 1971; Lesthaeghe, 1977; Chesnais, 1986). Crowded neighbourhoods and factory work facilitated more individual contacts and the transmission of new norms, such as rejection of certain homogamous rules and parental authority. Densely populated areas as well as large working places also increased the size of the marriage market and presumably facilitated the search for a spouse.

10/ As previously noted, the nuclear family is believed to have emerged in Europe long before industrialization (Laslett and Wall, 1972). However, under the impetus of industrialization, the economic function of the extended family declined considerably with the reduction of the number and size of large agricultural holdings and with the decline of the landowner classes. How much was due to political upheaval, increased parcelization of land or population growth cannot be ascertained. The nuclear family is also believed to constitute a family structure more adapted to the needs of industrialization: it facilitates migration, social mobility and independence from family or parental pressures.

11/ It was suggested that the progressive availability of larger and safer transportation played an important role in the surge of large-scale migrations towards the New World.

12/ The social changes that took place during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century actually produced both positive and negative effects on age at first marriage. It is the net effect of opposing influences that should be seen as producing the trend towards younger ages at first marriage. From this point of view, delayed marriages due to the depression and the war only slowed down the declining age at marriage trend.

13/ In Italy, estimates reveal increments in mean age at marriage of from one to two years (Livi-Bacci, 1977), although not without fluctuations.

14/ Analyses of both national and regional data for Spain confirm increases in mean age at marriage during the first decades of the twentieth century (Brandes, 1976; Cachinero S nchez, 1982).

15/ In various provinces of Portugal, an increase in the percentage married in age group 20-24 (from which a decrease in age at marriage is inferred) occurred between 1860 and 1940 (Livi-Bacci, 1971). Significant differences exist, however, between the northern and southern parts of the country. In the north, customs that restricted marriage survived until relatively recent times (Livi Bacci, p. 52), notably a system of property ownership and distribution which led to land fragmentation. When this institution was legally abolished, its practice nevertheless survived (Livi Bacci, 1971, pp. 50-52), thus maintaining conditions of late marriage in a number of areas.

16/ In Portugal, it is reported that after the declaration of the Republic (1910), especially in the south of the country, religious practices were abandoned in many villages: diffusion of birth control was initiated; and people were not getting married in the Church and often not even in civil ceremonies (Livi-Bacci, 1971)).

17/ Because these two regions were of significantly different character and the migration patterns quite different despite the similar socio-cultural context from which the first migrants originated, it is important to bear in mind the usual reservations regarding generalization observations based on small population groups. Some marriage patterns may indeed be associated with the migrants' original marriage norms. But national events, religious differentials, differences in ethnic, religious and social appurtenance, different patterns of population growth and trends in modernization undoubtedly constitute different determinants in the formation of prevailing marriage patterns, even when these different factors produced similar outcomes.

18/ A study of Australia pertaining to the inter-war period from 1920-1921 to 1937-1938 and focusing on economic indicators identified a strong positive association between marriages and employment levels (Basavarajappa, 1971).

19/ The required information is not available for some of the crucial periods. For instance, annual data on population by age and marital status are not available and fluctuations in marriage of never-married men remaining in Australia during the First World War cannot be assessed. One study concludes, however, that this war appears to have had slight long-term impact on marriage (McDonald, 1974).

20/ Changes in marriage norms cannot be excluded, and both regional and individual differences must be kept in mind. It is reported, notably, that native-born Australian women were likely to marry earlier than women migrants who had married before arriving in Australia (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1978).

21/ Estimates from the 1901, 1911 and 1921 censuses show that in most of Australia the marriage market was unfavourable to men, particularly in Western Australia, where the ratio of unmarried men per 100 unmarried women was 301 in 1901 and 205 in 1911 (McDonald, 1974).

22/ New family codes included provisions concerning age at marriage. In Muslim Russia--a region not examined here--girls married at about 12-15 years of age. This tradition was prohibited in 1925; however, in 1937, 43 per cent of the girls were already married by age 16. At one time, a tax on spinsters and bachelors was also enacted as part of a pro-natalist policy (Coser, 1951; Kerblay, 1986; Glass and Stolee, 1987).

23/ From 1872 to 1918, marriage data were derived from family records. Because no marriage license was needed and reporting of marriages was sometimes delayed, many marriages were dissolved before they could be recorded. Data for that period are of unknown reliability and not until the first census in 1920 was an overall assessment of marriage patterns possible (Goode, 1963).

24/ The expansion of Japan flourished during the first decades of the twentieth century along with a strong movement towards urbanization and education (ESCAP, 1984). The manpower in the agricultural sector declined from 76.4 per cent in 1872 to 28.2 in 1940, whereas the industrial sector grew from 8.6 to 40.5 per cent during the same period (Chesnais, 1986). Industrialization thus progressed very significantly, along with the familial system of management (Beillevaire, 1986).

25/ Data relating to registered marriages show, for instance, that women's age at marriage rose from about 20-21 years in 1901-1902 to 22 in the 1940s, and those marrying under the general marriage ordinance marry later (22-23 years) than those marrying under Muslim law (18-19 years) (Abhayaratne and Jayewardene, 1967; ESCAP, 1976). The mean age at first marriage for women may well be somewhat lower than it appears for the period under study, and further data evaluation could shed some light on the bias that may result from inappropriate marital status classification. Indeed, consensual unions were not uncommon in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon). Census enumerators sometimes classified as "unmarried" couples not registered according to the law so that SMAMs computed on the basis of percentage single overestimate the singulate mean age at first marriage. Data from the 1911 and 1921 censuses were reported to be particularly affected by this misclassification (Fernando, 1975), and SMAM estimates from these two censuses have been omitted for that reason. As late as the 1953 census, it was reported that "Nearly half as many of those who had their marriage registered had chosen to live married without the blessings of the law. At what age these persons get married must necessarily be a matter of conjecture" (Abhayaratne and Jayewardene, 1967, p. 246).

26/ In Korea, for instance, delayed marriage of women is attributed to the large numbers of female migrants to urban areas after 1925; this effect was compounded by postponement of marriages by males due to high rates of unemployment (Kwon, 1977).

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II. AFRICA

A. Levels and trends in marriage patterns

In the second half on the twentieth century, out of 51 African countries, there were 44 for which data on marriage among women were available for at least one point in time (see annex table A.1); and of this group, 26 countries had data for at least two points in time. The discussion here covers both groups of countries. 1/

Unfortunately, due to a variety of reporting problems, the quality of the marriage data remains difficult to evaluate. The conceptual problems of marriage in Africa are examined in detail in the earlier publication on this topic (United Nations, 1988a). The difficulties noted pertain both to the definition of marriage and to the reporting of types and time of marriage. As concerns the definition of marriage, censuses do, as a rule, distinguish two or three types of marital union, usually legal unions, customary or religious unions and sometimes consensual unions. These various categories, if recorded, were combined in this study into a single ever-married category. Only in cases where certain types of unions were omitted or were not properly recorded is there a source of error.

In marriages in Africa, a marital union is not always the outcome of one single well-defined event, such as a blessing or a ceremony. Sometimes a number of requirements, with judicial significance, must be satisfied, such as payment of instalments of the bride-wealth, transfers of goods or other obligations to be fulfilled (see, e.g., François, 1975; Gaisie, 1975; Morgan, 1975). Hence, the date of marriage can be arbitrarily placed at some point during that process and may or may not precede the establishment of a household or the birth of children (Rwabushaija, 1987; van de Walle and Meekers, 1988).

In addition, census and survey directives were not always prepared to achieve the best reporting of such a variety of marital statuses, especially when Western criteria were applied during the colonial period to identify African marriages (van de Walle, 1968a; Pison, 1988). Likewise, in Muslim marriages in Africa and elsewhere, marriage registration (contact signing) and cohabitation are not always simultaneous; this practice also may be a cause of uncertainty (Morocco, 1974; Sayed, El-Khorazaty and Way, 1985; Abdelrahman and Morgan, 1987). No country-by-country assessment of the data was undertaken. 2/ The estimates of marriage prevalence provide a rather satisfactory assessment because the recorded levels of adolescent and overall prevalence are consistently high, as expected. As concerns trends, comparisons over time are on less firm ground because of uncertainty as to the comparability of areas or populations surveyed.

1. Timing of marriage

Since the Second World War and up to the most recent census or survey, Africa remains a region of very early first marriage, primarily among women. Among men, adolescent marriages (those at ages 15-19) 3/ are relatively uncommon, as norms for age at marriage are generally less constraining for males. The lowest recorded proportions of married males in this young age group (under 1 per 100) were found in Mauritius, South Africa, Tunisia and Zaire during the 1970s and 1980s (and in Réunion if only legal unions are considered). Proportions of 10 per cent or more were found in recent censuses or surveys in the Comoros (1980) and the Congo (1984). In the earlier censuses, such high proportions were found in the Central African Republic (1959), Chad (1963), Kenya (1962), Mozambique (1950) and the Niger (1959). In most of the other countries, male proportions range mainly from 3 to 6 per cent, without specific patterns in the various subregions.

It is among women that the level of adolescent marriages is highest. The percentages of ever-married women at ages 15-19 reveal a general pattern of very precocious marriage both in the past and currently.

During the 1950s and 1960s, in only two of the countries for which data were available were fewer than 20 per cent of girls aged 15-19 ever married: Réunion (legal unions only); and South Africa. During the same period, in a considerable number of countries, more than 50 per cent of the females in that age group were already in a marital union (table 4); and in several countries, notably Benin (1961), Gabon (1960), Morocco (1952) and Senegal (1960), this proportion varied between 60 and 70 per cent (annex table A.1). In some countries, the level of adolescent female marriages was as high as 80 per cent, namely, in Guinea (1955), Mali (1960) and particularly the Niger (1959), which stands out with a peak of 86.4 per cent (annex table A.1). The more recent censuses--those of the 1970s and 1980s--now available for more countries confirm the general pattern of high levels of marriage among adolescent females (table 4).

During the late 1970s and the 1980s, eight countries had fewer than 20 per cent adolescent females married before age 20--Botswana, Burundi, Mauritius, Morocco, Réunion, Rwanda, South Africa and Tunisia. In some of these countries, however, incompleteness of data may be the reason for this low level. 4/ Conversely, during the same period, in a few countries--Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Senegal--more than 50 per cent of adolescent females were in a union. Indeed, Mali had a peak level of 75 per cent ever married (annex table A.1). The other countries fall in the range of 20-49 per cent, which is still considerable according to current world standards, in terms both of timing of family formation and of reproductive potential. For some of the countries where adolescent marriages were highest in the past (Chad, Gabon, Guinea and the Niger), recent data are available.

When trends in adolescent marriages are examined in terms of average annual percentage change for countries for which data were available for at least two points in time, it can be seen that most countries experienced reductions, relatively modest among men and much more substantial among women (table 5). Because doubts remain as to the comparability of the earlier and

Table 4. Distribution of countries according to percentage of women ever married aged 15-19, Africa, 1945-1985

Percentage ever married aged 15-19	Prior to 1970	Country	Since 1970	Country
Fewer than 10 per cent	1954	Réunion a/	1981	Botswana
	1951	South Africa	1987	Burundi
			1982	Réunion
			1980	South Africa
			1984	Tunisia
10-19 per cent			1983	Mauritius
			1982	Morocco
			1983	Rwanda
20-39 per cent	1948	Algeria	1977	Algeria
	1960	Egypt	1980	Comoros
	1966	Lesotho	1984	Congo
	1950	Mozambique	1980	Egypt
			1971	Ghana
			1979	Kenya
			1977	Lesotho
			1973	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
			1975	Madagascar
			1980/81	Somalia
			1979	Sudan
			1978	United Rep. of Tanzania
			1975/76	Zaire
			1980	Zambia
			1982	Zimbabwe
40-49 per cent	1960	Angola	1982	Benin
	1950	Guinea-Bissau	1978	Cameroon
	1962	Kenya	1975	Central African Rep.
	1952	Mauritius	1974	Liberia
	1956	Tunisia	1977	Mauritania
	1969	Uganda	1981/82	Nigeria
	1969	Zambia	1971	Togo
50 per cent or more	1961	Benin	1975	Burkina Faso
	1959	Central African Rep.	1978	Côte d'Ivoire
	1963	Chad	1984	Ethiopia
	1960	Congo	1977	Malawi
	1960	Gabon	1987	Mali
	1960	Ghana	1980	Mozambique

Table 4 (continued)

Percentage ever married aged 15-19	Prior to 1970	Country	Since 1970	Country
50 per cent or more	1955	Guinea	1978	Senegal
	1962	Liberia		
	1960	Mali		
	1952	Morocco		
	1959	Niger		
	1960	Senegal		
	1958	Togo		
	1967	United Rep. of Tanzania		

Source: Annex table A.1.

a/ Legal unions only.

Table 5. Percentage ever married aged 15-19, by sex, Africa, 1950-1985

Subregion and country a/	Percentage ever married aged 15-19				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Earliest reading b/	Year of census or survey	Most recent reading	Year of census or survey	
			Men		
Eastern Africa					
Burundi	..	..	..	..	..
Ethiopia	8.2	1981	6.1	1984	-0.70 c/
Kenya	10.8	1962	2.6	1979	-0.48
Mauritius	2.0	1952	0.6	1983	-0.05
Mozambique	10.0	1950	8.4	1980	-0.05
Réunion d/	0.5	1954	0.2	1982	-0.01
Rwanda	3.7	1970	3.1	1978	-0.08
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	7.1	1967	3.6	1978	-0.32
Zambia	3.8	1969	2.0	1980	-0.16
Middle Africa					
Cameroon	3.8	1976	4.0	1978	0.10 c/
Central African Rep	10.2	1959	13.4	1975	0.20
Congo	5.0	1960	11.8	1984	0.28
Northern Africa					
Algeria	4.8	1948	2.5	1977	-0.08
Egypt	6.9	1960	3.3	1980	-0.18
Morocco	7.4	1952	2.1	1982	-0.18
Tunisia	4.8	1956	0.0	1984	-0.17
Southern Africa					
Botswana	5.7	1971	0.9	1981	-0.48
Lesotho	1.2	1966	1.6	1977	0.04
South Africa	1.6	1951	0.9	1980	-0.02
Western Africa					
Benin	5.3	1961	3.5	1982	-0.09
Côte d'Ivoire	3.4	1975	3.3	1978	-0.03 c/
Ghana	3.6	1960	1.4	1971	-0.20
Liberia	4.8	1962	3.2	1974	-0.13
Mali	1.5	1960	4.9	1976	0.21
Senegal	1.1	1960	1.6	1978	0.03
Togo	3.1	1958	2.4	1971	-0.05

Table 5 (continued)

Subregion and country a/	Percentage ever married aged 15-19: Earliest reading b/	Year of census or survey	Most recent reading	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (percentage points)
		Women			
Eastern Africa					
Burundi	19.2	1979	6.5	1987	-1.59
Ethiopia	54.1	1981	60.9	1984	2.27 c/
Kenya	44.7	1962	28.8	1979	-0.94
Mauritius	41.5	1952	10.7	1983	-0.99
Mozambique	34.8	1950	52.4	1980	0.59
Réunion d/	7.5	1954	3.0	1982	-0.16
Rwanda	18.0	1970	12.7	1983	-0.41
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	51.9	1967	37.6	1978	-1.30
Zambia	42.0	1969	31.7	1980	0.94
Middle Africa					
Cameroon	45.9	1976	49.0	1978	1.55 c/
Central African Rep.	57.9	1959	46.8	1975	-0.69
Congo	58.4	1960	25.7	1984	-1.36
Northern Africa					
Algeria	33.2	1948	23.6	1977	-0.33
Egypt	34.0	1960	22.4	1980	-0.58
Morocco	60.7	1952	18.5	1982	-1.41
Tunisia	41.5	1956	6.9	1984	-1.24
Southern Africa					
Botswana	13.5	1971	7.3	1981	-0.62
Lesotho	22.0	1966	25.9	1977	0.35
South Africa	9.2	1951	5.6	1980	-0.12
Western Africa					
Benin	66.7	1961	45.5	1982	-1.01
Côte d'Ivoire	49.5	1975	52.1	1978	0.87 c/
Ghana	54.1	1960	31.8	1971	-2.03
Liberia	56.5	1962	42.3	1974	-1.18
Mali	79.1	1960	75.4	1987	-0.14
Senegal	62.8	1960	55.0	1978	-0.43
Togo	53.1	1958	40.6	1971	-0.96

Source: Annex table A.1.

a/ Including only countries for which observations were available for at least two points in time.

b/ For several countries, data were not available prior to 1970.

c/ Based on an interval of less than five years.

d/ Legal unions only.

e/ Data for mainland.

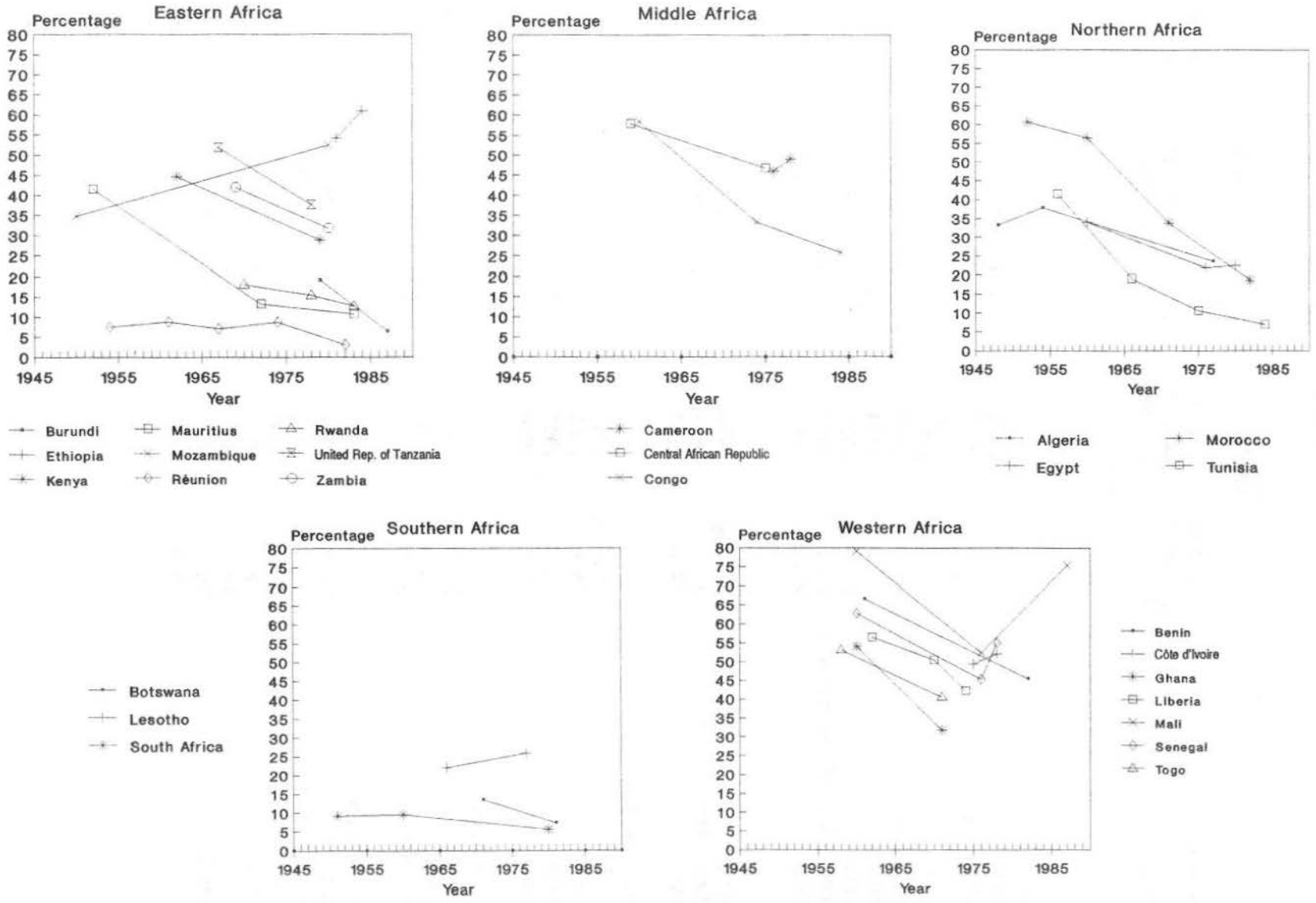
latter data sets, no firm conclusions are drawn regarding these trends. Of particular uncertainty is the extent of the increments in proportions of women ever married, as in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali and Mozambique, as well as the sharp declines in Burundi, the Congo, Ghana, Morocco and the United Republic of Tanzania, all of which would need to be corroborated. In the Sudan, the two data collections (omitted from table 5) cover different areas and are not comparable. These trends are shown in figure 5, which illustrates the former and current high levels of adolescent marriages among females, notably in various countries of Eastern, Middle and Western Africa. In Mauritius, Réunion and Tunisia, the declines observed are considered genuine as far as magnitude is concerned. Morocco had one of the most impressive declines: the proportion of women ever married at ages 15-19 fell from 60.7 to 18.5 per cent between 1952 and 1982. A sharp reduction also appears to have taken place in Ghana, from 54.1 to 31.8 per cent between 1960 and 1971.

Among the subregions, Western Africa still has the highest levels (usually over 40 per cent) of marriage among women aged 15-19. Northern Africa has had significant reductions in adolescent marriages, with recent levels varying at about 20 per cent of those ever married and with a low of 6.9 per cent in Tunisia. Southern Africa displays the lowest levels, but as indicated in note 4, the status of Botswana needs to be corroborated. Eastern and Middle Africa do not reflect any specific pattern and the percentages ever married cover a wide range, from about 10.7 in Mauritius in 1983 to 60.9 in Ethiopia in 1984. The increases in Ethiopia and Mozambique are not corroborated by other sources and may be due to data inconsistencies (figure 5).

When assessing marriage timing in terms of singulate mean age at marriage, a wide range of SMAMs emerges among both men and women. In most of the countries, male SMAMs vary between 23 and 27 years (annex table A.1). A few countries, notably Malawi (1977) and Mozambique (1980), display low ages of between 22 and 23 years. The Niger, with 21.5 years in 1959, has the lowest male SMAM recorded in Africa during the second half of the twentieth century. At the upper end of the scale, SMAMs as high as 27-29 years were observed for a number of countries. Currently, Northern and Southern Africa are characterized by the highest SMAMs, whereas countries of Eastern Africa have some of the lowest. The changes given in table 6 and illustrated in figure 6 highlight the small changes in male SMAMs, with annual increments averaging less than 0.1 year but with more pronounced increases in Botswana, the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire. In some countries (Algeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Mozambique), SMAMs declined; the reliability of these declines, however, could not be corroborated.

As concerns the levels and trends observed in female SMAMs in Africa (table 6 and figure 6), in Middle and Western Africa, levels continue to be under 20 years in most countries, except in the Congo (1984). Up to the early 1960s, ages under 18 years were not uncommon and were recorded around 1960, notably in Angola, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Gabon, Ghana and Senegal. SMAMs of less than 17 years--the lowest in Africa--were found in Chad, Benin, Guinea, Mali and the Niger. Currently, levels under 18 years are still reported in, for example, Ethiopia (1984), Mali (1987) and Mozambique (1980) (see annex table A.1).

Figure 5. Trends in percentage ever married for women aged 15–19, Africa, 1950–1989



Source: Annex table A.1.

Table 6. Singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, Africa, 1950-1985
(Years)

Subregion and country a/	Singulate mean age at marriage: Earliest prior to 1970 b/	Year of census or survey	Most recent since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (years)
			Men		
Eastern Africa					
Burundi	23.8	1965	24.4	1979	0.04
Ethiopia	25.5 b/	1981	23.3	1984	-0.73 c/
Kenya	24.1	1962	25.5	1979	0.08
Mauritius	25.7	1952	27.5	1983	0.06
Mozambique	23.8	1950	22.7	1980	-0.04
Réunion d/	27.2	1954	28.1	1982	0.03
Rwanda	22.6 b/	1970	24.5	1978	0.24
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	24.1	1967	24.9	1978	0.07
Zambia	24.4	1969	25.1	1980	0.06
Middle Africa					
Cameroon	26.3 b/	1976	26.2	1978	-0.05 c/
Central African Rep.	22.6	1959	23.3	1975	0.04
Congo	24.0	1960	27.0	1984	0.13
Northern Africa					
Algeria	26.0 e/	1948	25.3	1977	-0.02
Egypt	25.9	1960	26.9	1980	0.05
Morocco	24.5	1952	27.2	1982	0.09
Tunisia	25.9	1956	28.1	1984	0.08
Southern Africa					
Botswana	29.3 b/	1971	30.8	1981	0.15
Lesotho	26.0	1966	26.3	1977	0.03
South Africa	27.1	1951	27.8	1980	0.02
Western Africa					
Benin	24.8	1961	24.9	1982	0.00
Côte d'Ivoire	26.7 b/	1975	27.1	1978	0.13 c/
Ghana	26.2	1960	26.9	1971	0.06
Liberia	26.3	1962	26.6	1974	0.03
Mali	26.5	1960	27.3	1976	0.05
Senegal	28.0	1960	28.3	1978	0.02
Togo	25.6	1958	26.5	1971	0.07

Table 6 (continued)

Subregion and country a/	Singulate mean age at marriage: Earliest prior to 1970 b/	Year of census or survey	Most recent since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (years)
		Women			
Eastern Africa					
Burundi	20.6	1965	21.9	1987	0.06
Ethiopia	17.7 b/	1981	17.1	1984	-0.20 c/
Kenya	18.4	1962	20.3	1979	0.11
Mauritius	19.3	1952	23.8	1983	0.15
Mozambique	19.4	1950	17.6	1980	-0.06
Réunion d/	23.8	1961	25.8	1982	0.10
Rwanda	20.1 b/	1970	21.2	1983	0.08
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	17.9	1967	19.1	1978	0.11
Zambia	18.2	1969	19.4	1980	1.1
Middle Africa					
Cameroon	18.8 b/	1976	18.8	1978	0.00 c/
Central African Rep.	17.3	1959	18.4	1975	0.07
Congo	17.6	1960	21.9 f/	1984	0.18
Northern Africa					
Algeria	20.0 f/	1948	21.0	1977	0.03
Egypt	19.8	1960	21.4	1980	0.08
Morocco	17.3	1952	22.3	1982	0.17
Tunisia	19.3	1956	24.3	1984	0.18
Southern Africa					
Botswana	24.8 b/ f/	1971	26.4 f/	1981	0.16
Lesotho	20.3	1966	20.5	1977	0.02
South Africa	22.8	1951	25.7	1980	0.10
Western Africa					
Benin	16.9	1961	18.3	1982	0.07
Côte d'Ivoire	18.4 b/	1975	18.9	1978	0.17 c/
Ghana	17.8	1960	19.4	1971	0.15
Liberia	18.0	1962	19.4	1974	0.12
Mali	16.2	1960	16.4	1987	0.01
Senegal	17.4	1960	18.3	1978	0.05
Togo	17.6	1958	18.5	1971	0.07

Source: Annex table A.1.

a/ Including only countries for which observations were available for at least two points in time.

b/ For several countries, data were not available prior to 1970.

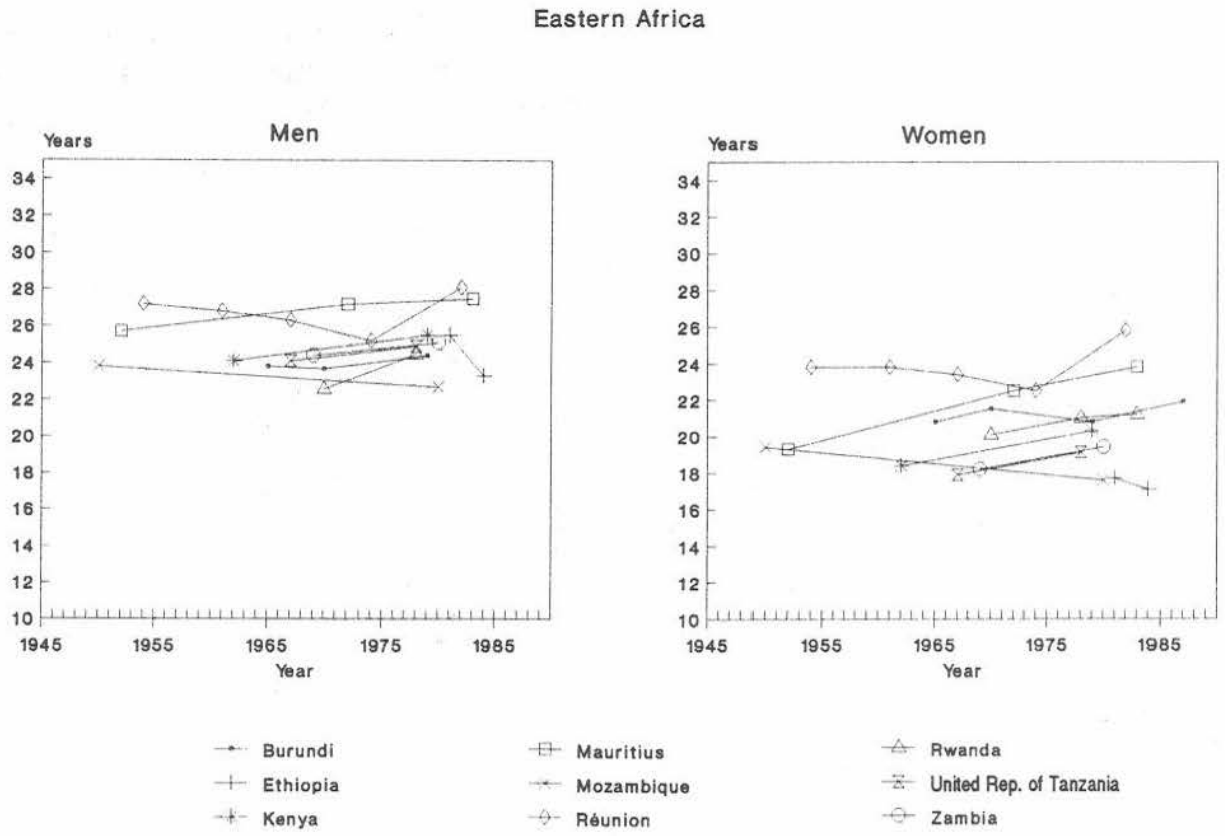
c/ Based on an interval of less than five years.

d/ Legal union only.

e/ Data for mainland

f/ Data of uncertain quality or comparability.

Figure 6. Trends in singulate mean age at marriage, Africa, 1950–1989



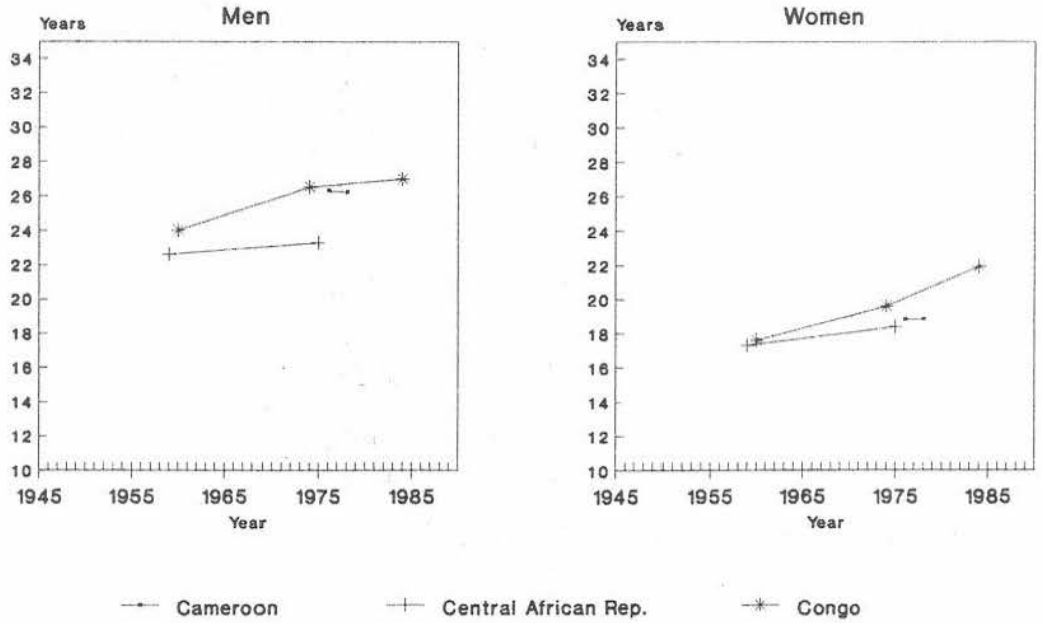
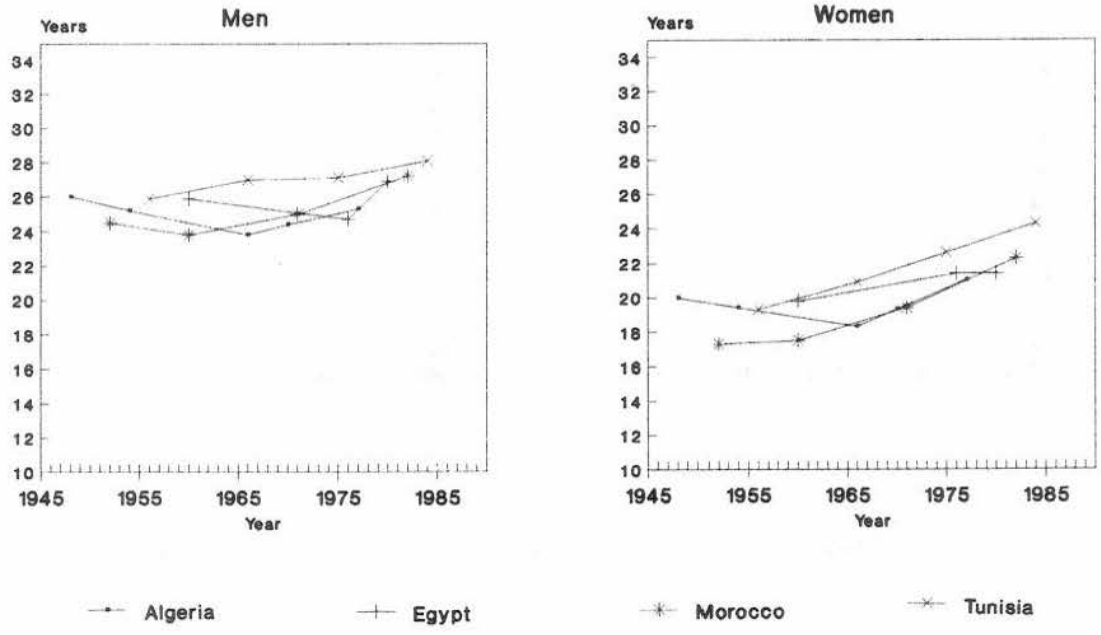


Figure 6 *(continued)*

Northern Africa



Southern Africa

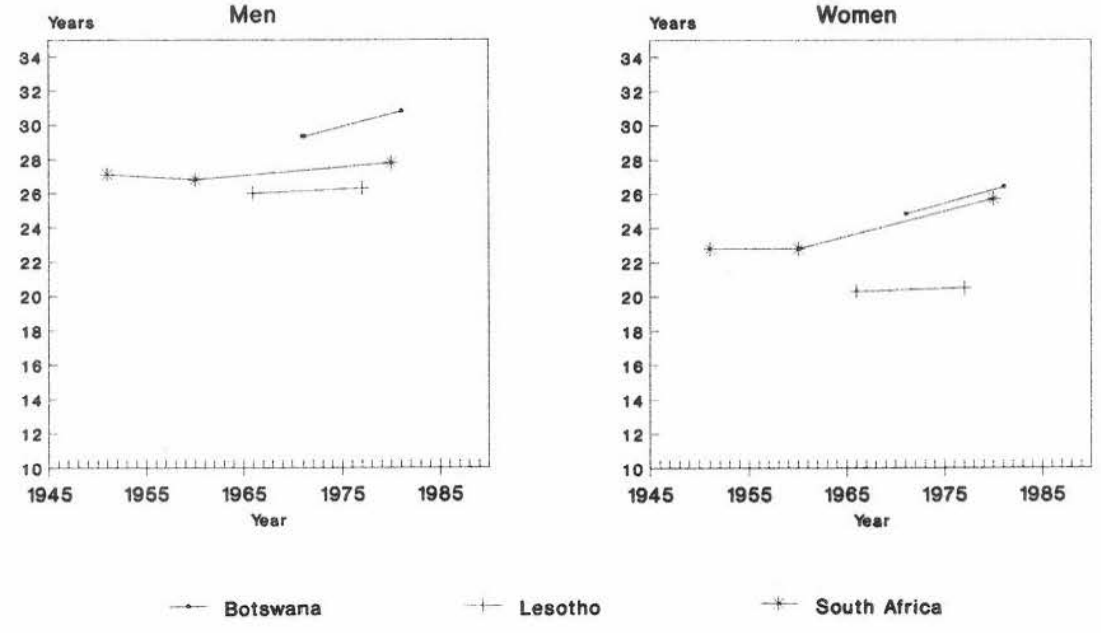
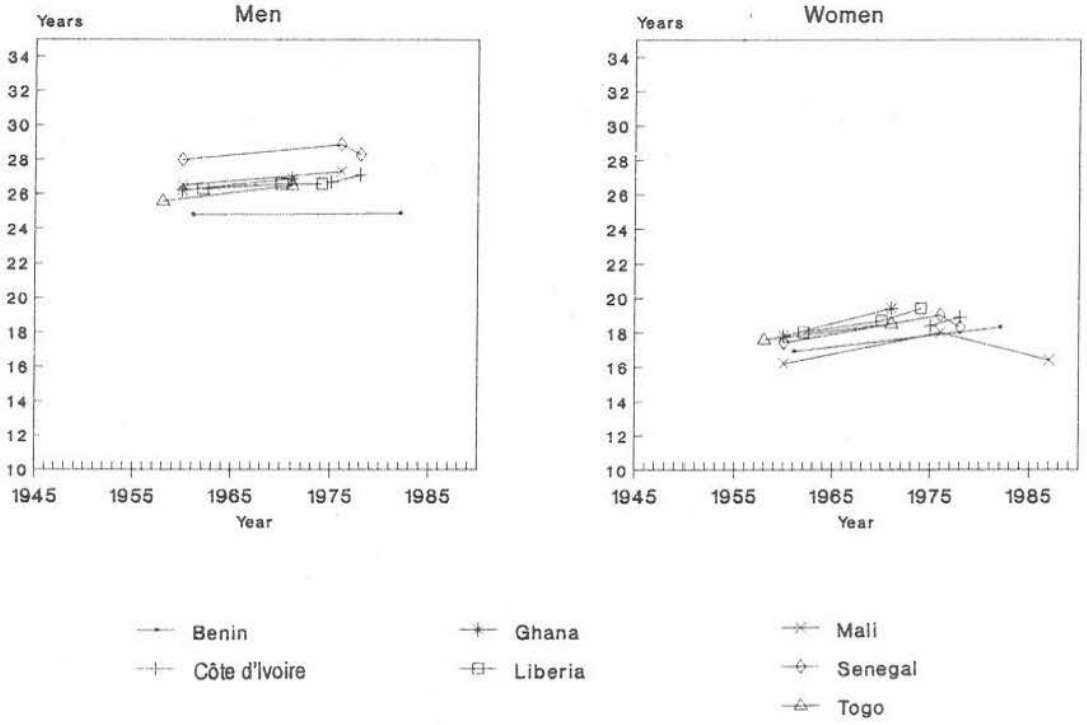


Figure 6 *(continued)*

Western Africa



Source: Annex table A.1.

In Eastern Africa, both early- and late-marriage patterns among females are currently found. For instance, Ethiopia (1984), Malawi (1977) and Mozambique (1980) still had SMAMs of about 17 years. On the other hand, in Burundi (1987) and Rwanda (1983), levels exceeded 21 years; and Mauritius reported close to 24 years in 1983, averages that are high by African standards. The data for Réunion are not comparable. 5/ Furthermore, in several countries where female SMAMs were under 20 years during the 1950s and 1960s, the level has recently increased to over 20 years

Southern Africa represents the opposite timing pattern: SMAMs are over 20 years, a late marriage pattern by African standards. The reliability in the case of Botswana could not be confirmed because late marriage for women reported in other studies (Kuper, 1985) may have resulted from underestimation of marital unions. 6/

In Northern Africa, female SMAM currently exceed 21 years, except possibly in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. 7/ The largest increases have taken place in Morocco and Tunisia; the 1984 census of Tunisia reported a female SMAM as high as 24.3 years. 8/

By world standards, Africa--in particular, sub-Saharan Africa--remains a region of very young marriages among women. At the beginning of the period under review, in 19 of 26 countries for which data were available at two points in time, SMAMs were under 20 years; at the end of this period, in 13 countries SMAM was still under 20-year level (table 6). There are obviously cultural factors in many sub-Saharan countries that maintain traditional marriage norms among women, thus providing considerable time of exposure to the risk of conception in countries where contraceptive use is at a very low level. Given the general low level of social change observed, current differences in SMAM still reflect (with some exceptions) cultural differences rather than different stages reached in the marriage transition (Bongaarts, Frank and Lesthaeghe, 1984).

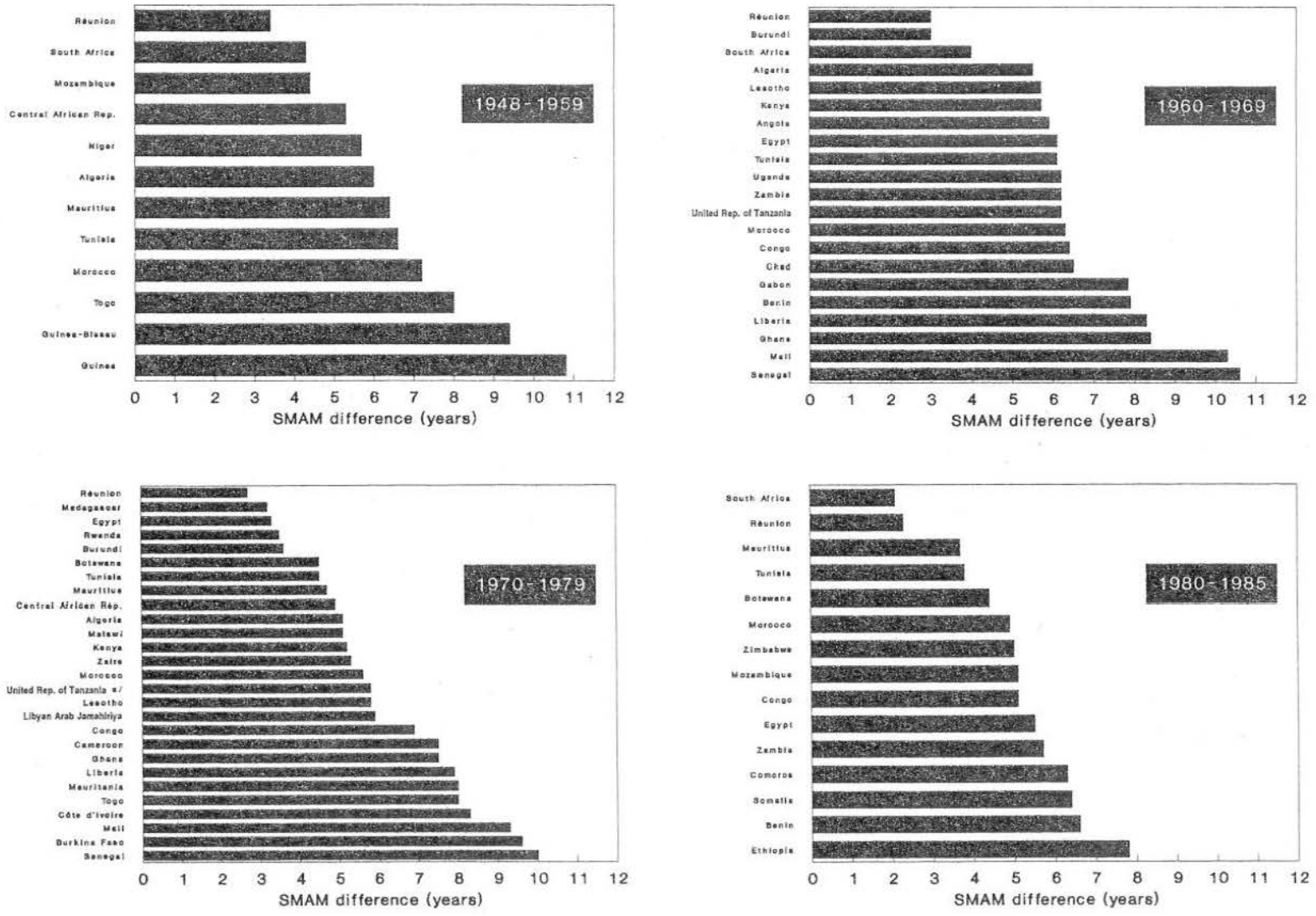
2. Difference between sexes in age at first marriage

A notable feature of marriage patterns in sub-Saharan Africa is the large differences between male and female SMAMs. These differences range from about 2-4 years in some countries to over 10 in others (see annex table A.1).

In Eastern Africa, differences in SMAM vary mainly from two to six years. In Middle and Northern Africa, differences of from four to seven years are common. The largest differences are found in countries of Western Africa: the most common fall in the range of from six to nine years, but differences exceeding 10 years have been observed in Guinea, Mali and Senegal (1960 and 1978). The smallest difference in SMAM observed in Africa, 2.1 years in 1980, was that for South Africa.

When differences between sexes are compared over time (see figure 7), it appears that they did not begin to narrow until the 1980s. Reductions appear to have been most substantial in Northern Africa: differences narrowed by one or two years in Algeria and Morocco and by almost three years in Tunisia. In the other subregions, declines were less significant. The largest observed

Figure 7. Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage, Africa, 1948–1985



Source: Annex table A.1.

Note: SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

[a]Mainland.

recent difference, 7.8 years, was recorded in Ethiopia in 1981. For many of the countries with very large differences in the past, notably in Western Africa, no comparison can be made because of the paucity of recent data.

Age differences between marital partners are due to a variety of social and demographic factors and norms which usually define a range of socially acceptable differences between sexes in age at marriage (United Nations, 1988a). Polygamy, in particular, contributes to larger differences between sexes because the larger, younger female cohorts provide the marriageable girls needed to accommodate the greater demand for brides by older men (Locoh, 1984; Pison, 1986). Bride-wealth is another factor which leads to large age differences in both monogamous and polygamous marriage when men have to wait until a large bride-wealth is collected. In fact, a legal ceiling had to be set for bride-wealth payments in some countries, notably in Gabon and Togo, in order to facilitate marriages (François, 1975; Locoh, 1984; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988).

Migration may, in certain circumstances, delay matrimony of migrant men and increase age differences either because there is a shortage of marriageable women or because of observance of traditional rules of homogamy by the immigrants or the local population. A study conducted in Côte d'Ivoire showed that immigrants had a mean difference in age at first marriage of 11 years, as compared with 7 years for nationals (Ahonzo and others, 1984).

The husband's education sometimes also affects differences in age at marriage. At Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), for instance, this difference is reported to vary from 13.8 years when the husband is uneducated to 5.7 years for college-educated husbands (Gendreau and Gubry, 1988).

3. Prevalence of marriage

A number of the problems emphasized above with respect to definition of marriage may affect the level of marriage prevalence as measured by the percentage ever married by age 50 (van de Walle, 1971). In general, couples in Africa state their marital status correctly; the high level of prevalence reported for both sexes supports this conclusion.

As concerns marriage prevalence, Africa is characterized, with few exceptions, by universal marriage among both men and women (annex table A.1). Among men, during the period 1950-1960, the percentages ever married by age 50 ranged from 95 to 99 per cent in most countries, although some lower proportions (between 90 and 94 per cent) were reported in a few countries. Among women, from 97 to 99 per cent, in general, have entered a marital union, and a prevalence level as high as 100 per cent was reported for Guinea (1955). Somewhat lower prevalence is found in Mauritius and South Africa (about 94 per cent). Proportions ever married of fewer than 90 per cent for both men and women were reported only in Botswana and Réunion, 10/ quite likely because of underreporting of consensual unions.

For the most recent period (1970-1985), data show that universality of marriage has remained the prevailing norm for both sexes in most countries. Among women in particular, the proportion ever married by age 50 remained very high, about 98-99 per cent, in Northern Africa, even in Tunisia, where age at first marriage has increased considerably. In Middle and Western Africa,

97-99 per cent prevalence remains the norm. In Eastern Africa, some countries, notably Mauritius and Madagascar, have a somewhat lower prevalence. Low prevalence rates in Angola and in the Congo need to be corroborated. Exceptions include South Africa (1980), 91.0 per cent; Réunion (1982), 85.4 per cent; and Botswana (1981), 84.0 per cent. 11/

Thus, with very few exceptions, marriage in Africa remains virtually universal for both sexes. However, although prevalence in general underwent small declines or had no change at all during the period 1950-1985, a large number of countries displayed an upward trend among both men and women (table 7 and figure 8). Sharp increases in prevalence, as were found in Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire, especially over short periods of time, call for closer scrutiny of data comparability and corroboration. 12/

B. Polygamy

A major feature of marriages in Africa is the tradition of polygamy, this term is used in this section as a synonym for polygyny. Sociological aspects of this type of marital union are discussed in the earlier publication on first marriage (United Nations, 1988a). A variety of indices have been proposed for the measurement of polygamy (e.g., van de Walle, 1968a; Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989), three of which--percentage of married men and of married women in a polygamous union, and mean number of wives per married man are used in table 8 to present the available information on levels and trends of this phenomenon. The issue of completeness and reliability of data on polygamous unions is even more complex than the reporting of monogamous marriages according to their types (legal, traditional, religious or consensual). Actually, in countries like Kenya, where six different types of polygamous union have been enumerated, it is extremely difficult to ascertain to what extent all types are properly reported in censuses. 13/ The data presented here provide the best currently available assessment of prevalence levels of polygamy in Africa. The first and third columns provide a measure of prevalence among men and women, respectively. The second column gives the mean number of wives per married man.

A major feature that emerges from the data presented in the first column of table 8 is the difference in polygamy prevalence between Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. In Northern Africa, where polygamy appears to have traditionally been low (Fargues, 1986), fewer than 5 per cent of married men are in a polygamous union. It is clear that the levels of polygamy are much lower in the Muslim, Arab culture of Northern Africa than in the sub-Saharan countries. Even though the Sudan stands out with a comparatively higher level of 15.9 per cent polygamous men in 1956, this is only about half the male polygamy prevalence found in most sub-Saharan countries. The second column of table 8 also shows that in Northern Africa the mean number of wives per husband is very close to 1.0, except in the Sudan. In 1979, 16.8 per cent of the currently married women in the Sudan reported having at least one co-wife (Sudan, 1982). In Algeria, where the prevalence of polygamy among men is low, only 1.8 and 1.3 per cent of married men had a second wife in 1966 and 1970,

Table 7. Marriage prevalence by sex, Africa, 1950-1985

Subregion and country a/	Percentage ever married by age 50: Earliest prior to 1970 b/	Year of census or survey	Most recent since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (percentage points)
			Men		
Eastern Africa					
Burundi	99.0	1965	98.8	1979	-0.01
Ethiopia	99.4	1981	99.5	1984	0.03 c/
Kenya	95.9	1962	95.0	1979	-0.05
Mauritius	94.2	1952	94.8	1983	0.02
Mozambique	95.8	1950	97.7	1980	0.06
Réunion d/	86.6	1954	86.4	1982	-0.01
Rwanda	99.2	1970	98.7	1978	-0.06
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	95.7	1967	95.9	1978	0.02
Zambia	97.3	1969	96.8	1980	-0.05
Middle Africa					
Cameroon	89.9 f/	1976	93.0	1978	1.55 c/
Central African Rep.	99.1	1959	92.6	1975	-0.41
Congo	96.8	1960	93.4	1984	-0.14
Northern Africa					
Algeria	95.8 f/	1948	98.3	1977	0.09
Egypt	98.0	1960	99.1	1980	0.06
Morocco	97.9	1952	97.9	1982	0.00
Sudan	96.7	1973	96.6	1979	-0.02
Tunisia	95.0	1956	97.5	1984	0.09
Southern Africa					
Botswana	89.5 f/	1971	87.2 f/	1981	-0.23
Lesotho	96.0	1966	96.0	1977	0.00
South Africa	92.6	1951	90.9	1980	-0.06
Western Africa					
Benin	96.0	1961	97.9	1982	0.09
Côte d'Ivoire	92.4	1975	94.3	1978	0.63 c/
Ghana	96.3	1960	96.2	1971	-0.01
Liberia	93.6	1962	93.2	1974	-0.03
Mali	98.5	1960	96.9	1976	-0.10
Senegal	97.8	1960	97.5	1978	-0.02
Togo	97.4	1958	96.9	1971	-0.04

Table 7 (continued)

Subregion and country a/	Percentage ever married by age 50				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Earliest prior to 1970 b/	Year of census or survey	Most recent since 1970	Year of census or survey	
	Women				
Eastern Africa					
Burundi	99.0	1965	98.8	1987	-0.01
Ethiopia	99.4	1981	99.0	1984	-0.13 c/
Kenya	97.9	1962	97.9	1979	0.00
Mauritius	94.4	1952	96.0	1983	0.05
Mozambique	97.0	1950	97.4	1980	0.01
Réunion d/	80.7	1954	85.4	1982	0.17
Rwanda	99.9	1970	99.7	1983	-0.02
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	98.9	1967	98.5	1978	-0.04
Zambia	97.5	1969	96.5	1980	-0.09
Middle Africa					
Cameroon	95.6	1976	97.5	1978	0.95 c/
Central African Rep.	99.9	1959	94.5	1975	-0.34
Congo	99.4	1960	93.2	1984	-0.26
Northern Africa					
Algeria	97.8	1948	99.1	1977	0.04
Egypt	98.8	1960	98.7	1980	-0.01
Morocco	98.3	1952	99.1	1982	0.03
Tunisia	97.7	1956	98.5	1984	0.03
Southern Africa					
Botswana	88.3 f/	1971	84.0 f/	1981	-0.43
Lesotho	97.7	1966	97.5	1977	-0.02
South Africa	94.7	1951	91.3	1980	-0.12
Western Africa					
Benin	99.5	1961	99.5	1982	0.00
Côte d'Ivoire	94.5	1975	98.7	1978	0.20 c/
Ghana	99.5	1960	99.5	1971	0.00
Liberia	98.0	1962	97.6	1974	-0.03
Mali	99.5	1960	100.0	1987	0.02
Mauritania	97.5	1962	96.9	1976	-0.04
Senegal	99.6	1960	99.5	1978	-0.01
Togo	99.5	1958	99.9	1971	0.03

Source: Annex table A.1.

a/ Including only countries for which observations were available for at least two points in time.

b/ For several countries, data were not available prior to 1970.

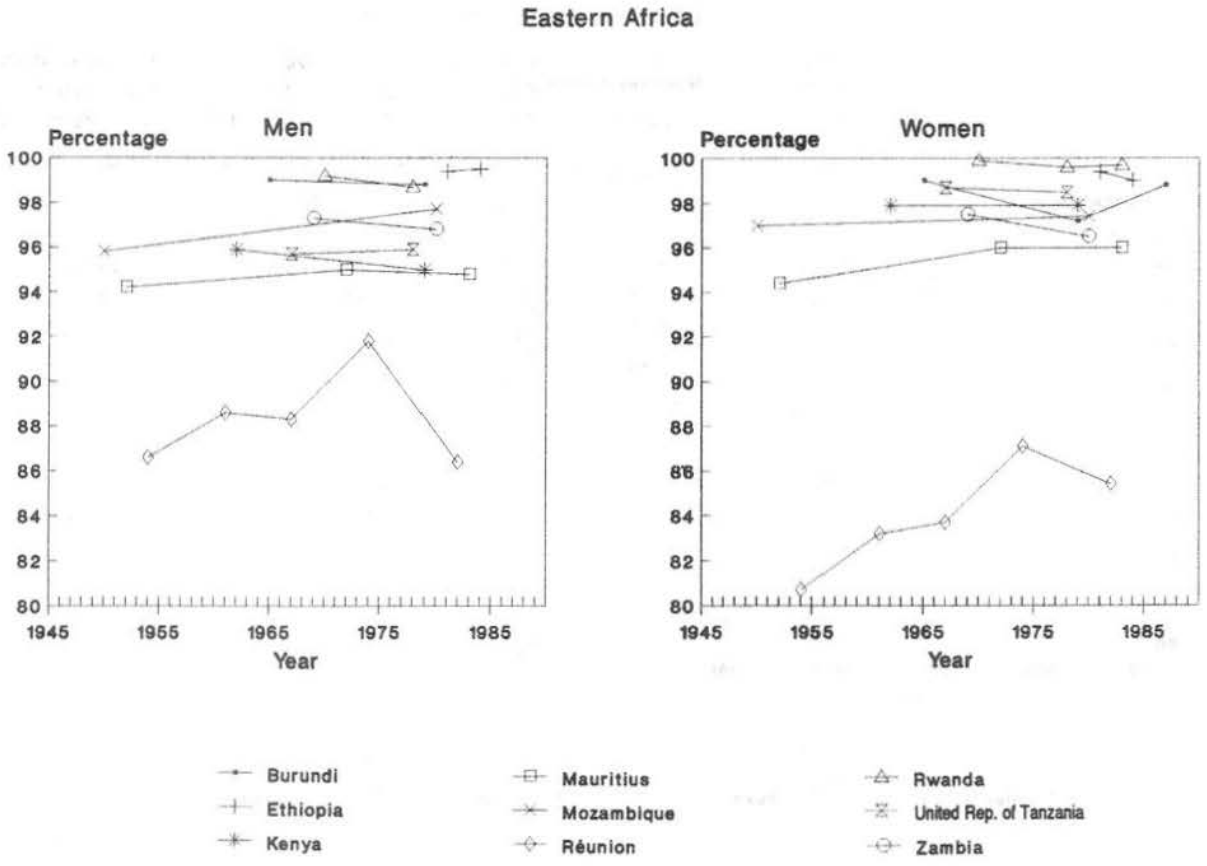
c/ Based on an interval of less than five years.

d/ Legal union only.

e/ Data for mainland.

f/ Data of uncertain quality or comparability.

Figure 8. Trends in percentage ever married by age 50, Africa, 1950–1989



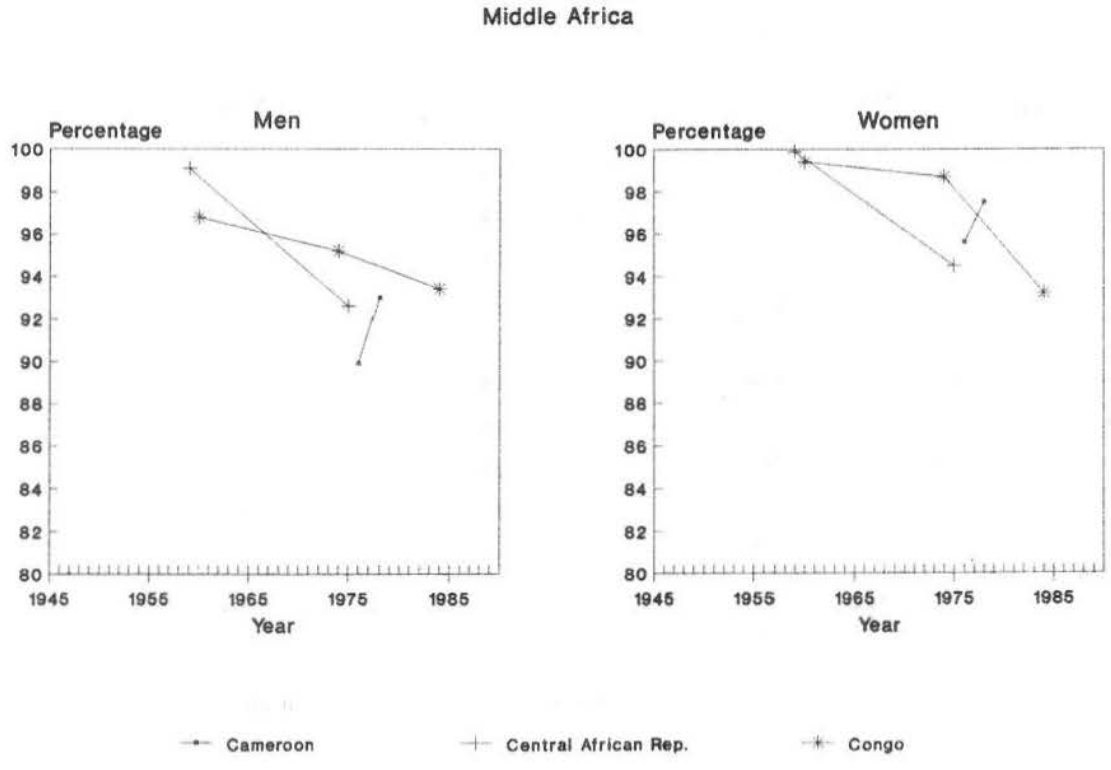
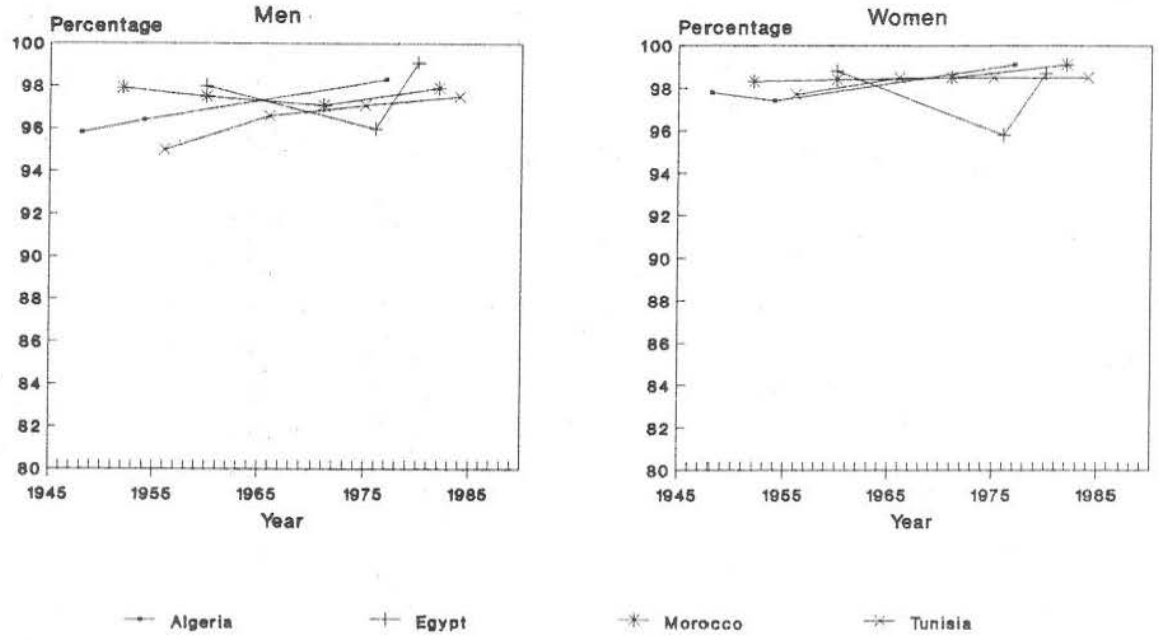


Figure 8 *(continued)*

Northern Africa



Southern Africa

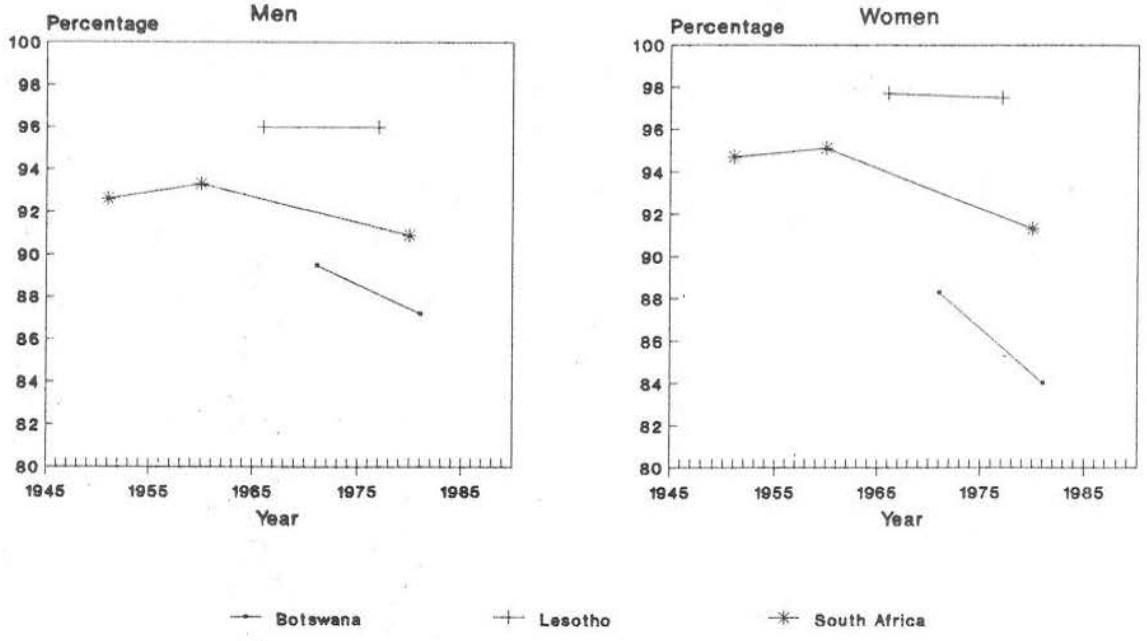
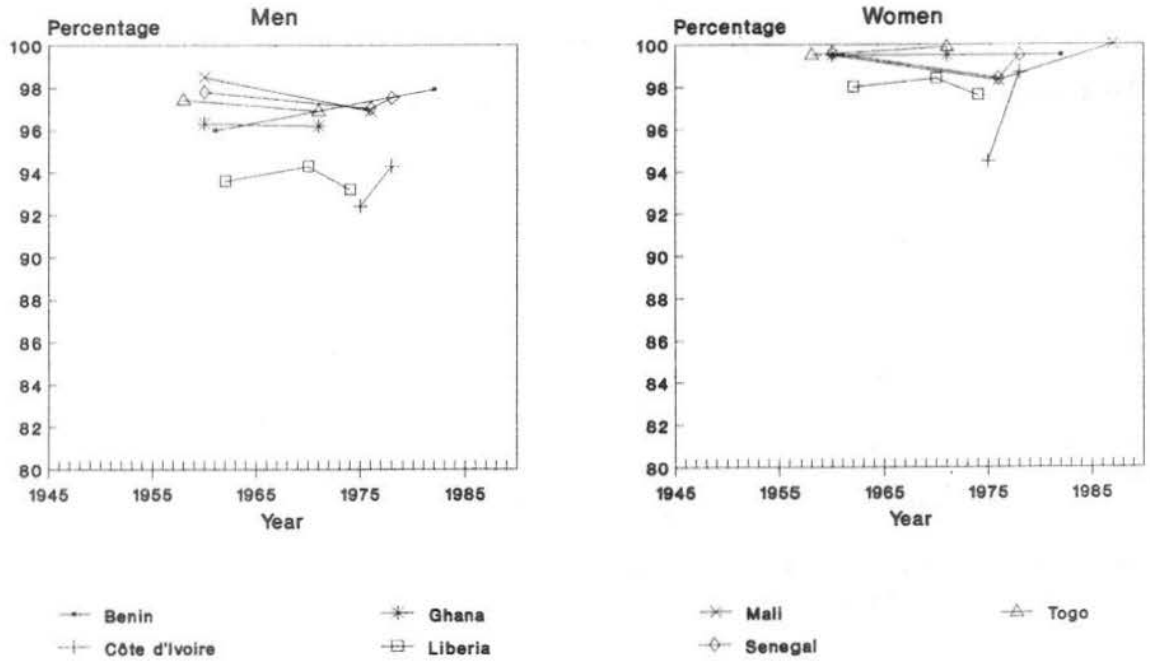


Figure 8. *(continued)*

Western Africa



Source: Annex table A.1.

Table 8. Levels of polygamy, selected countries of Africa, various years, 1947-1982

Subregion and country	Year	Percentage of married men in a polygamous union	Mean number of wives per married man	Percentage of married women in a polygamous union
Northern Africa				
Algeria	1948	3.0	..	..
	1954	2.0	1.02	..
	1966	1.8	..	..
	1970	1.3	..	..
Egypt	1947	3.4	..	..
	1960	3.8	1.04	..
	1986	2.3	..	..
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1954	3.2	..	..
	1964	2.9	1.03	..
	1973	3.3	..	..
Morocco	1952	6.6	..	..
	1961-1963	3.1	..	..
	1967	3.0	..	..
	1987	..	..	5.1
Sudan	1956	15.9	1.2	..
	1979	..	..	16.8
Tunisia	1946	4.5	..	..
Sub-Saharan Africa				
Benin	1961	31.0	1.4	..
	1981-1982	..	..	36.5 a/
Burkina Faso	1956-1957 b/	25.5	1.7	..
Cameroon	1962-1964 c/	26.0	1.4	46.3 d/
	1976 e/	23.6	1.3	44.2 d/
	1978 d/	..	1.4 d/	42.9 d/
Central African Republic	1959-1960	24.4	1.3	..
Chad	1964	22.0	..	..

Table 8 (continued)

Subregion and country	Year	Percentage of married men in a polygamous union	Mean number of wives per married man	Percentage of married women in a polygamous union
Sub-Saharan Africa (continued)				
Congo	1960-1961	31.9	1.5	53.8 d/
	1974 d/	..	1.6 d/	38.1 d/
Côte d'Ivoire	1957-1958 f/	29.1	1.4	..
	1975 d/	..	1.3 d/	41.4 d/
	1978-1979 g/	24.3	1.3	..
	1980-1981	..	1.3 d/	41.4 d/
Gabon	1960-1961	27.3	1.4	..
Ghana	1960	26.2	..	..
	1961 d/	..	1.3	45.4
	1971 d/	..	1.2	..
	1979 d/	..	1.2	34.4
Guinea	1954-1955	37.1	1.6	..
Kenya d/	1962	..	1.3	..
	1969	..	1.3	..
	1977	..	..	29.5
	1979	..	1.2	..
Lesotho	1977	..	..	7.5 a/
Liberia	1962 d/	..	1.4	..
	1974 d/	..	1.3	..
	1986	..	..	38.0
Mali	1956-1958 h/	23.2	1.3	..
	1960 d/	..	1.4	44.1
	1976 d/	..	1.3	46.3
Mauritania	1965 d/	..	1.0	8.4
	1977 d/	..	1.1	..
	1981	..	..	14.8 a/
Mozambique d/	1955	..	0.8	..
	1970	..	1.1	24.6
	1980	..	1.2	..
Niger	1959-1960	22.4	1.3	..

Table 8 (continued)

Subregion and country	Year	Percentage of married men in a polygamous union	Mean number of wives per married men	Percentage of married women in a polygamous union
Sub-Saharan Africa (continued)				
Nigeria	1974	..	..	34.0
Rwanda	1970 d/	..	1.1	16.1
	1978 d/	..	1.2	15.2
	1983 e/	..	..	18.4
Senegal	1960-1961	27.0	1.4	..
	1970	28.0	1.4	46.9 d/
	1976	31.0	1.5	51.8 d/
	1978	32.0	1.5	48.5 d/
Somalia	1980-1981	20.9	..	..
Togo	1958-1960	31.9	1.5	..
United Rep. of Tanzania	1957	21.2	1.3	..
	1967 d/	..	1.3	..
	1973 d/	..	1.2	27.1
	1977 d/	..	1.2	..
Zaire	1950 i/	23.1	..	40.1
	1955-1957 j/	20.4	1.2	35.9
	1975-1976 j/	19.5	1.3 k/	33.5
	1982-1984	..	..	32.1 l/

Sources:

For mean number of wives per married man:

Algeria (1964), **Egypt** (1960) and **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya** (1964): Economic Commission for Africa, Demographic Handbook for Africa (Addis Ababa, 1968), p. 85, table 19; **Cameroon** (1978), **Congo** (1974) and **Côte d'Ivoire** (1974 and 1980-1981): Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Georgia Kaufmann and Dominique Meekers, "The nuptiality regimes in sub-Saharan Africa", in Reproduction and Social Organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, ed. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1989), data from preliminary draft.

For percentage of married women in a polygamous union:

Benin, Lesotho and **Mauritania:** Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), p. 331, table 171; **Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire** and **Senegal:** Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Georgia Kaufmann and Dominique Meekers, "The nuptiality regimes in sub-Saharan Africa", in Reproduction and Social Organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, ed. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1989), data from preliminary draft; **Sudan:** Ministry of National Planning, The Sudan Fertility Survey 1979 - Principal Report, vol. 1 (Khartoum, Department of Statistics and World Fertility Survey, 1982), table 4.12.

For other data:

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Congo: 1960-1961: Economic Commission for Africa, Demographic Handbook for Africa (Addis Ababa, 1968), p. 85, table 19; 1974: Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Georgia Kaufmann and Dominique Meekers, "The nuptiality regimes in sub-Saharan Africa", in Reproduction and Social Organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, ed. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1989), data from preliminary draft.

Côte d'Ivoire: 1957-1958: Economic Commission for Africa, Demographic Handbook for Africa (Addis Ababa, 1968), p. 85, table 19; 1975: Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Georgia Kaufmann and Dominique Meekers, "The nuptiality regimes in sub-Saharan Africa", in Reproduction and Social Organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, ed. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1989), data from preliminary draft; 1978-1979: E. Ahonzo and others, Population de la Côte d'Ivoire: analyse des données démographiques disponsibles (Abidjan, Direction de la statistique, 1984), p. 229, table 5.8.

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Mali: 1956-1958: Economic Commission for Africa, Demographic Handbook for Africa (Addis Ababa, 1968), p. 85, table 19; 1960, 1976: Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Georgia Kaufmann and Dominique Meekers, "The nuptiality regimes in sub-Saharan Africa", in Reproduction and Social Organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, ed. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1989), data from preliminary draft.

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Senegal: Etienne van de Walle and John Kekovole, "The recent evolution of African marriage and polygyny", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 3-5 May 1984, p. 8, table 2.

Somalia: Somalia, Central Statistical Department, National Survey of Population 1980-81 (1986), p. 17, table III.4.

United Republic of Tanzania: 1957: Economic Commission for Africa, Demographic Handbook for Africa (Addis Ababa, 1968), p. 85, table 19; 1967, 1973, 1977: Ron J. Lesthaeghe, Georgia Kaufmann and Dominique Meekers, "The nuptiality regimes in sub-Saharan Africa", in Reproduction and Social Organization in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ron J. Lesthaeghe, ed. (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1989), data from preliminary draft.

Zaire: A. Romaniuk, "La polygamie et la parenté en Afrique tropicale: le point de vue d'un démographe", in African Population Conference, Dakar,1988, vol. 2 (Liège, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1988), table 1; Zaire, Etude démographique de l'Ouest du Zaire, EDOZA (1975-1976), Tome 3, Mouvement de la population (Louvain, Université Catholique de Louvain, 1978), p. 27, table 1.05; B. Makani and others, Planification familiale, fécondité et santé familiale au Zaïre, 1982-1984 (Kinshasa, Institut national de la statistique, 1985), derived from table 4.5.

a/ Ever-married women aged 15-49.
b/ Husbands aged 60-64.
c/ North Cameroon only.
d/ Data refer to currently married women aged 15 or over.
e/ Population aged 15 or over.
f/ Excluding towns.
g/ Data refer to population aged 10 or over.
h/ Central Nigerian delta region only.
i/ Data for 1950 refer to population aged 20 or over.
j/ Data for 1955-1957 and 1975-1976 refer to rural population of Western Zaire only, aged 15 or over.
k/ Population aged 14 or over; unweighted averages for nine subregions; covers only Western Zaire.
l/ Women aged 13-49 from two villages.

respectively (Tabutin, 1974; Fargues, 1986). Polygamy in Northern Africa is thus a marginal phenomenon, as compared with sub-Saharan Africa; and in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, the trend has surely continued further downward.

In most countries of sub-Saharan Africa for which data were available, at least 20 per cent of the married men and from about 30 to 45 per cent of the married women are in a polygamous union (table 8). Among men, during the period 1955-1961, the highest levels were observed in Guinea, with as many as 37 per cent polygamous men, and in the Congo and Togo, with a level of about 32 per cent. In 1978, level of 32 per cent polygamous married men was also reported in Senegal. Among women, the prevalence of polygamy seems to vary considerably, with a value above 50 per cent observed in Senegal in 1976.

At the subregional level, some of the highest levels of polygyny are found in Western African countries--Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Togo--with from 1.3 to 1.7 wives per married man on average and with proportions of married women in a polygamous union usually ranging from 30 to 50 per cent. Some Middle African countries, such as Cameroon, the Congo and Zaire, fall almost, but not quite, in the same range. Because of the possibility of reporting errors, trend comparisons of polygamy are uncertain. 14/ In particular, if genuine increments in polygamy do exist, it is difficult to find a reason for them. This is notably the case for Senegal, where the proportion of men in a polygamous union is reported to have increased from 27 to 32 per cent between 1960 and 1978 (van de Walle, 1968a; Senegal, 1981). Other studies on polygamy conclude that there is no evidence of a decline in polygyny in sub-Saharan Africa, although some downward trend may be genuine in certain cases (van de Walle and Kekovole, 1984; Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989). 15/

Some countries have adopted legislation directed to influencing the practice of polygamy. Specific measures to regulate polygamy were enacted in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo and Zaire, where polygamy has not been officially recognized since 1964 but is practised and generally accepted (Ahonzo and others, 1984; Locoh, 1984; Romaniuk, 1988). Tunisia is the only Maghreb country where polygamy is officially prohibited (Duza and Baldwin, 1970). How polygyny was affected by this law is not ascertained, but it was already assumed to be rare, if only because of its economic cost (Vallin, 1970).

In traditional African agricultural systems--particularly in low-technology production systems--in which men get access to land when they marry, taking a wife gives the husband higher status and greater power. Wives, who are committed to work on the land and produce children, thus become a source of power. The greater the number of wives acquired, the larger the parcel of land acquired, the more numerous the number of children produced in the household (even though the number of children per woman may be lower than in a monogamous marriage) and the higher the men's status (Muhsam, 1956; Boserup, 1985; Goody, 1973, cited in Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 1988; Goody, 1976, cited in Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989).

Evidence on the attitude of women in sub-Saharan Africa towards polygamy remains unfortunately sparse. One Nigerian study reported that notwithstanding the effects of formal education and urbanization, as many as 60 per cent of the women in the city of Ibadan did not mind sharing their husband, while only 23 per cent were openly angry at the idea (Ukaegbu, 1981).

In sub-Saharan Africa, polygamy is in a cross-current of traditional and modernizing influences. So far, however, these new influences have had a very limited impact on the practice (Romaniuk, 1988). Although it is assumed that polygamy also declines with modernization and urbanization, the preference for this custom in the urban areas of a number of countries suggests that it has to date been largely impervious to the new urban conditions in certain settings.

A new marital practice has also emerged whereby married men maintain a relationship with a second woman, identified as an "outside wife" or deuxième bureau, eventually meet her parents and sometimes even pay bride-wealth to them (Morgan, 1975; Lacombe, 1987; Kaufmann, Lesthaeghe and Meekers, 1989). It is not clear whether this practice should be considered a visiting union or an alternative form of polygamy. Moreover, it is reported that at Lagos this practice is far from being new and that rather than being a substitute for polygyny, it is found primarily in monogamous marriages. A significant distinction between "outside wifeship" and polygyny is that the latter practice is associated with financial obligations, legal rights and the performance of public ceremonies (Karanja, 1988). On the other hand, it is also suggested that currently "the most important changes in marriage revolve around the changing nature of polygyny in the midst of increasing stratification" and that "education plays a pivotal role in these changes" (Brandon and Bledsoe, 1988, p. 11). Nevertheless, at this point, polygamy remains an attractive marital arrangement even among sub-Saharan populations in the process of modernization.

Does polygamy contribute to lowering the mean age at first marriage of women? Analysing the relationship between polygamy and age at first marriage, a recent study found a much higher probability of early marriage among females in societies with high levels of polygyny than in societies where the level is medium or low. However, given the relationship of polygamy and other socio-cultural factors favouring early marriage, none of these probabilities was considered "of sufficient strength to single out polygyny as the prime determinant" (Lesthaeghe, 1984, p. 64).

C. Nuptiality differentials

Special attention is given in this section to differences in marriage timing of women according to selected socio-economic and cultural characteristics. The section focuses primarily on women because most of the studies from which the information is drawn deal only with women. Appropriate data were not always available for a sufficient number of countries to allow proper generalizations; and even within a country, the danger of simplification arises, given the great variety of cultures and traditions. Furthermore, aggregate data do not constitute the best indices to assess certain timing differentials, especially when several factors compound their effects, so that even when clear differences are observed, it is not always possible to identify what particular individual characteristics account specifically for the estimated differences in age at first marriage.

Many marriage studies show that major differences in women's age at first marriage are associated with levels of education, as well as levels of women's participation in non-agricultural activities (see, for example, United Nations, 1988a). The African attitudes towards marriage cannot be understood

only on the basis of such factors because the weight of traditional marriage norms is still heavy and is believed to contribute significantly to the fact that only small changes are found even among educated or working women. In addition, traditional marriage norms vary in different regions, and in certain areas or cultures, marriages may be delayed for reasons other than schooling or work. It is therefore important to examine not only the modern characteristics associated with delayed marriages but the context of traditional marriage as it may still influence behaviour in many African societies (see Ukaegbu, 1981; and Lesthaeghe, 1984, among others).

1. Education

The importance of the association between women's education and delayed marriage is established by evidence from a number of studies (for example, United Nations, 1987a; and Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989). The data given in table 9 illustrate the magnitude of the effect of this factor on singulate mean age at marriage for a number of countries. Although the role of education appears to be very substantial at the individual level, its impact on marriage age may not yet be reflected at the aggregate level because the proportion of women who actually reach the educational level needed to initiate marriage delays is not large enough. Indeed, in many African countries, illiteracy among women remains extremely high (United Nations, 1985b), and a recent study of selected African countries reported that from 60 to 90 per cent of the ever-married women had not completed one year of schooling (table 10). Such data as those given in table 9 do not leave any doubt regarding the importance of education as a determinant of late marriage. A detailed analysis of age at first marriage based on married women aged 35-49 confirms the importance of women's education, even when urban/rural differences are kept constant, and underscores the fact that the woman's education is also more important than her husband's as far as age at first marriage is concerned (Vallin, 1973).

2. Occupation

Testing the hypothesis of a positive relationship between women's occupation and age at first marriage (United Nations, 1988a) presents many difficulties. A major obstacle arises from the differences among African countries in the manner of reporting the employment status of women, differences which tend to produce variations as well as underestimation of women's activities (Anker, 1983; Oppong, 1987), 16/ and thus hamper comparability between countries. In order to ascertain whether work influences the timing of first marriages, attention naturally focuses on work before marriage, although the prospect or possibility of work after marriage may also be a factor in certain cultures. The assumption is that under modernizing conditions women who work prior to matrimony are associated with later marriage. A recent analysis, based on the World Fertility Survey (WFS) among ever-married women aged 23 years or more from 10 African countries, shows that the mean age at first marriage varied from 16 to about 19 years for women who had no occupation or worked in the traditional sector before marriage as compared with 19 years or over for those who had worked in the

Table 9. Singulate mean age at marriage of women, by selected levels of education, various countries of Africa
(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Singulate mean age at marriage (years) a/ No schooling	Seven or more years or secondary level level or more	Difference (years)
Algeria b/	1970	18.5	22.0	3.5
Benin	1982	16.9	24.1	7.2
Cameroon	1978	15.4	22.1	6.7
Côte d'Ivoire	1980	17.1	21.8	4.7
Egypt c/	1984	16.3	20.8	4.5
Ghana	1979/80	17.4	20.5	3.1
Kenya	1977/78	17.2	21.8	4.6
Lesotho	1983	18.3	22.3	4.0
Morocco	1979/80	20.3	25.9	5.6
Nigeria d/	1983	16.9	22.0	5.1
Rwanda c/	1983	18.8	20.8	2.0
Senegal	1978	16.7	22.8	6.1
Sudan	1978/79	21.2	24.7	3.5
Tunisia c/	1983	18.4	21.4	3.0
Zaire e/	1982/84	15.3	16.3	1.0

Sources: **Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal** and **Sudan:** Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 119; indicators are singulate mean age at marriage.

Algeria: Jacques Vallin, "Facteurs socio-économiques de l'âge au mariage de la femme algérienne (Algérie du Nord)", Population (Paris), vol. 28, No. 6 (November-December, 1973), pp. 1171-1177, table II.

Egypt: H. A. A. H. Sayed, M. N. El-Khorazaty and A. A. Way, Fertility and Family Planning in Egypt 1984 (Cairo, Egypt National Population Council; and Columbia, Maryland, Westinghouse Public Applied Systems, 1985), table 3.7.

Lesotho: Ngoakoane M. Molise, "Nuptiality patterns and differentials in Lesotho", in Studies in African and Asian Demography: CDC Annual Seminar 1983, Research Monograph Series, No. 12 (Cairo, Cairo Demographic Centre, 1984), pp. 399-422, table 4.

Nigeria: National Population Commission, National Fertility Survey 1981-1982 Preliminary Report March 1983 (Lagos, 1985), table 3.2.

Rwanda: Rwanda 1983 Enquête nationale sur la fécondité, vol. I, Analyse des résultats (Kigali, Office national de la population, n.d.), table 3.9.

Tunisia: Mohamed Ayad and Younee Zoughlami, Fécondité et planification familiale en Tunisie 1983. Rapport sur les résultats de l'Enquête tunisienne sur la prévalence de la contraception (Tunis, Office national de la famille et de la population, 1985), table 4.3.

Zaire: Bakutuvwidi Makani, Kinavwidi Lewa Niwembo and Ann Way, Planification familiale, fécondité et santé familiale au Zaïre, 1982-1984 (Kinshasa, Institut national de la statistique, 1985), table 4.4.

Table 9 (continued)

a/ Singulate mean ages at marriage (SMAMs) except as noted. Data for countries otherwise indicated were computed for specific ages of ever-married women, as shown in the notes, and are not comparable to SMAMs, although comparisons by level of education within country are valid.

b/ Mean age at first marriage reported by women aged 35-49.

c/ Mean age at first marriage reported by women aged 25-49 who had married before age 25. The figure in the second column pertains to secondary education or more.

d/ Unweighted average of age at first marriage reported by women in five-year age groups from 20 to 49 for women with "no schooling" and five-year age groups from 35 to 49 for those with "7 or more years".

e/ Refers to ever-married women aged 20-49 who had married before age 20. Unweighted averages derived from estimates for cities and rural areas regions.

Table 10. Percentage distribution of ever-married women who had less than one year of schooling, selected countries of Africa a/

Country	Year of survey	Percentage
Benin	1982	88.0
Cameroon	1978	68.0
Côte d'Ivoire	1980	84.0
Egypt	1980	60.0
Ghana	1979/80	60.0
Kenya	1977/78	53.0
Lesotho	1977	8.0
Mauritania b/	1981	40.0
Morocco	1979/80	88.0
Senegal	1978	90.0
Sudan	1978/79	81.0
Tunisia	1978	77.0

Source: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 109.

a/ Married women aged 15-49.
b/ Refers to the category "no schooling"; number of years not available.

modern sector of the economy (table 11). As can be seen, women who had worked before marriage in a non-agricultural sector married somewhat later than the others. Only work performed in the modern sector of the economy determined a substantial delay in marriage.

Women's participation in the labour force in Africa has traditionally been confined to agricultural or agriculture-related tasks (including trade in agricultural and other products). Concomitantly, especially in agricultural societies, marriage formation was primarily a family matter and dependent upon family arrangements. Hence, to the extent that parents conformed to early marriage norms and wanted their daughters to marry young, work and marriage did not emerge as competing factors. In fact, because of bride-wealth payments and the wife's responsibilities of working on the land, women's work could even favour early marriage (see section 4 below). Only in the more modernized population subgroups is women's later marriage associated with work status in certain types of occupations.

3. Urban or rural residence

The distinctive influence of the urban setting on age at first marriage is also difficult to ascertain, partially because of data errors, partially because of variations in the concept of "urban" and partially because of the heterogeneity of the populations of large towns and cities resulting from considerable rural-to-urban migrations, international migrations and refugee movements.

Studies often show that urban women have higher mean ages at first marriage than rural women (table 12). This situation may be accounted for by the observation that urban areas offer more of the modern features associated with delayed marriage, notably non-traditional marriage norms and opportunities for women to acquire an education and to work in modern occupations. Various studies confirm such findings. In Western Africa, for instance, SMAMs of about 20 years were confined to urban areas and to adjacent areas with high levels of education; in Central, Eastern and Southern Africa, ages at first marriage as high as 21 years or over were observed specifically in regions where levels of schooling for women were well above the national average (Ohadike, 1968; United Nations, 1980; Lesthaeghe, 1984).

But the new conditions favourable to late-marriage unions in urban areas are not always sufficient to outweigh the components of the urban context that still favour traditional marriage behaviour. As a result, some countries, notably Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya and Mauritania, display only very small urban/rural differences in SMAM (see table 12). Most likely, the effects of modernizing factors are counterbalanced by other cultural factors not reflected in the indices used. For instance, small urban/rural differences in SMAM can be accounted for in part by rural-to-urban migration. Migrants or refugees may have married young even before coming to cities, or they may simply conform to traditional early marriage norms even after their arrival in the larger town. One analysis of ever-married female migrants in Senegal estimated that rural women who migrated to urban areas married, on average, at age 16.2 instead of age 15.5 had they not migrated (Charbit, Gueye and Ndiaye, 1985), a truly small difference resulting from the urban environment. Thus, in certain categories of towns and urban areas, traditional marriage norms

Table 11. Mean age at first marriage of women, [a] by occupation before marriage, selected countries of Africa

Country	Year of survey	Type of occupation [b]				
		No work	Modern	Transitional	Mixed	Traditional
Benin	1982	19.0	22.2 [c]	18.2	18.7	18.6
Cameroon	1978	17.5	19.5	19.4	17.5	18.2
Côte d'Ivoire	1980	17.5	20.3	19.6	17.9	18.6
Egypt	1980	17.7	22.2	19.4	20.1	17.7
Ghana	1979/80	18.2	21.2	19.5	18.7	19.7
Mauritania	1981	15.6	17.2 [c]	17.3	18.2	15.8
Morocco	1979/80	16.9	19.7	18.1	16.9	17.3
Senegal	1978	16.4	19.7	17.6	17.9	16.4
Sudan	1978/79	16.5	20.5	18.0 [c]	17.3	16.8
Tunisia	1978	19.4	22.3	20.4	21.3	19.3

Source: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 129.

[a] The mean ages at first marriage were computed from retrospective data of truncated cohorts of ever-married women 23 years or older. Data adjusted for education.

[b] Modern = professional and clerical work; transitional = domestic and service work; mixed = sales, skilled and unskilled workers; traditional = agricultural work.

[c] Fewer than 20 cases.

Table 12. Singulate mean age at marriage of women, by type of place of residence, selected countries of Africa

Country	Year of survey	Singulate mean age at marriage		Difference in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Rural	Urban	
Benin	1982	16.8	20.0	3.2
Cameroon	1978	16.9	19.5	2.6
Côte d'Ivoire	1980	17.6	17.9	0.3
Egypt	1980	19.8	23.0	3.2
Ghana	1979/80	18.9	20.0	1.1
Kenya	1977/78	19.8	20.6	0.8
Mauritania	1981	19.1	19.1	0.0
Morocco	1979/80	20.1	23.0	2.9
Senegal	1978	16.2	19.9	3.7
Sudan	1978/79	20.9	22.8	1.9
Tunisia	1978	23.2	24.6	1.4

Source: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 101.

still prevail. Definitions may also play a role. Often towns are defined as "urban", but only major cities, and some more than others, provide the modern environment required to bring about delayed marriage of women. 17/ It is also possible that the proportions of women with higher education or modern occupations are comparatively too low in very populous urban areas to affect the overall urban SMAM. Even when urban areas reflect new marriage norms, their impact may remain too limited to be reflected in an index like the singulate mean age at marriage.

4. Status of women

Various hypotheses about the role of the status of women in determining age at first marriage in Africa have been proposed, but none is entirely satisfactory to account for all empirical situations found under current conditions of social change. In Boserup's and Goody's models (Boserup, 1985; Goody, 1973, cited in Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988; and Goody, 1976, cited in Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989), women achieve high status in their social context (while remaining deprived of any decision-making authority in the family) because of both their productive function as workers on the land and their reproductive function as mothers. Upon marriage, land is allocated to the husband by his lineage; the wife's obligation is to work the land and bear children. 18/ Within this framework, the man's family is in favour of early marriage of women because it gives them longer reproductive periods within which to bear children and provide a labour force. When men provide land and women work, a bride-wealth paid to the girl's family ensures that the wife shall meet her obligations. The bride's family is thus also in favour of early marriage of daughters, not only to conform to prevailing early marriage norms, but also because the sooner the bride-wealth is received for their daughters, the earlier the family can use it to marry off their sons (United Nations, 1988a). Although this model may not be applicable to all African agricultural societies, it is clear that the cultures that still fall in the context of such production systems have little incentive to delay marriage. 19/

This model implies, however, various prerequisites which are currently undergoing changes. For instance, availability of land is declining because of population growth as well as government intervention in land privatization, agricultural planning and land reforms (see, e.g., Frank and McNicoll, 1987). Changes in agricultural techniques and shifts to less low-technology agriculture reduce the economic and reproductive value of women by reducing the need for child labour. With less employment in agricultural work and no alternatives in the modern sector (trade, services, government), women may become more dependent upon their husbands, which eventually could reinforce early marriage. Early marriage can also be motivated by an "increasing need for children as economic security", which may "outbalance their reduced need for children as sources of labour" (Boserup, 1985, p. 389). On the other hand, if other occupational opportunities are available, families may wish to provide women with increased education to allow them to enter non-agricultural activities, which in turn may lead to higher ages at first marriage. At the same time, these new opportunities, such as education and work for the Government, may provide an alternative to the traditional status for women, thus maintaining the family structure intact. Aside from the economic aspects of the status of women, law and tradition may still hamper their emancipation (Dozon, 1986). 20/

Lastly, bride-wealth payments, which constitute a judicial condition of marriage, a compensation to the parents of the girl as well as a guaranty of the stability of the union, also become a factor delaying marriage. Although in the past bride-wealth was composed of goods and/or services, it now tends to be money. In recent years, the amounts requested in certain societies could be quite substantial, thus potentially delaying marriage. Under contemporary conditions and with the weakening of the family power and responsibility, bride-wealth payment tends to become increasingly the responsibility of the individual, making it even more time-consuming to collect a large bride-wealth unless parents provide assistance. In several countries, laws reducing or limiting bride-wealth expenses were enacted to facilitate marriages, notably in Benin, Nigeria and Togo (Ngondo a Pitshandenge, 1988; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1988; François, 1975; Locoh, 1984). Whether dowry payments raise similar problems could not be documented.

Despite its theoretical importance in marriage-timing patterns, the empirical effect of bride-wealth payment is difficult to ascertain. This factor is likely to affect first age at marriage of men, since they, or their families, usually have the obligation to provide the bride-wealth. Both the marriage delay and the high proportions of never-married men reported in an Igbo study are attributed to this factor. Another consequence would be increasing polygamy, to the extent that the excess in unmarried females would be absorbed by polygyny and "outside wives", non-legal and non-customary unions which do not require bride-wealth payments (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1988). Women's age at first marriage will be affected only to the extent that they have to wait for marriageable men.

5. Social structure

A variety of social structure factors that traditionally favoured early marriage (Goode, 1963; Dozon, 1986; Pittin, 1987; United Nations, 1988a) may hamper, at least in the short term, delayed marriage of women. Lesthaeghe and Surkyn investigated various aspects of social organization and kinship systems and found a great complexity of interactive effects. For instance, although most African societies have early marriage norms for women, in matrilineal societies, which are more protective of women's rights, women marry later. In Islamic agricultural societies, associated with early marriage, property transmission through women produces even earlier ages at marriage for women, whereas in pastoralist Islamic societies, with caste endogamy and preferential parallel cousin marriage, property transmission produces exceptionally late age at marriage for women (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988).

An analysis of the variance of the effects of traditional factors, such as type of production system, lineage organization, inheritance of property (through males or females), and political and social stratification, and of one modernization factor, literacy, on the timing of women's marriage (measured by the proportion of single women in age group 15-19) concludes that literacy is the major modernization factor that produces high proportions of singles. Indeed, literacy accounts for 28 per cent of the variance in the proportions single. The effect of the traditional characteristics (e.g., transfer of property) is significantly smaller, accounting for no more than

about 6 per cent of the variance. A complementary regression analysis also points to the importance of literacy as a factor in delaying marriage (Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989, preliminary data).

The effects of religion and beliefs on marriage timing are difficult to study because of their overlap with other factors. In Christianized societies of sub-Saharan Africa, religion perhaps exercises a delaying effect on age at first marriage through modernized marriage-timing norms. In these societies, age at first marriage of women is, in general, comparatively higher than in Muslim societies, where women conform to early-marriage norms and experience lower levels of education. Although there are great variations among cultures, traditional African religions tend to determine an intermediate age at first marriage (Goode, 1963; Momodu and Taylor-Thomas, 1985; Adeokun, 1987; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988). Other types of traditional beliefs may also play a role, although their influence is uncertain. 21/

6. Polygamy

Interactions between various social factors and polygamy are illustrated by the data of Côte d'Ivoire (table 13), which shows that such characteristics as lack of education, not living in the capital city, religion, ethnic group and involvement in an agricultural system of production through the husband's occupation are characteristics associated with higher levels of polygamy. It is worth noting that in Côte d'Ivoire, almost 60 per cent of the women reported not to work are in a polygamous union, whereas among those involved in agricultural work only about 20 per cent are in such a union. Also noteworthy is the fact that women whose husbands are non-agricultural workers or artisans are almost never in a polygamous marriage.

Table 13 also shows that the absence of education is strongly associated with higher polygamy levels, an observation recorded in other countries, such as Liberia, where 42.0 per cent of uneducated women in a union are polygamous, compared with only 18.5 per cent of women with secondary or more education (Liberia, 1988).

Urban polygamy may result in particular from male migrants who had married in their village and who take another wife in the city to which they migrated (Anker and Knowles, 1982). It is also possible that certain non-economic functions of polygamy--such as providing social status or a sexual partner for men during periods of post-natal abstinence--constitute sufficient motivation to maintain polygamy, even among urbanized populations. 22/

In certain countries, polygamy does not seem to show significant urban/rural differences, although polygamy levels are reported to be somewhat lower in urban than in rural areas (Brown, 1981; Pison, 1986; Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989; Gaisie, 1975), as can be seen in table 14. A striking feature of the countries included in table 14, beside the high polygamy levels and the small differences between the urban and rural areas, is the relatively high prevalence of polygamy in the capital city.

As concerns the factor of religion, although it is often reported that Christian and Muslim populations have lower levels of polygamy than populations attached to traditional African beliefs (Podlewski, 1975;

Table 13. Percentage of women aged 15-49 currently in a marital union who are in a polygamous marriage, by socio-cultural characteristic, Côte d'Ivoire, 1980-1981

Characteristic	Percentage of wives in a polygamous marriage
Education	
No schooling	32.2
Primary	24.6
Secondary or more	17.3
Place of residence	
Abidjan	26.1
Urban forest	33.2
Urban savannah	33.9
Rural forest	30.5
Rural savannah	32.5
Religion	
Christian	21.8
Islam	37.6
Others	29.7
Occupation since first union	
Never worked	58.8
Agricultural work	21.1
Non-agricultural work	22.6
Husband's occupation	
Supervisor - clerk	22.4
Services - trade	36.5
Agriculture	45.4
Worker - artisan	2.8
Not working	4.1
Ethnic group	
Akan	23.0
Krou	29.1
Mandé North	43.8
Mandé South	28.4
Voltaïc	37.3
Other (African)	30.4

Source: Côte d'Ivoire, Ministère de l'économie et des finances, Enquête ivoirienne sur la fécondité 1980-81: Rapport principal, vol. 1, Analyse des principaux résultats (Abidjan, Direction de la statistique, 1984), table 4.22.

Table 14. Percentage of married women aged 15-49 in a polygamous union, by type of residence, selected countries of Africa

Country	Year	Capital city	Other urban area (percentage)	Rural area
Cameroon a/	1976	21.0	47.0	41.0
Côte d'Ivoire b/	1980/81	26.1	33.5 c/	31.5 d/
Kenya	1977/78	22.0	25.0	30.0
Liberia	1986	..	30.2	42.6
Senegal	1978	..	45.7	49.7
United Rep. of Tanzania e/	1973	14.2	17.7-22.1 f/	31.6

Sources:

Cameroon: Ministère de l'économie et du plan, Enquête nationale sur la fécondité du Cameroun, 1978: rapport principal, vol. 1, Analyse des principaux résultats (Yaoundé, Direction de la statistique et de la comfabilité nationale, 1983), table 4.16.

Côte d'Ivoire: Ministère de l'économie et des finances, Enquête ivoirienne sur la fécondité 1980-81: rapport principal, vol. 1, Analyse des principaux résultats (Abidjan, Direction de la statistique, 1984), table 4.22.

Kenya: Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Kenya Fertility Survey 1977-1978, First Report, vol. 1 (Nairobi, Central Bureau of Statistics, 1980), table 4.10.

Liberia: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Demographic and Health Survey, Liberia, 1986 (Monrovia, Bureau of Statistics; and Columbia, Maryland, Institute for Resource Development, Westinghouse, 1988).

Senégal: Ministère de l'économie et des finances, Enquête sénégalaise sur la fécondité, 1978: Rapport national d'analyse, vol. I, Analyse des résultats définitifs (Dakar, Direction de la statistique, Division des enquêtes et de la demographie, 1981), table 5.12.

United Republic of Tanzania: Roushdi A. Henin, "The demography of Tanzania: an analysis of the 1973 National Demographic Survey of Tanzania", in 1973 National Demographic Survey of Tanzania, vol. VI, An Analysis of the 1973 National Demographic Survey of Tanzania, Roushdi A. Henin, Douglas Ewbank and Howard Hogan, eds. (Dar es Salaam, Bureau of Statistics of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and University of Dar es Salaam, 1977), table 4.7.

a/ Ages 15-54.
b/ Ages 15-50.
c/ Urban forest and savannah.
d/ Rural forest and savannah.
e/ Ages 30-39 only.
f/ The two figures refer to large and small urban areas, respectively.

Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988), this is not confirmed in Côte d'Ivoire, as can be seen from table 13. Likewise, in Liberia, only 31.5 per cent of women with traditional beliefs are in a polygamous union, as compared with 51.0 per cent among the Muslim women (Liberia, 1988).

The impact of Christianity is lower in countries where polygamy had previously existed, mainly because it was seen to interfere with the sexual availability of women during the long period of abstinence and because it deprived some women, widows for instance, of the opportunity to have husbands (Mann, 1988). These factors are assumed to have led Christian communities to maintain a polygynous tradition.

In Northern Africa, where polygamy levels are considerably lower than in sub-Saharan Africa, socio-economic differences also exist. For example, in Algeria in 1966, male polygamy rates (proportion polygamous among married men) for urban and rural areas were 1.3 and 2 per cent, respectively. Polygamy was high also in certain occupations, notably among the agricultural self-employed: a level of 3.7 per cent was reported in 1966 (Tabutin, 1974). In Morocco, a polygamy rate of 3.1 per cent was reported in the 1961-1963 survey (Vallin, 1970). No recent data are available for Northern Africa and the situation may have changed since then.

D. Arranged marriages

In Africa, as well as in many other societies of the third world, the traditional process of marriage formation, especially for girls, was the responsibility of the family and the social group at large. Female marriage-timing norms were set for very early matrimony, sometimes child betrothal, and the result was a prevalence of arranged marriages at very young ages for women (see, e.g., Goode, 1963). There are various reasons to believe that with social change, daughters may find it advantageous to marry later, and even parents may benefit from delayed marriage (Davis-Blake, 1967). The emerging trend of "free-choice marriage", generally with parental consent, is thus seen as a factor of later female marriages.

Free choice in marriage indicates autonomy both in the choice of a marriage partner and in the timing of the marriage. Its meaning may vary from personal choice with required parental consent to marriage decisions with automatic parental approval. Free choice expresses a shift towards "modern" values in societies where arranged marriages of young girls are the norm. Although marriage decisions are still strongly imbedded in the traditional social framework, there is a body of evidence suggesting greater decision-making autonomy among non-traditional couples (see, e.g., Thoré, 1964; Omideyi, 1983; Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989). Such a shift in values necessarily encompasses a desire among the young to make their own decisions, as well as a willingness of the parents and even of the family at large to relinquish some of their decision-making authority in matters of matrimony.

In some countries, free-choice marriages were not legally recognized in the past (Capron and Kohler, 1978). In other countries, legislative measures have been taken to assist couples to resist unwanted early marriages. These measures include raising the minimum legal age at marriage, as in Burundi and Tunisia; requiring mutual consent of spouses, as in Tunisia; legally

abolishing child marriages of girls, as in Nigeria (Omideyi, 1983; Segamba and others, 1987; Sahli, 1981). Other factors also are crucial to the proper functioning of free choice as a determinant of marriage timing. For instance, free choice may be hampered by the bride-wealth obligations if the couple depends upon economic assistance from the bridegroom's family. With the monetarization of the economy, men who do not work in the family production system, such as professionals, business people and civil servants, can assemble the bride-wealth themselves. Not all cultures require bride-wealth; however, dowries are also requested in certain societies.

No quantitative assessment of the effect of free-choice marriage on marriage timing could be found in the literature. In Tunisia, where female SMAM rose from 19.3 to 24.3 years between 1956 and 1984, the increase has been associated with socio-economic changes and legislative reforms, notably the new Civil Code of 1956 and the 1964 modification which raised the minimum legal age at marriage of girls to 17 years. However, free choice in marriage matters is likely to have an impact on marriage timing only in the context of favourable changes in socio-cultural conditions (Vallin, 1971; Duza and Baldwin, 1977; Naceur, 1986).

E. Concluding remarks

The major features of African nuptiality during the period under study are its sustained early-marriage pattern and its high marriage prevalence among both sexes, as well as its high levels of polygamy.

As concerns marriage timing, prior to the 1970s, in most countries surveyed more than 40 per cent of women aged 15-19 had already married; this percentage was as high as 70 in certain countries. Since the 1970s, countries in this category have no longer been the majority. Likewise, in terms of mean age at first marriage, of 26 countries for which data at two points in time were available, 19 had female SMAMs of under 20 years prior to 1970 and 13 had this level in the most recent data collection. Most countries are characterized by female SMAMs of 21 years or under, except in Northern Africa, where they tend to exceed 21 years.

Marriage remains universal among both sexes, especially in sub-Saharan Africa; and prevalence levels, with few exceptions, fluctuate about or above 95 per cent ever married at age 50. Incidently, it should also be noted that given the very low SMAMs of women and the comparatively late marriage among men, many African countries have experienced, on average, some of the largest differences between sexes in mean age at first marriage, as large as from 9 to 10 years in several countries, especially before the 1970s. These differences, however, have diminished somewhat in recent years.

Another feature is the continuing high prevalence of polygyny in countries where this marriage institution had prevailed in the past. There is, however, a sharp cleavage between Northern African and sub-Saharan polygyny. In the former countries, in general, the proportion of married men in polygamous union is fewer than 7 per cent, whereas in the sub-Saharan countries, this level may exceed 20 per cent, or even 30 per cent in certain countries. Although a slight declining trend has been noted, polygamy continues to be an important part of the social organization.

Factors that contribute to the maintenance of the traditional marriage-timing and prevalence norms are to be found in the strong structure of the African family and in parental authority in decision-making regarding marriage matters. These customs are sustained by the prevailing rural economies, the mode of agricultural production systems (characterized by low technology) and the particular and important status of the woman in the family and in the rural economy, which favours her early entry into matrimony. Although such factors as urbanization, advanced education and work in a modern occupation are indeed associated with delayed marriages of women, not enough women have acquired these characteristics to influence the aggregate indices of marriage at the national level. Given the state of economic development in many sub-Saharan African countries (United Nations, 1988b), no rapid changes in marriage timing and prevalence, and subsequently in fertility levels, can be expected. It is obvious that delayed marriage remains a potentially significant factor likely to reduce family size in the high-fertility African countries where contraception is generally currently at a very low level.

Notes

1/ This refers to countries with more than 300,000 inhabitants in 1980, based on United Nations estimates (United Nations, 1986b). The 44 countries studied contain about three quarters of the total African population, as estimated in 1980. Fewer countries had data for men than for women because a number of household surveys included in this study were geared to fertility analysis and collected marriage information on women only.

2/ The reliability of marriage timing in Africa is difficult to access in many societies where neither age nor age at marriage is properly recorded or known by the individual (van de Walle, 1968b; Pison, 1979). An appraisal of age-data reliability in African censuses and surveys found that females in their teens are often underreported, notably as a result of misreporting and digit preferences. An early attempt to evaluate the quality of African data (based on stable population theory), concluded indeed that "Africans usually marry earlier than most census data would lead us to believe" (van de Walle, 1968a, p. 205). Another assessment of marriage data obtained for 12 World Fertility Surveys reported "good" data only for two countries, "acceptable" quality for three countries and "less reliable" for seven countries (United Nations, 1987b).

3/ It should be borne in mind that in the African context, as in Asia and in most developing countries, marriage of the very young, especially of girls, was quite a common custom and marriage in adolescence was in conformity with marriage norms. The term "adolescent" used here is based on the age group concept rather than on the social concept of "teen-age" marriage, which has a somewhat different connotation.

4/ The report of a recent survey in Botswana (1984), which included a question on non-legal marital arrangements, states that 46.9 per cent of the women in age group 15-19 were in a legal or consensual union at the time of the survey (Manyeneng and others, 1985). In Burundi, where age at marriage was always comparatively higher, the proportion of married adolescent females may be underestimated because respondents sometimes avoid reporting girls who married below the new legal minimum age at marriage, recently raised to 18 years for females (Segamba and others, 1987). As concerns Réunion, only legal unions are reported here.

5/ Female SMAM in Réunion pertains to legal unions only. Consensual unions are formed at much earlier ages, but women of that marital status are generally classified as single. The 1974 census (United Nations, 1984, table 40), which provides a separate classification for consensual unions, yielded a female SMAM of 19.2 years when both legal and consensual unions were included, instead of 22.5 years when only legal marriages are considered.

6/ A survey in Botswana in 1984 provided separate data for consensual unions. When both legal and consensual marital statuses are combined, the estimated SMAM for women in 1984 is 17.6 years (Manyeneng and others, 1985).

7/ The data for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya pertain to 1973 and may have increased recently.

8/ In Algeria, SMAM of 20 years for women in 1948 seems to be too high, compared with a level of 18.4 years in 1966 (Vallin, 1973; Tabutin, 1982; Sahli, 1984). It is possible that this is because age overestimation due to digit preferences was more pronounced in the 1948 census (Sahli, 1984, p. 181) and because in 1948 marital status data were classified by year of birth rather than in completed years (United Nations, 1979). Hence, the increase from 1948 to 1977 in female SMAM may be on the order of two or three years.

9/ Assessing with accuracy the role of polygamy on differences between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage would require more detailed information than is usually provided by population censuses.

10/ The low prevalence in Réunion is to be attributed to the omission of consensual unions, which represented (in the 1974 census) 11.0 per cent of all unions (Festy, 1983).

11/ In Botswana, better recording of consensual unions might make a difference (Kuper, 1985). A low prevalence of 89.8 per cent ever-married women is, however, reported in the 1984 survey of Botswana (Manyeneng and others, 1985). See also note 6.

12/ Corroboration for trend estimates is sometimes difficult in view of the differences in coverage of two survey efforts. Certain countries had to be omitted. In the case of the Sudan, the World Fertility Survey covered only the north. In Nigeria, the early 1965/66 study that was expected to cover the entire country was ultimately restricted to rural areas (Omideyi, 1986). Sharp trend fluctuations may also result from better reporting or classification of marital status at one of the two points in time.

13/ In Kenya, the following polygamous unions have been distinguished: leviratic polygyny; sororal polygyny; "ghost" polygyny; child polygyny; wife polygyny; old polygyny (Makoteku and Acholla-Ayayo, 1988). Errors arise from the omission of reporting of co-spouses, of inherited wives or of co-wives living in separate quarters. There is also the problem of undeclared polygamous co-wives, who are reported as consensual wives when polygamy is not officially recognized, e.g., in Zaire, the Central African Republic and Côte d'Ivoire (Blanc, 1963; van de Walle, 1965, 1968a, 1971; Ngondo and Sala-Diakanda, 1981; Barrere, 1984; Goldman and Pebley, 1986).

14/ For Zaire, data given in table 8 are not directly comparable.

15/ In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, where the data given in table 8 suggest a slight decline in polygamy, reporting is uncertain and levels might be higher than reported, given the fact that since 1964, polygamy has been prohibited (Ahonzo and others, 1984) although tolerated. In Cameroon, in certain regions, men inherit their father's wives (Cameroon, n.d.) and become polygamous themselves (if married), thus holding polygamy levels high though no marriage of their own took place.

16/ In Senegal, for instance, only agricultural work among females is considered "work", even when women are responsible for such tasks as artisanal production, manufacturing from cattle products etc. (Charbit, Gueye and Ndiaye 1985). In other societies, women's work participation is reported as low even when male out-migration is very high. One would assume that in the absence of men, women are necessarily participating in the economy, as might be the case in Botswana, Lesotho or Zimbabwe, where one study reported that 77 per cent of men aged 20-39 were absent on migrant labour (van der Wiel, 1977 cited in Kuper, 1985). In certain Muslim countries, definitions are such that reports of women's levels of labour force participation are comparatively low (e.g., United Nations, 1986a, 1987a). Definition of women's self-employment as well as domestic work are bound to be improperly reported. In certain cases, work is not acknowledged if below a certain duration. In other cases, only work remunerated is considered actual work (United Nations, 1985b).

17/ For instance, an analysis of large cities in Algeria showed that in 1966, the capital city of Algiers had an estimated mean age at first marriage for women of 18.9 years, whereas in the city of Oran it was 20.4 years (Sahli, 1984).

18/ Production and reproduction status are not always linked; in certain societies, childless women can and do hire children to work on the land (see, e.g., Pittin, 1987).

19/ Women's activities, in addition to domestic tasks, are often not limited to agriculture. There are many societies where both men and women are equally involved in farming. Where women are also involved in trading activities, their economic value and status increases, as is the case among Western African populations. In societies that rely also upon animal husbandry, or where cattle-raising and trading are ascribed exclusively to men, as practised among certain Eastern and Southern African societies, female agricultural work receives less status (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988; Lesthaeghe, Kaufmann and Meekers, 1989).

20/ Specific reference is made here to societies where the husband's authorization is required to provide health care or contraception to his wife, as is notably the case in Botswana, Ethiopia and Swaziland (Molokomme, 1984; Armstrong, 1987; International Planned Parenthood Federation, 1988). In other cultural contexts, different factors may interact with socio-economic or legal determinants. Even religion can be interpreted to justify a particular status for women.

21/ It is reported that in an Eastern Nigerian community, the preference of polygynists for young women is said to derive from the notion that very young women increase the vitality of old men (Ukaegbu, 1977).

22/ One study reports that in rural Eastern Nigeria, the ideal number of wives given by men still reaches sometimes four (Ukaegbu, 1977, 1981).

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III. LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

A. Levels and trends in marriage patterns

In studying marriage timing and prevalence patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean, it should be borne in mind that marriages there take at least two and sometimes three different forms. In Central and South America, legal and consensual marriages are prevalent. Both types are socially recognized as a means of entering matrimony, are accepted as processes of family formation and are generally recorded separately in census reports. In the Caribbean, mainly in the anglophone and francophone countries, visiting unions constitute an additional type of marital union (United Nations, 1988a). Because of the sociological and demographic importance of these various marriage forms, notably as social determinants of reproduction, all three forms are considered in this study to be bon a fide marriages, and women and men in such unions are included in the category "married". However, because these unions are different types, they are also examined separately whenever data to distinguish between the types are available. 1/

The various forms of marriage have not always been dealt with similarly in different countries or at different points in time. When common-law unions were not recognized, common-law spouses were reported as single. Currently, however, many censuses and surveys of Latin America and the Caribbean report consensual unions separately. Visiting unions also are reported in the anglophone and francophone countries of the Caribbean, for which more detailed survey data are available. Such unions are examined separately in section B. Despite the care taken to report marital status properly when collecting data, statistical errors, underreporting and misreporting still occur when the true marital status is not correctly reported by the respondents at the time of the census or survey (United Nations, 1988a). 2/ Non-reporting of consensual or visiting unions produces an underestimate of the number of persons who have ever entered into a marital union, especially at older ages. In the Caribbean, where not only consensual unions but visiting unions are common in a number of countries, an additional problem of measuring levels and comparing estimates arises when persons in one or both categories of the non-legalized unions are recorded as never married. Therefore, these shortcomings must be kept in mind in undertaking either cross-country comparisons or trend comparisons. 3/

1. Timing of marriage

The timing of first marriages between 1950 and 1985 is examined here in terms both of percentage ever married in age group 15-19 and of SMAM. These two indicators are complementary, the former capturing better the extent of very young marriages, the latter representing a summary indicator of the entire age distribution of first marriage. Data are presented for two points in time and are classified in two subgroups pertaining to the periods prior to 1970 and since 1970.

Examining first the data given in table 15, which provide an overall description of precocity of women's marriages, it can be seen that the Latin American region is much less subject to very early marriages than either Africa or Asia. Many countries with data for the recent past (1950-1960) and

Table 15. Distribution of countries according to percentage of women ever married aged 15-19, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950-1985

Percentage ever married aged 15-19	Prior to 1970	Country	Since 1970	Country
Fewer than 10				
	1952	Chile	1982	Chile
	1961	Guadeloupe a/	1982	Guadeloupe
	1950	Haiti b/	1982	Haiti
	1960	Jamaica a/	1982	Jamaica
	1954	Martinique a/	1982	Martinique
10-19				
	1960	Argentina	1980	Argentina
	1950	Bolivia	1976	Bolivia
	1951	Colombia	1980	Brazil
	1950	Costa Rica	1985	Colombia
	1950	Ecuador	1984	Costa Rica
	1950	Nicaragua	1980	Guyana
	1950	Paraguay	1982	Paraguay
	1961	Peru	1981	Peru
	1950	Puerto Rico	1980	Puerto Rico
	1963	Uruguay	1975	Uruguay
20-39				
	1953	Cuba	1981	Cuba
	1960	Dominican Rep.	1970	Dominican Rep.
	1950	El Salvador	1982	Ecuador
	1950	Guatemala	1971	El Salvador
	1960	Guyana	1981	Guatemala
	1961	Honduras	1974	Honduras
	1960	Mexico	1980	Mexico
	1950	Panama	1971	Nicaragua
	1960	Trinidad and Tobago	1980	Panama
			1980	Trinidad and Tobago
	1950	Venezuela	1981	Venezuela

Source: Annex table A.2.

a/ Legal unions only.
b/ Including legal and consensual but not visiting unions.

more current data (1970-1980) have fewer than 20 per cent of marriages among females aged 15-19. Among countries where proportions exceed 20 per cent, they are rarely more than 25 per cent (see annex table A.2). Some of the lowest percentages do not reflect appropriately the early-marriage pattern, notably in several anglophone and francophone countries of the Caribbean, where only legal unions are reported. The three types of marital union common in these countries, as well as in Guyana--legal, consensual and visiting unions--are examined in more detail in section B.

In table 16, data available for proportions ever married at ages 15-19 are presented by subregion. These data show that among males, adolescent marriages were relatively uncommon during the period 1950-1960. Omitting the non-comparable Caribbean data, proportions were lowest in Temperate South America; and in Tropical South America, they were not more than 5 per cent. The highest levels during that period are found in Central America, with most of the countries varying between 3 and 8 per cent and a peak level of 14.5 per cent in El Salvador, an unusually high percentage which could not be corroborated by other sources. In the Caribbean, levels are low and are not comparable with one another because of the heterogeneity in marital-status reporting. For the countries with comparable estimates--Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico--levels of male PEM at ages 15-19 are also very low, at about 2 per cent.

An examination of more recent levels since 1970 shows that among males, adolescent marriages usually followed an upward trend in most countries. Ecuador (1982), Jamaica (1982), Guatemala (1981), Venezuela and Mexico (1980) had the highest levels of male marriage before age 20, namely, 9.7, 9.1, 8.3, 7.5 and 7.1 per cent, respectively. In Cuba (1981) and the Dominican Republic (1970), the comparable Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean, the proportions amounted to more than 6 per cent (table 16 and figure 9).

The average changes per annum, shown in the last column of table 16, underscore the magnitude of the changes which took place. Aside from the fact that most of the changes are upward (attributed to a large extent to better marriage reporting), they amount to less than 0.1 percentage point per annum in most countries and exceed 0.2 percentage point only in very few cases. The large decline in El Salvador from 1950 to 1971 and the fast pace of the increase in the Dominican Republic between 1960 and 1970 probably reflect problems of data comparability.

Among women, during the 1950s and 1960s, Central America had the highest proportions, usually more than 20 per cent, with a minimum of 14.9 per cent in Costa Rica (1950) and a maximum of 31.7 per cent in Guatemala (1950), which also represents a maximum for Latin America in that period. On the other hand, in Tropical South America the range is narrower, from 14.2 per cent in Bolivia (1950) to 21.9 per cent in Venezuela (1950). 4/ In Temperate South America, the proportions are lower, about 10 per cent. In the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries, levels are comparatively high: 19.2 per cent in Puerto Rico (1950); 20.5 in Cuba (1953); 21.8 in Trinidad and Tobago (1960); and 24.9 in the Dominican Republic (1960). Reported proportions for Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica and Martinique are considerably lower but do not include all the types of marital unions prevalent in these countries. 5/

Table 16. Percentage ever married aged 15-19, by sex, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950-1985

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married aged 15-19				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
		Men			
Caribbean					
Cuba	2.2	1953	6.8	1981	0.16
Dominican Republic	2.2	1960	6.3	1970	0.41
Guadeloupe a/	1.6	1961	0.2	1982	-0.07
Haiti b/	0.8	1950	3.2	1982	0.08
Jamaica a/	0.2	1960	9.1	1982	0.40
Martinique a/	0.2	1954	0.1	1982	-0.00
Puerto Rico	2.4	1950	4.5	1980	0.07
Trinidad and Tobago a/,c/	1.6	1960	2.6	1980	0.05
Central America					
Costa Rica	1.6	1950	2.7	1984	0.03
El Salvador	14.5	1950	3.5	1971	-0.52
Guatemala	7.5	1950	8.3	1981	0.03
Honduras	3.5	1961	4.9	1974	0.11
Mexico	6.8	1960	7.1	1980	0.02
Nicaragua	4.2	1950	4.7	1971	0.02
Panama	5.2	1950	5.1	1980	-0.00
Temperate South America					
Argentina	2.2	1960	2.1	1980	-0.01
Chile	1.3	1952	2.2	1982	0.03
Uruguay	1.1	1963	2.2	1975	0.09
Tropical South America					
Bolivia	4.2	1950	4.7	1976	0.02
Brazil	1.5 d/	1970	3.7	1980	0.22
Colombia	2.2	1951	5.5	1985	0.10
Ecuador	3.1	1950	9.7	1982	0.08
Guyana a/,c/	2.4	1960	2.5	1980/81	0.00
Paraguay	0.7	1950	2.2	1982	0.05
Peru	2.9	1961	5.8	1981	0.15
Venezuela	3.0	1950	7.5	1981	0.15

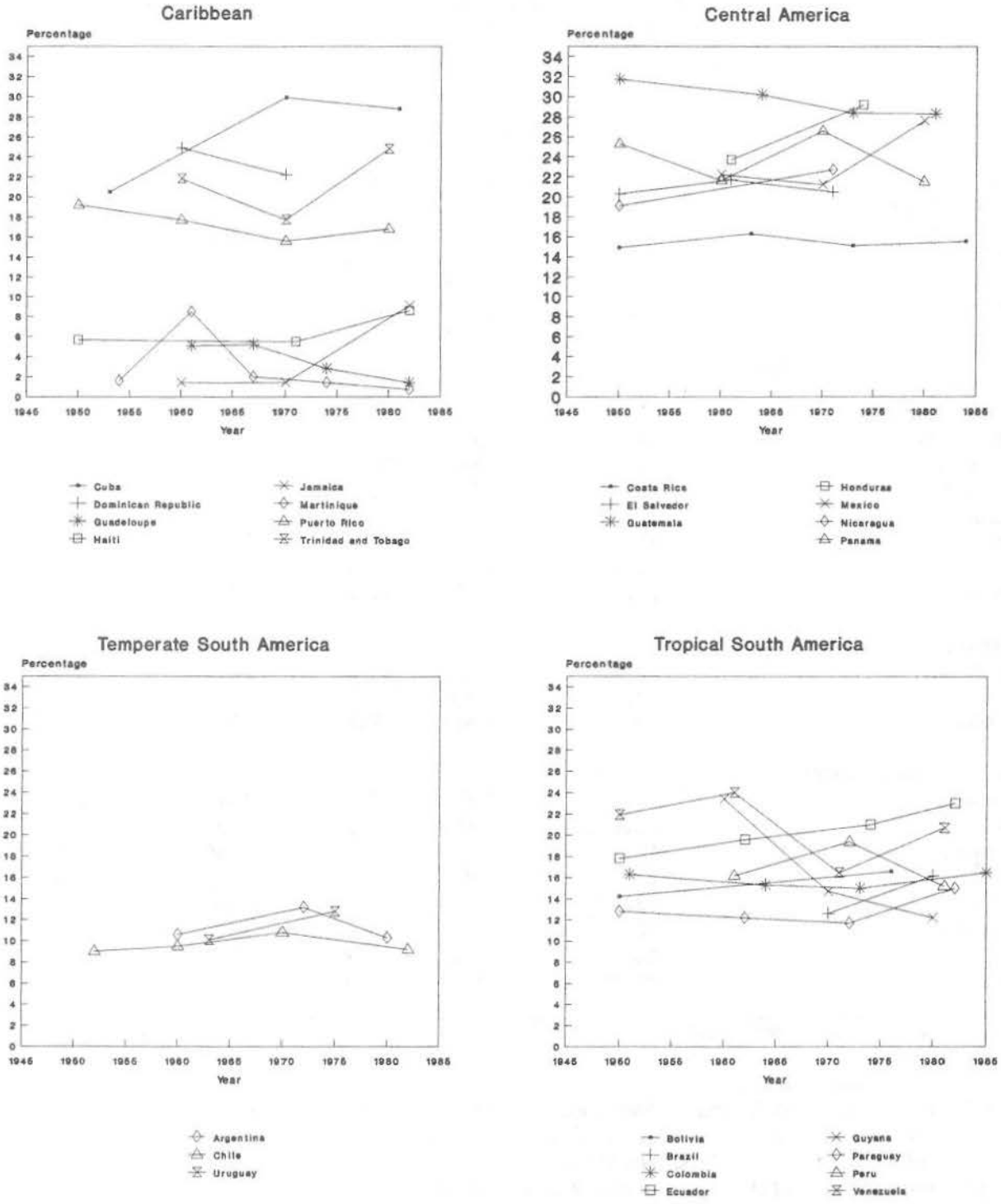
Table 16 (continued)

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married aged 15-19				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
		Women			
Caribbean					
Cuba	20.5	1953	28.8	1981	0.30
Dominican Republic	24.9	1960	22.2	1970	-0.27
Guadeloupe a/	5.1	1961	1.4	1982	-0.18
Haiti b/	5.7	1950	8.6	1982	0.09
Jamaica	1.4 a/	1960	9.1 b/	1982	..
Martinique a/	1.6	1954	0.7	1982	-0.03
Puerto Rico	19.2	1950	16.8	1980	-0.08
Trinidad and Tobago a/,c/	21.8 e/	1960	24.8 e/	1980	0.15
Central America					
Costa Rica	14.9	1950	15.5	1984	0.02
El Salvador	20.3	1950	20.5	1971	0.01
Guatemala	31.7	1950	28.3	1981	-0.11
Honduras	23.7	1961	29.2	1974	0.42
Mexico	22.2	1960	27.6	1980	0.27
Nicaragua	19.1	1950	22.7	1971	0.17
Panama	25.3	1950	21.5	1980	-0.13
Temperate South America					
Argentina	10.6	1960	10.3	1980	-0.02
Chile	9.0	1952	9.2	1982	0.01
Uruguay	10.1	1963	12.8	1975	0.23
Tropical South America					
Bolivia	14.2	1950	16.6	1976	0.09
Brazil	12.6 d/	1970	16.2	1980	0.36
Colombia	16.3	1951	16.5	1985	0.01
Ecuador	17.8	1950	23.0	1982	0.16
Guyana a/,c/	23.4 b/	1960	12.2	1980/81	..
Paraguay	12.8	1950	15.0	1982	0.07
Peru	16.2	1961	15.2	1981	-0.05
Venezuela	21.9	1950	20.7	1981	-0.04

Source: Annex table A.2.

a/ Legal unions only.
b/ Including legal and consensual unions, but not visiting unions.
c/ Including unregistered religious marriages.
d/ Data prior to 1970 not available.
e/ Including legal, consensual and visiting unions.

Figure 9. Trends in percentage ever married for women aged 15–19, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950–1985



Source: Annex table A.2.

More recently, the countries of Central America, such as Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, have emerged at the upper end of the scale, with proportions ever married at ages 15-19 years close to 30 per cent; excluding Costa Rica, no country in this subregion had PEMs of fewer than 20 per cent during the 1970s and 1980s. Tropical South America again holds an intermediate position, with prevalence levels ranging from 15 to 17 per cent, except in Ecuador (1982) and Venezuela (1981), with levels of more than 20 per cent. The data for females in Guyana, which pertain to legal unions only, do not properly reflect that marital union situation. 6/ The lowest level is found in Chile: 9.2 per cent in 1982.

Figure 9 illustrates the trend in female PEMs at ages 15-19 between 1950 and 1985 and highlights the variations in trends and fluctuations observed in certain countries. Most probably, the sharp movements are largely due to inconsistencies in reporting of marital status. Outside the Caribbean, the average change per annum during the past 30 years ranges from almost zero in Colombia from 1951 to 1985 to over 0.4 percentage point in Honduras between 1961 and 1974 (last column of table 16). As is the case for males, it is necessary to interpret these movements cautiously because of problems of definition and accuracy of reporting.

The data presented in table 17 and figure 10 cover marriage-timing patterns in terms of SMAM. 7/ In Central America and in Temperate and Tropical South America, male SMAMs fell within a rather narrow range during the 1950s and 1960s, from about 24 to 27 year. The lowest SMAM--about 24 years--was found in Guatemala (1954), Mexico (1960) and Panama (1950); and the highest--27 years--in Chile (1952) and Colombia (1951). Exceptionally high SMAMs are found in some of the Caribbean countries when only legal unions are taken into consideration: the highest is found in Jamaica (1960), 33 years; and in Guadeloupe (1961) and Martinique (1954), where means were close to 30 years. Since 1970, male SMAMs in all of Latin America except the Caribbean have generally been between 24 and 26 years. Much higher values are found in the Caribbean for 1982, notably in Guadeloupe, Jamaica and Martinique (29.6, 30.8 and 31.2 years, respectively). In these latter countries, SMAMs are for legal marriages only, a fact that may account for the delay. Although the time trend in the Caribbean is not clear, the rest of Latin America shows a general slow decline amounting to about 0.05 of a year per annum (last column of table 17). These reductions in SMAM among men may be only partially genuine, assuming better recording in marital status in the more recent data collections.

Among women, the post-war censuses (1950-1960) show that except in a small number of countries, SMAMs do not generally fall below age 20. In Temperate and Tropical South America, women married at ages between 20 and 23 years, except in Argentina (1960) and Chile (1952), where SMAMs exceeded 23 years. The lowest SMAMs observed at that time were in Central America, ranging from a low of 17.9 years in Honduras (1961), to 18.3 in Panama (1950), 18.6 years in Guatemala (1950) and 19.7 in El Salvador (1950). Venezuela, with 18.1 years in 1950, is an exception in Tropical South America. If one assumes that a number of non-legalized unions are not properly reported, these SMAMs may even be lower.

Table 17. Singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950-1985
(Years)

Subregion and country	Singulate mean age at marriage: Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (years)
			Men		
Caribbean					
Cuba	26.0	1953	23.5	1981	-0.09
Dominican Republic	25.9	1960	26.1	1970	0.02
Guadeloupe a/	29.6	1961	29.6	1982	0.00
Haiti b/	28.5	1950	27.3	1982	-0.04
Jamaica a/	33.1	1960	30.8	1982	-0.12
Martinique a/	29.7	1954	31.2	1982	0.05
Puerto Rico	25.3	1950	24.1	1980	-0.04
Trinidad and Tobago a/,c/	27.0	1960	27.9	1980	0.05
Central America					
Costa Rica	26.2	1950	25.1	1984	-0.03
El Salvador	25.3	1950	24.7	1971	-0.03
Guatemala	24.0	1950	23.5	1981	-0.02
Honduras	25.1	1961	24.4	1974	-0.05
Mexico	24.4	1960	24.1	1980	-0.02
Nicaragua	26.3	1950	24.6	1971	-0.08
Panama	24.6	1950	25.0	1980	0.01
Temperate South America					
Argentina	26.7	1960	25.3	1980	-0.07
Chile	27.0	1952	25.7	1982	-0.04
Uruguay	26.9	1963	25.4	1975	-0.13
Tropical South America					
Bolivia	24.6	1950	24.5	1976	-0.00
Brazil	26.2 d/	1970	25.3	1980	-0.09
Colombia	27.2	1951	25.9	1985	-0.04
Ecuador	25.6	1950	24.3	1982	-0.04
Guyana a/,c/	25.1	1960	26.0	1980/81	0.04
Paraguay	26.7	1950	26.0	1982	-0.02
Peru	25.6	1961	25.7	1981	0.01
Venezuela	26.5	1950	24.8	1981	-0.05

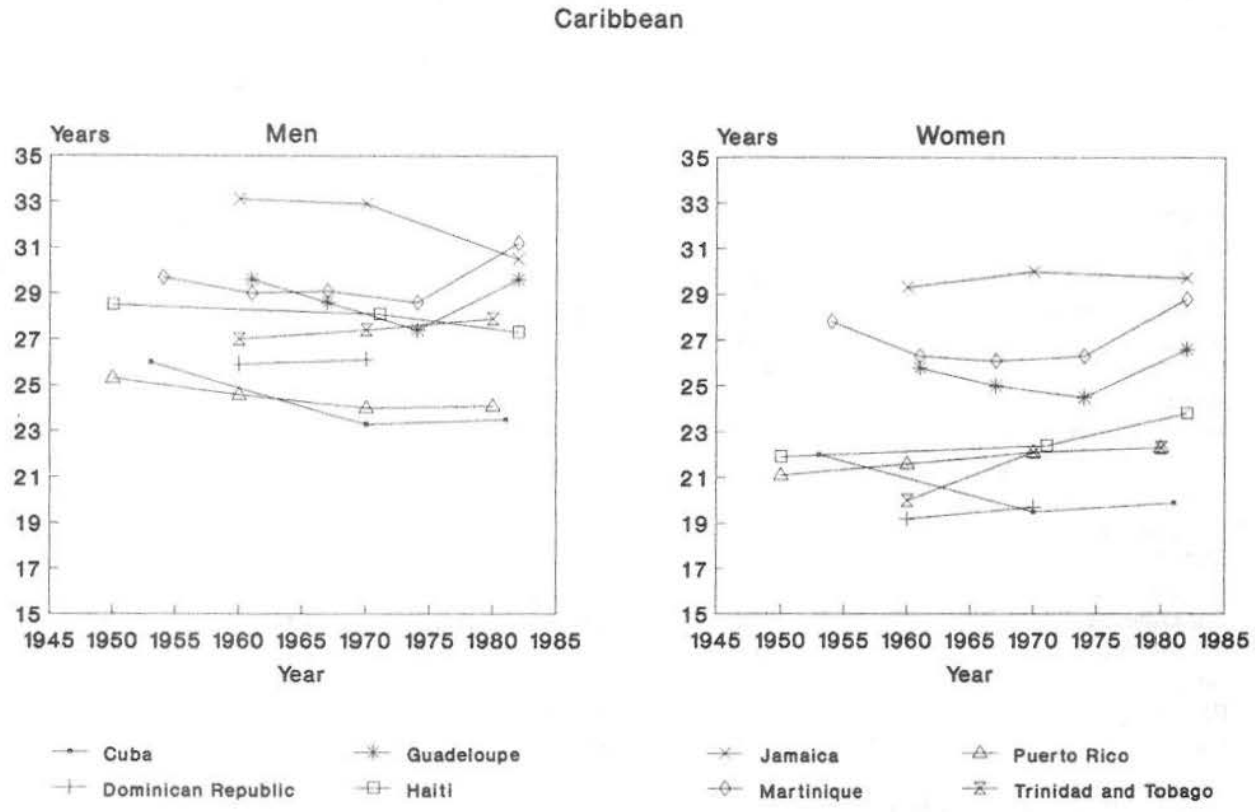
Table 17 (continued)

Subregion and country	Singulate mean age at marriage: Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (years)
			Women		
Caribbean					
Cuba	22.0	1953	19.9	1981	-0.08
Dominican Republic	19.2	1960	19.7	1970	0.05
Guadeloupe a/	25.8	1961	26.6	1982	0.04
Haiti b/	21.9	1950	23.8	1982	0.06
Jamaica	29.3 a/	1960	29.7 b/	1982	..
Martinique a/	27.8	1954	28.8	1982	0.04
Puerto Rico	21.1	1950	22.3	1980	0.04
Trinidad and Tobago a/,c/	20.0 e/	1960	22.3 e/	1980	0.12
Central America					
Costa Rica	21.9	1950	22.2	1984	0.01
El Salvador	19.7	1950	19.4	1971	-0.01
Guatemala	18.6	1950	20.5	1981	0.06
Honduras	17.9	1961	20.0	1974	0.16
Mexico	21.1	1960	20.6	1980	-0.03
Nicaragua	20.0	1950	20.2	1971	0.01
Panama	18.3	1950	21.3	1980	0.10
Temperate South America					
Argentina	23.1	1960	22.9	1980	-0.01
Chile	23.7	1952	23.6	1982	-0.00
Uruguay	22.8	1963	22.4	1975	-0.03
Tropical South America					
Bolivia	22.5	1950	22.1	1976	-0.02
Brazil	23.0 d/	1970	22.6	1980	-0.04
Colombia	21.5	1951	22.6	1985	0.03
Ecuador	21.1	1950	21.1	1982	0.00
Guyana a/,c/	20.1 b/	1960	23.7	1980/81	..
Paraguay	20.9	1950	21.8	1982	0.03
Peru	21.7	1961	22.7	1981	0.05
Venezuela	18.1	1950	21.2	1981	0.10

Source: Annex table A.2.

a/ Legal unions only.
b/ Including consensual unions.
c/ Including unregistered religious marriages.
d/ Earliest data not available.
e/ Including legal, consensual and visiting unions.

Figure 10. Trends in singulate mean age at marriage, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950–1985



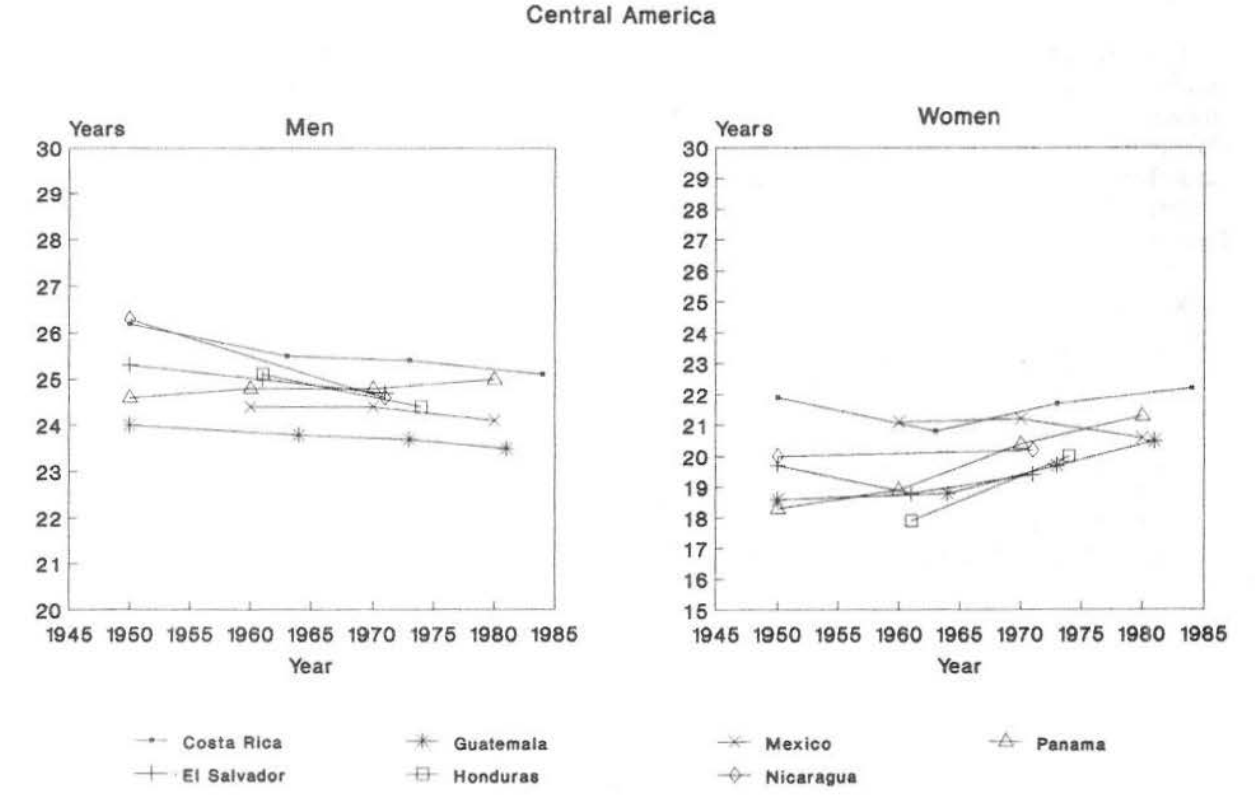
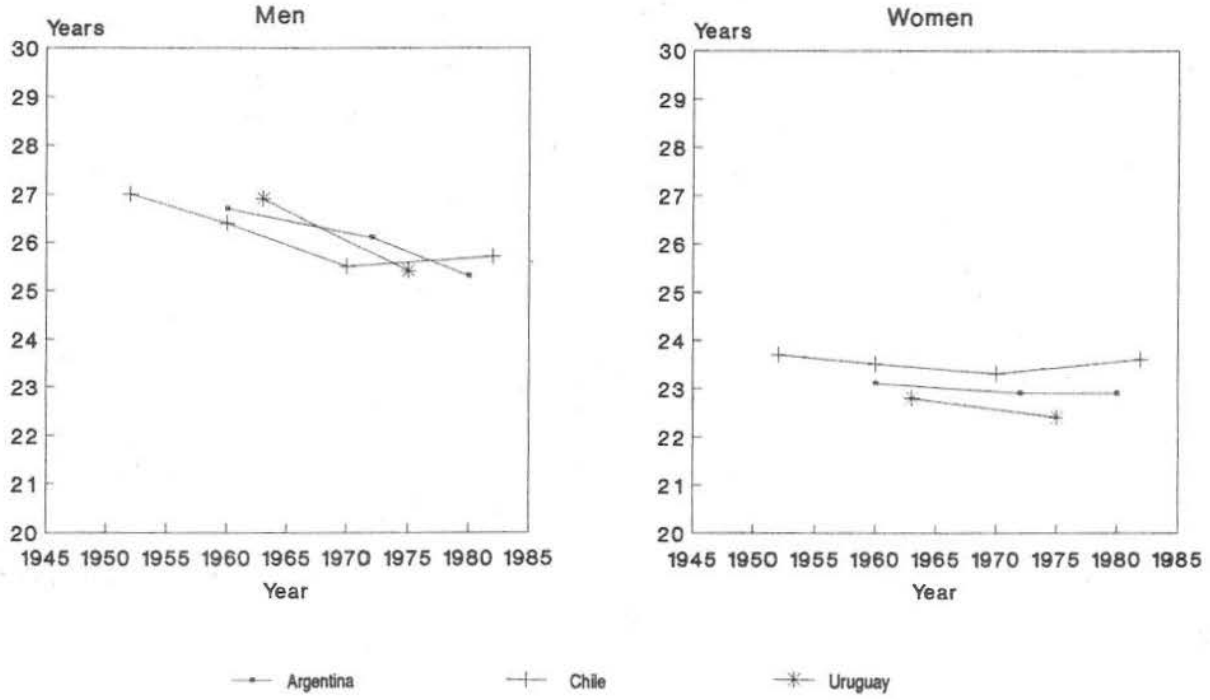
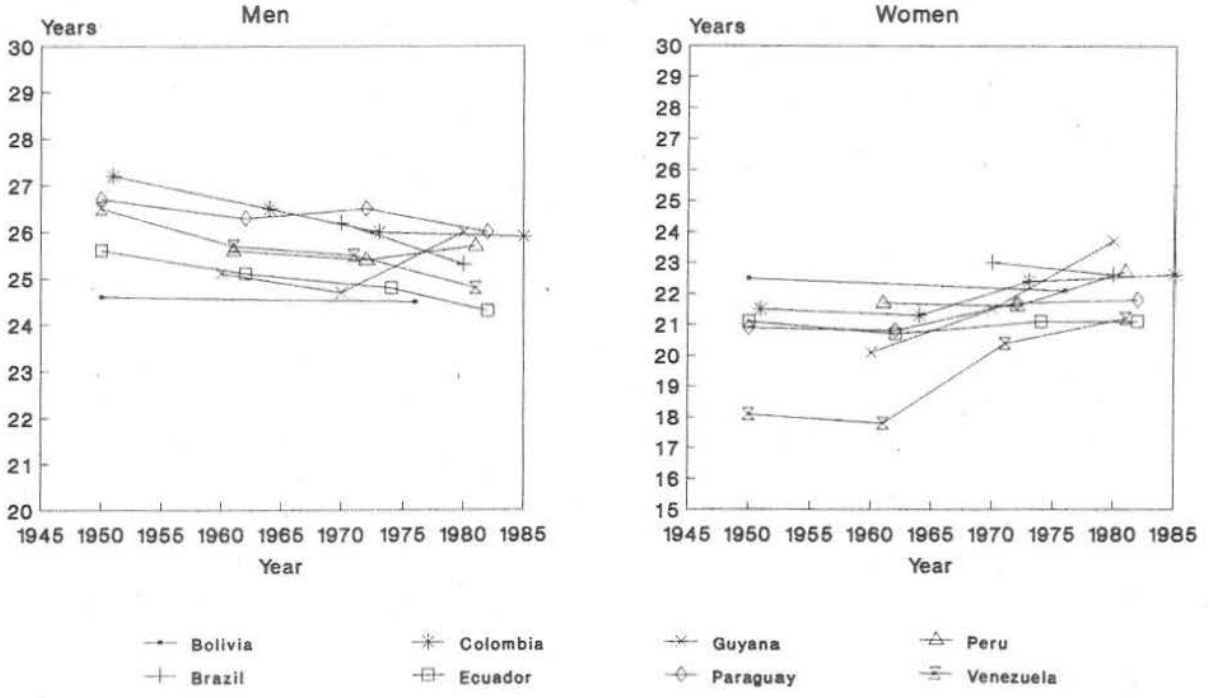


Figure 10 *(continued)*

Temperate South America



Tropical South America



Source: Annex table A.2.

In the Caribbean, for countries where legal unions only are reported, female SMAMs were very high: 29.3, 27.8 and 25.8 years, respectively, in Jamaica (1960); Martinique (1954) and Guadeloupe (1961). In Trinidad and Tobago (1960), where all forms of unions--legal, consensual and visiting--are reported, SMAM was only 20 years. Only in the Dominican Republic was the age under 20 years (19.2) in 1960. Censuses of the 1970s and 1980s show a modest upward trend, and there are currently very few countries with SMAMs under 20 years. The only exceptions are El Salvador (1971) and the Dominican Republic (1970), with 19.4 and 19.7 years, and, more recently, Cuba (1981). 8/

In all other subregions, female SMAMs also exceed the 20-year level but usually remain under 23 years. In general, data from the most recent censuses confirm a general but modest upward trend in female SMAMs (figure 10), except in Temperate South America, where a small decline is noted. The changes, however, are slight, sometimes even negligible, as can be seen from the annual changes (last column of table 17). Indeed, in most of the countries, fluctuations do not exceed more than one hundredth of a year per annum and are too small to be evaluated properly in terms of genuine changes. Conversely, among men, SMAMs have slightly declined in most countries.

2. Difference between sexes in age at first marriage

Annex table A.2 and figure 11 present data on the difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage at the country level, as derived from censuses and surveys. In general, one can see that from the decade of the 1950s to that of the 1980s, the difference between sexes in SMAM tended to decrease, particularly in the countries where differences were originally rather large. As is shown in figure 11, during the period 1950-1959, the level in Haiti, Nicaragua and Panama exceeded six years, and the largest difference (observed in Venezuela) was over eight years. In 1960-1969, differences exceeding six years were found in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Venezuela. More recently, during 1970-1979 the largest difference fell below six years except in the Dominican Republic; and in the 1980 round of censuses, differences tended to vary only between two years and about four years. 9/

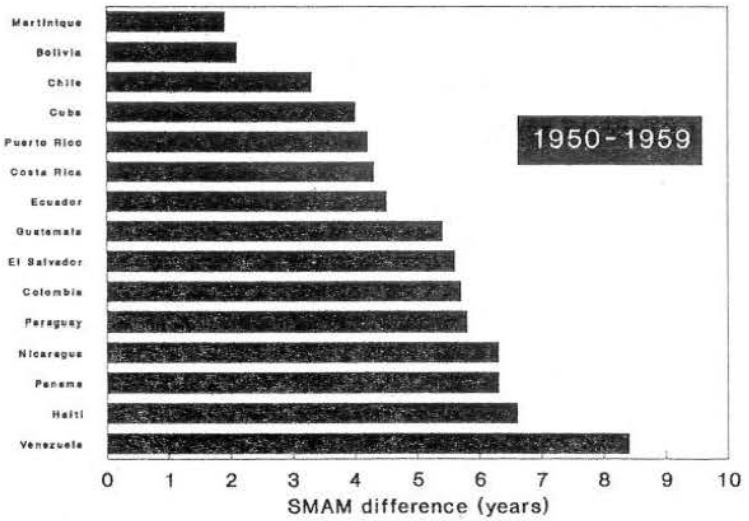
3. Prevalence of marriage

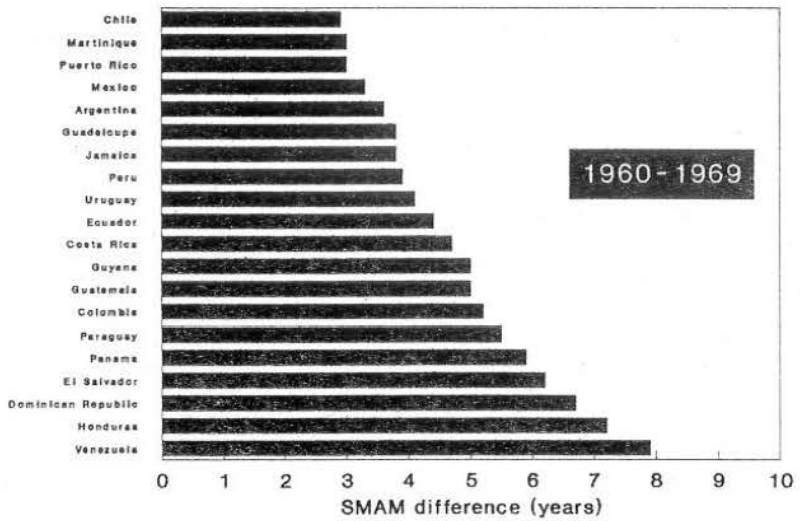
Accurate marriage prevalence levels and trends are particularly difficult to assess in most countries of Latin America and the Caribbean because, as noted previously, there is substantial overestimation of permanent celibacy, especially in the older age groups (Camisa, 1971 and 1972). 10/

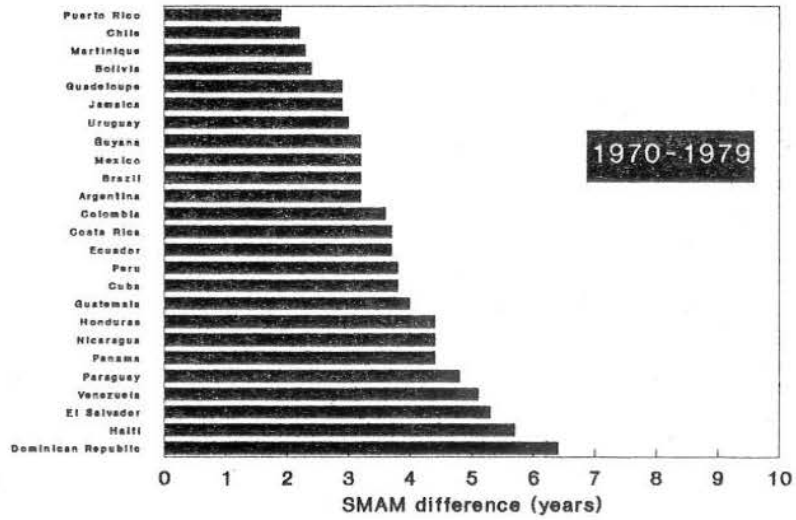
Table 18 presents estimates of marriage prevalence as proportions of men and women ever in a union by age 50. 11/ For the 1950s and 1960s, only three countries (Bolivia, Ecuador and Mexico) reported 90 per cent or more males ever married or in a union. The other countries reported fewer than 90 per cent, even fewer than 80 per cent in several countries and just 60.0 and 65.3 per cent in Jamaica (1960) and Martinique (1954), respectively, based only on legal unions.

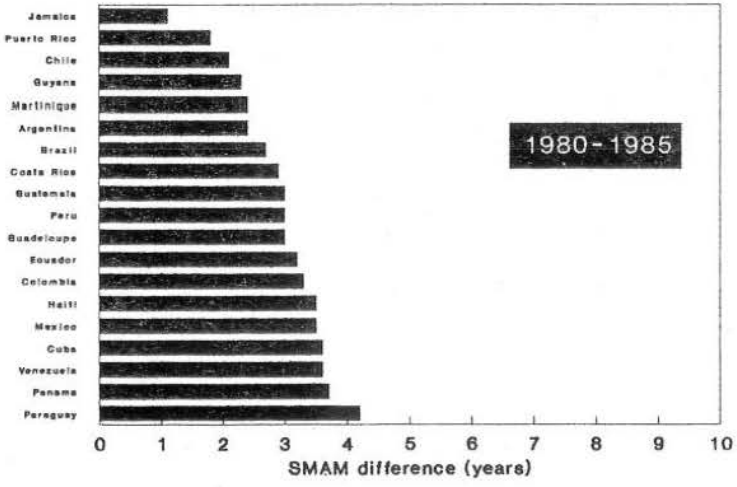
For women, certain estimates were even lower than for men during the same period. In the Jamaican census of 1960, PEM by age 50 reached a minimum of 59 per cent, considering legal unions only. In Guadeloupe, Martinique, Paraguay

Figure 11. Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950–1985









Source: Annex table A.2.

Note: SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

Table 18. Marriage prevalence, by sex, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950-1985

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married by age 50				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
		Men			
Caribbean					
Cuba	81.4	1953	90.7	1981	0.33
Dominican Republic	84.3	1960	76.7	1970	-0.76
Guadeloupe a/	70.9	1961	73.9	1982	0.14
Haiti b/	87.5	1950	89.4	1982	0.06
Jamaica a/	60.0	1960	62.4	1982	0.10
Martinique a/	65.3	1954	71.6	1982	0.23
Puerto Rico	89.1	1950	92.2	1980	0.10
Trinidad and Tobago a/,c/	77.3	1960	80.7	1980	0.17
Central America					
Costa Rica	87.6	1950	90.4	1984	0.08
El Salvador	81.5	1950	85.2	1971	0.18
Guatemala	88.8	1950	94.3	1981	0.18
Honduras	85.8	1961	94.3	1974	0.65
Mexico	93.6	1960	94.4	1980	0.04
Nicaragua	84.0	1950	89.7	1971	0.27
Panama	77.5	1950	88.1	1980	0.35
Temperate South America					
Argentina	85.9	1960	88.4	1980	0.13
Chile	86.5	1952	89.5	1982	0.10
Uruguay	85.0	1963	85.3	1975	0.03
Tropical South America					
Bolivia	92.4	1950	94.4	1976	0.08
Brazil	93.3 d/	1970	93.9	1980	0.06
Colombia	84.7	1951	90.4	1985	0.17
Ecuador	90.0	1950	91.8	1982	0.06
Guyana b/,c/	83.0	1960	85.6	1980/81	0.12
Paraguay	84.5	1950	90.9	1982	0.20
Peru	89.7	1961	92.7	1981	0.15
Venezuela	77.8	1950	88.8	1981	0.35

Table 18 (continued)

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married by age 50: Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (percentage points)
			Women		
Caribbean					
Cuba	87.8	1953	95.6	1981	0.28
Dominican Republic	81.7	1960	81.5	1970	-0.02
Guadeloupe a/	65.4	1961	69.4	1982	0.19
Haiti b/	76.6	1950	91.6	1982	0.47
Jamaica	59.0 a/	1960	66.1 b/	1982	..
Martinique a/	63.1	1954	69.1	1982	0.28
Puerto Rico	91.5	1950	94.4	1980	0.10
Trinidad and Tobago a/,c/	87.3 e/	1960	93.8 e/	1980	0.33
Central America					
Costa Rica	81.2	1950	86.4	1984	0.15
El Salvador	71.9	1950	76.9	1971	0.24
Guatemala	81.2	1950	93.8	1981	0.41
Honduras	73.8	1961	94.7	1974	1.61
Mexico	91.3	1960	92.9	1980	0.08
Nicaragua	71.5	1950	86.4	1971	0.71
Panama	74.3	1950	92.3	1980	0.60
Temperate South America					
Argentina	86.7	1960	89.9	1980	0.16
Chile	84.0	1952	87.6	1982	0.12
Uruguay	86.2	1963	89.2	1975	0.25
Tropical South America					
Bolivia	88.9	1950	92.3	1976	0.13
Brazil	91.2 d/	1970	91.9	1980	0.07
Colombia	77.0	1951	88.1	1985	0.33
Ecuador	82.1	1950	89.3	1982	0.23
Guyana a/,c/	78.8 b/	1960	85.8	1980/81	..
Paraguay	67.2	1950	83.6	1982	0.51
Peru	85.6	1961	91.5	1981	0.30
Venezuela	66.0	1950	85.3	1981	0.62

Source: Annex table A.2.

a/ Legal unions only.
b/ Including consensual unions.
c/ Including unregistered religious marriages.
d/ Data prior to 1970 not available.
e/ Including consensual and visiting unions.

and Venezuela also, prevalence of legal unions fell to the 60 per cent range. In the other countries of Central and Tropical South America, estimates are in the 70-80 per cent range (see table 18). In only two countries, Mexico and Puerto Rico, were 90 per cent or more of the women ever married or in a union.

For the period since 1970, levels of prevalence are higher in many countries, usually exceeding 90 per cent, which probably represents a better assessment of the level of marriage prevalence. Countries with prevalence levels in the 80 per cent range are, however, still likely to reflect underreporting, as is the case in several Caribbean countries. Data from recent surveys in which a special effort was made to record accurate marital status estimates show much higher prevalence levels. For example, in Honduras (1981), the proportion of women reported as ever in a union by ages 45-49 was 98.9 per cent (Suazo and others, 1985); in Haiti (1983), this proportion was 97.2 per cent (Haiti, 1985); and in the Dominican Republic (1983), it was 99.1 per cent (Dominican Republic, 1983).

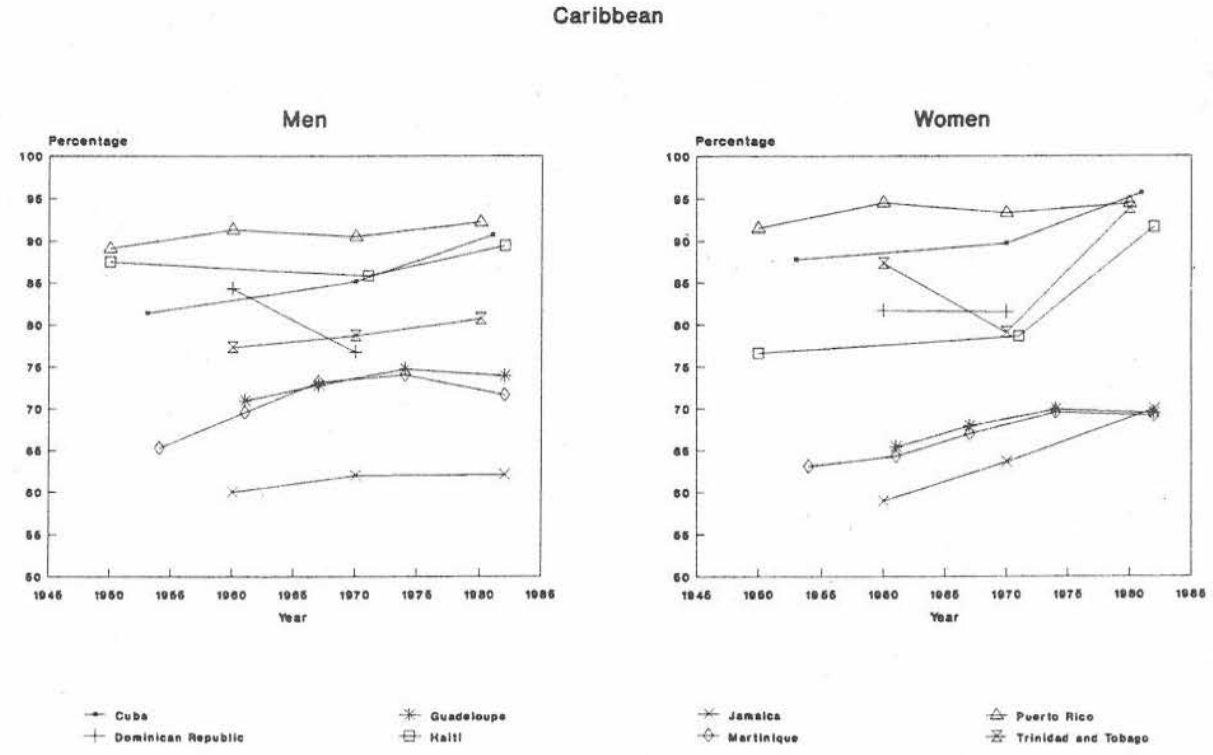
The general trend towards higher prevalence levels at age 50 among both sexes, illustrated in figure 12, can be interpreted as reflecting better reporting of consensual unions and possibly increasing proportions of couples who marry legally. 12/ These increments did not occur in all countries to the same extent, as can be seen from the average increases (last column of table 18). Increases ranged from about 0.10 to 0.35 per annum among men and from 0.20 to over 0.60 among women.

B. Consensual unions

Marriage patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be properly understood without assessing the prevalence among all marital unions of non-legalized consensual and visiting unions. Consensual unions prevail in all Latin American countries; and in the Caribbean, visiting unions constitute an additional marriage form, although they are acknowledged primarily in the anglophone and francophone countries (Mortara, 1963; Arretx, 1971; Camisa, 1978; Lira, 1981). Cultural norms and historical circumstances underlie these various types of marital union. These practices are demographically important because they constitute a socially accepted process of marriage formation and reproduction. A number of studies have investigated the implications for fertility of these various types of marital unions (e.g., Pérez Brignoli, 1981; Lira, 1981; McDonald, Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1981; da Trinidade Henriques, 1982; United Nations, 1984b). This section presents a brief overview of various aspects of non-legalized marital union. 13/

As can be seen in table 19 and figure 13, which present data from the censuses of the 1970s and 1980s, considerable proportions of all women in marital unions live outside the legal framework and many remain so throughout their reproductive years. The percentage of women aged 15-49 and in a union who were in a consensual union ranged from a maximum of 67.6 in Haiti in 1982 to a minimum of 4.6 in Chile, also in 1982. In nine countries, more than one third of all women aged 15-49 and in a marital union are in a consensual union; and in four countries--Haiti (1982), Dominican Republic (1975),

Figure 12. Trends in percentage ever married by age 50, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950–1985



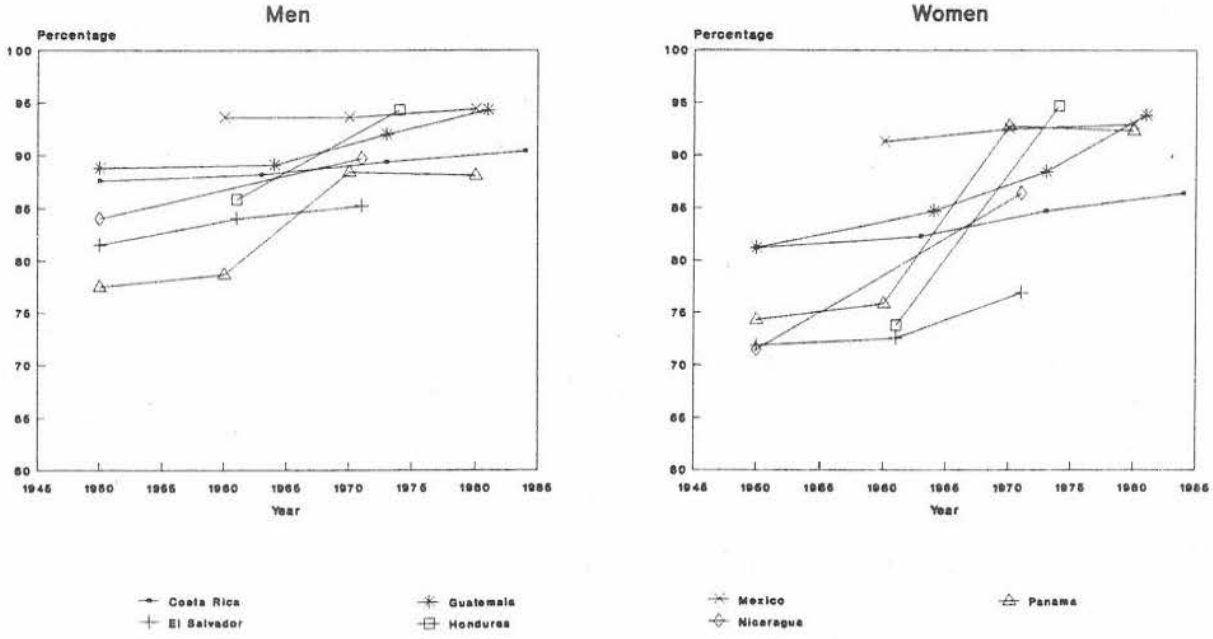
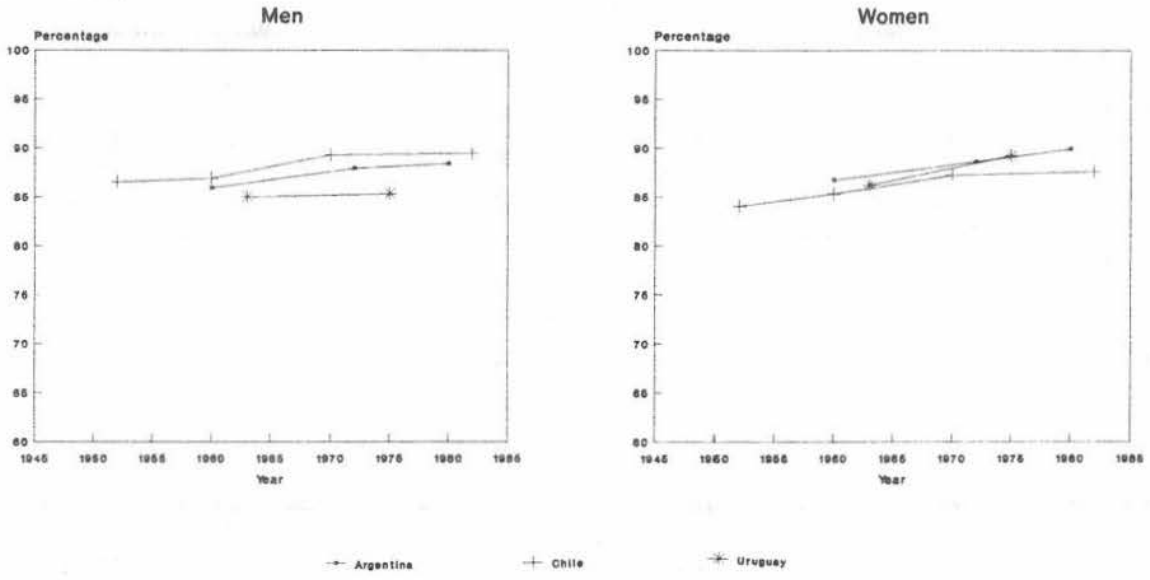
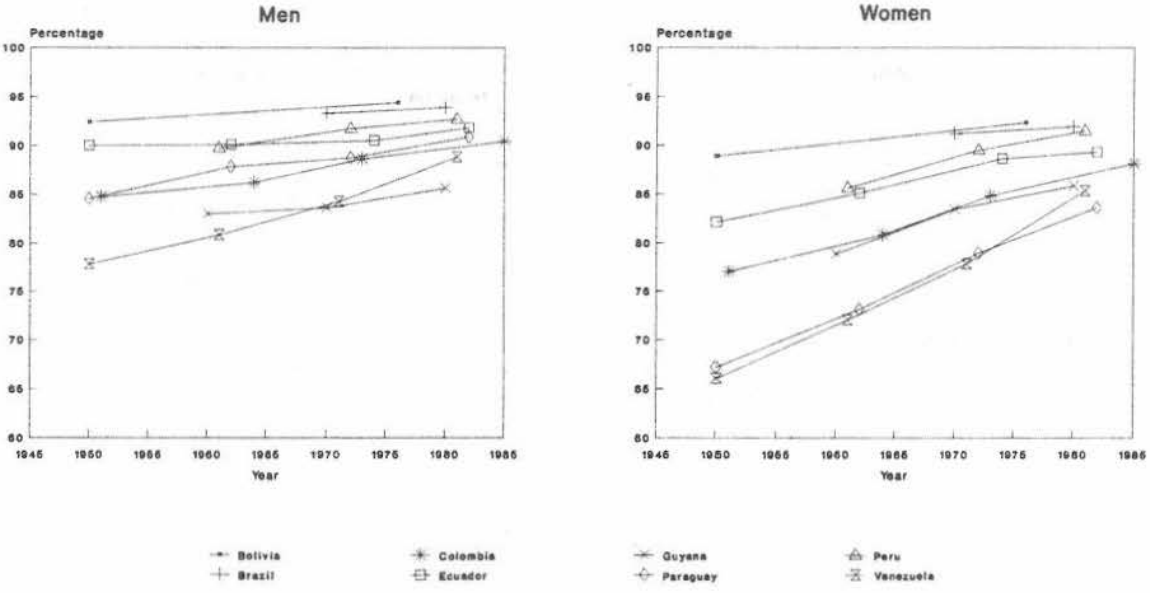


Figure 12 *(continued)*

Temperate South America



Tropical South America



Source: Annex table A.2.

Table 19. Percentage of women in a consensual union among all women currently in a marital union, by five-year age group, in order of decreasing magnitude of percentages at ages 15-49, Latin America and the Caribbean, recent years

Country	Year of census or survey	Age group (years)							
		15-49	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Haiti	1982	67.6	73.4	76.2	68.8	66.8	68.5	61.5	61.1
Dominican Republic	1975	62.6	85.8	75.4	64.0	62.4	47.5	53.8	41.0
Panama	1980	53.5	75.7	61.6	53.0	51.1	49.6	46.2	42.8
El Salvador	1971	52.6	70.7	60.2	52.4	50.7	49.4	44.6	41.4
Jamaica	1982	47.5	91.7	77.3	57.1	43.3	36.3	28.6	22.8
Guatemala	1981	45.9	55.5	47.3	45.0	43.7	45.4	43.1	42.2
Nicaragua	1971	40.8	56.8	48.0	42.7	37.2	36.5	32.1	30.1
Cuba	1981	37.5	62.6	47.0	34.9	32.5	32.1	31.4	31.0
Venezuela	1981	33.4	38.1	34.6	32.9	32.5	33.0	32.8	31.4
Colombia	1985	29.1	58.2	41.0	33.3	28.4	25.6	22.3	20.1
Ecuador	1982	28.6	44.4	34.3	29.1	26.4	25.7	..	22.4
Peru	1981	26.7	57.5	40.3	27.8	22.0	19.8	17.9	16.2
Trinidad and Tobago a/	1980	26.1	46.3	32.7	25.6	23.0	21.3	20.1	..
Paraguay	1982	22.8	32.0	27.2	24.9	22.7	20.6	17.8	15.5
Guyana b/	1980	21.3	36.1	27.0	21.0	18.9	16.9	15.3	14.5
Martinique c/	1976	19.1	51.6	31.4	21.7	18.4	16.5	15.1	13.6
Costa Rica	1984	19.0	36.8	22.4	19.2	17.2	16.0	14.9	13.3
Guadeloupe c/	1975	16.9	33.0	22.0	16.6	14.7	15.8	15.5	16.2
Mexico	1980	14.4	27.8	17.0	13.3	11.8	12.3	11.7	11.4
Argentina	1980	13.0	32.1	18.3	13.0	11.6	11.6	10.8	9.6
Brazil	1980	12.7	22.2	15.5	13.0	11.8	11.3	10.4	9.3
Uruguay	1975	10.0	17.6	11.7	9.1	8.0	10.7	9.7	9.6
Puerto Rico	1980	5.4	15.5	8.4	5.2	4.3	4.2	3.5	3.5
Chile	1982	4.6	8.4	4.7	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.5

Sources:

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico and Venezuela: Demographic Yearbook 1987 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.88.XIII.1), table 29.

Colombia: National Department of Statistics, Censo 85: XI Censo Nacional de Poblaciçn y IX de Vivienda, vol. 5, Demograféa (Caracas, 1986), p. 2, table 8.

Dominican Republic: United Nations, Marital Status and Fertility. A Comparative Analysis of World Fertility Survey Data in Twenty-one Countries (ST/ESA/SER.R/52) (New York, 1983), p. 89, table A.1.

Table 19 (continued)

El Salvador: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XIII.8), table 12.

Guadeloupe: Institut National de la Statistique et des études économiques, Recensement général de la population, 1974. Guadeloupe: tableaux sur la structure démographique (Paris, n.d.), tableau IND5.

Guyana: Caribbean Community, 1980-1981 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Guyana, vol. I (Kingston, University of the West Indies, 1985), p. 175, table 8.2

Martinique: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, Rencensement general de la population, 1974, Martinique: tableaux sur la structure demographique (Paris, n.d.), table IND 5.

Nicaragua: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8), table 12.

Trinidad and Tobago: Central Statistical Office, Population and Housing Census 1980, vol. VI, Fertility, Union Status, Marriage, p. 37, table 2.

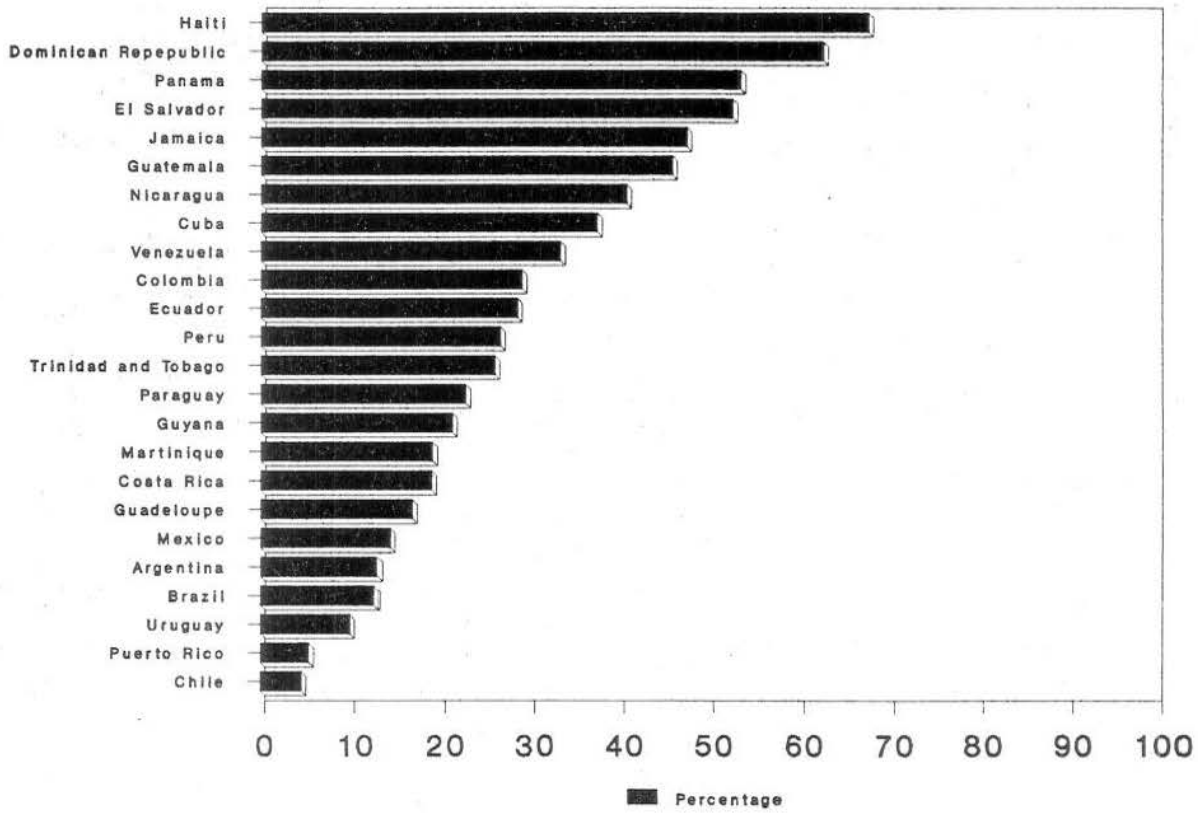
Uruguay: Demographic Yearbook 1982 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.83.XIII.1), table 40.

a/ Including visiting unions. A woman was classified as being in a visiting union if, while neither married or living in a consensual union, she had borne a child during the year preceding the census.

b/ Refers to women not attending primary or secondary school full time.

c/ Consensual unions include all women in a de facto marital union, regardless of their actual marital status.

Figure 13. Percentage of women in a consensual union among those in a union, Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: Table 19.

El Salvador (1971) and Panama (1980)--more than half of all unions are consensual. In the first two countries, non-legalized unions represent about two thirds of all unions. The highest percentages are found in the youngest age group (15-19), confirming the fact that in those countries many unions are initiated in a consensual form. The maximum level among this age group is observed for Jamaica in 1982, where 91.7 per cent of unions were not legalized; and the minimum is in Chile, also in 1982, with 8.4 per cent. The levels of consensual marriages tend to decrease with age, as consensual unions are progressively legalized or dissolved. But in the countries where high levels of consensual unions prevail, women remain in or keep entering consensual unions even at older ages, thus maintaining an overall high level of non-legalized unions even at ages 45-49. Haiti illustrates this situation, with 61.1 per cent of women aged 45-49 currently in a consensual union. In four other countries--the Dominican Republic (1975), El Salvador (1971), Guatemala (1981) and Panama (1980)--more than 40 per cent of the women in that age group were in a consensual union. In only five countries were fewer than 10 per cent of women in a consensual union at those older ages: Argentina; Chile; Uruguay (the three countries of Temperate Latin America); Brazil and Puerto Rico (table 19).

For some Caribbean countries and for Guyana, where the non-legalized marriage system includes visiting unions, table 20 presents data in the prevalence of first and current marital status of women aged 15-49 who had ever been in a union. In the Caribbean countries, a considerable proportion of the women ever in a union enter into marital relationships through non-legalized unions, primarily through visiting unions. In Haiti (1977), Jamaica (1975-1976) and Martinique (1975-1976), as many as 80 per cent of the unions began as a visiting union, while fewer than 10 per cent of the first unions were legal. Table 20 shows that the situation in Trinidad and Tobago is somewhat different, with a lower level of entry into a visiting union and a higher level into a legal union. The pattern in Guyana is more significantly different: more than 50 per cent of the women surveyed had had a legal first marriage, whereas 40 per cent had entered into a visiting union. The ethnic and cultural composition of the population of these latter countries account for this pattern: each has a population of East Indian and African origin; and Guyanese women of East Indian origin tend to favour entering into a legal union, whereas those of African origin are more prone to engage in a visiting union as a first union. WFS data for those two countries show that 85 and 76 per cent of the women of East Indian origin in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively, entered into a legal union first (United Nations, 1984a).

Data from table 20 and figure 14 also show a substantial decline in the percentage of visiting unions and a corresponding increase in legal unions when moving from first to current marital unions. It is obvious that in several countries a substantial number of women in a visiting union tend to marry legally during their reproductive years after spending some time in a consensual union.

Changes in marital status between the first and the current union can follow a variety of paths. Tables 21 and 22 concern the dynamics of these changes. Data on the current marriage patterns of women ever in a union, by type of first union, are given in table 21. Only relatively small proportions--37 per cent or lower--of women currently in a legal union had first entered into a legal union, except in Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago,

Figure 14. Percentage of ever-married women, by type of union, Latin America and the Caribbean

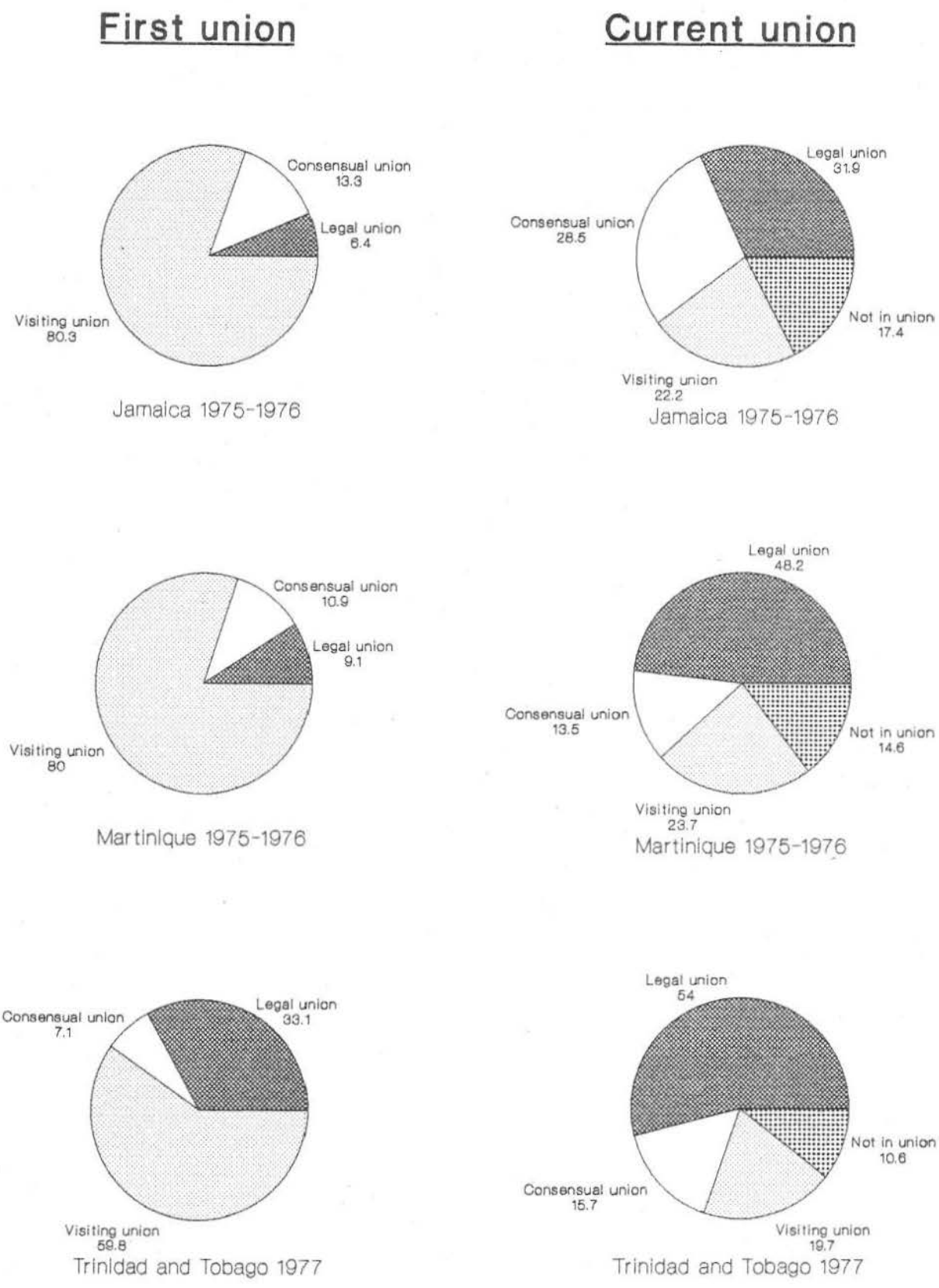
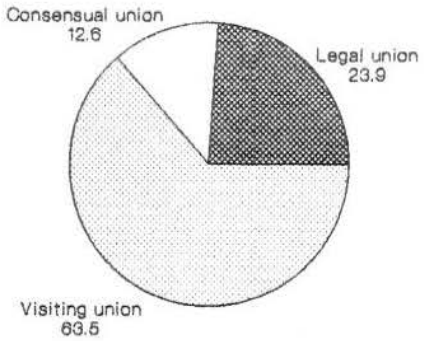
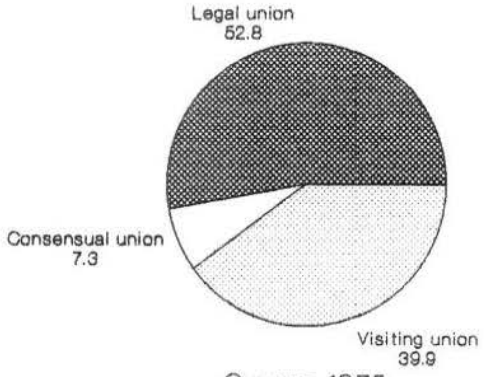


Figure 14 *(continued)*

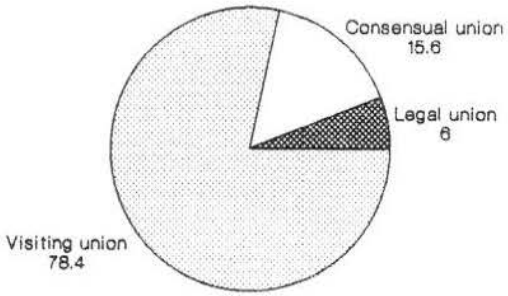
First union



Guadeloupe 1975-1976

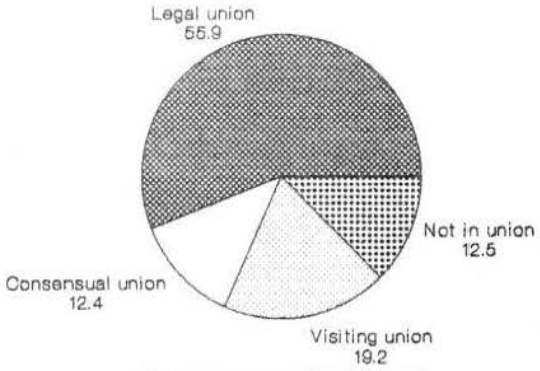


Guyana 1975

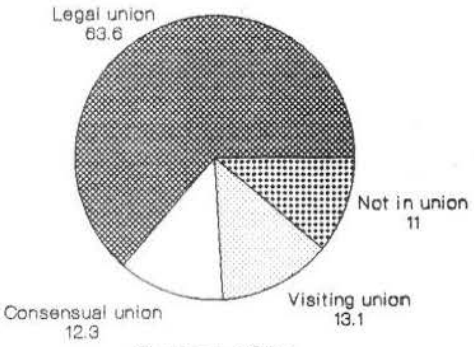


Haiti 1977

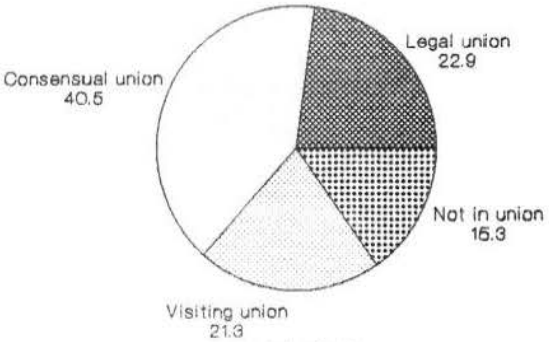
Current union



Guadeloupe 1975-1976



Guyana 1975



Haiti 1977

Source: Table 20.

Table 20. Women aged 15-49 in any marital union, by type of first marital union and by type of current marital union, some Caribbean countries and Guyana, 1971-1977

Country	Year of survey	Percentage aged 15-49, ever in a marital union, by type of first and current union: Legal union	Consensual union	Visiting union	Not currently in a union	Total
		A. First marital union				
Guadeloupe	1975	23.9	12.6	63.5	..	100.0
Haiti	1977	6.0	15.6	78.4	..	100.0
Jamaica	1975/76	6.4	13.3	80.3	..	100.0
Martinique	1976	9.1	10.9	80.0	..	100.0
Trinidad and Tobago	1977	33.1	7.1	59.8	..	100.0
Guyana	1975	52.8	7.3	39.9	..	100.0
		B. Current marital union				
Barbados	1971	36.5	19.6	27.2	16.7	100.0
Guadeloupe	1975	55.9	12.4	19.2	12.5	100.0
Haiti	1977	22.9	40.5	21.3	15.3	100.0
Jamaica	1975/76	31.9	28.5	22.2	17.4	100.0
Martinique	1976	48.2	13.5	23.7	14.6	100.0
Trinidad and Tobago	1977	54.0	15.7	19.7	10.6	100.0
Guyana	1975	63.6	12.3	13.1	11.0	100.0

Source: United Nations, Some Relationships between Nuptiality and Fertility in Countries of the West Indies (ST/ESA/SER.R/46) (New York, 1984), pp. 10-12, tables 2 and 3.

Table 21. Distribution of women aged 15-49 ever in a marital union, in each type of current marital status by type of initial marital union, some Caribbean countries and Guyana, 1975-1977
(Percentage)

Country and first marital union	Year of survey	Current marital union			
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	Not in union
Guadeloupe	1975				
Legal		37.6	(2.1)	(5.3)	(12.9)
Consensual		7.8	36.7	(10.1)	(13.6)
Visiting		54.6	61.2	84.6	73.5
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Haiti	1977				
Legal		20.3	(0.8)	(0.2)	(6.6)
Consensual		6.6	26.6	(3.7)	16.5
Visiting		73.1	72.6	96.1	76.9
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Jamaica	1975-1976				
Legal		17.8	(0.4)	(0.8)	(2.7)
Consensual		13.6	21.9	(4.2)	10.4
Visiting		68.6	77.7	95.0	86.9
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Martinique	1976				
Legal		16.3	(1.9)	(0.4)	(6.3)
Consensual		9.7	27.8	(4.6)	(9.7
Visiting		74.0	70.3	95.0	84.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Trinidad and Tobago	1977				
Legal		50.6	15.2	5.0	22.4
Consensual		4.5	21.1	3.4	6.8
Visiting		44.9	63.7	91.6	70.8
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 21 (continued)

Country and first marital union	Year of survey	Current marital union			
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	Not in union
Guyana	1975				
Legal		69.7	23.1	6.4	43.7
Consensual		4.2	25.3	(5.5)	(6.8)
Visiting		26.1	51.6	88.1	49.5
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: United Nations, Some Relationships between Nuptiality and Fertility in Countries of the West Indies (ST/ESA/SER.R/46) (New York, 1984), p. 16, table 5.

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on fewer than 30 observations.

Table 22. Distribution of women aged 15-49 ever in a marital union, in each type of initial marital union by current marital status, some Caribbean countries and Guyana, 1975-1977
(Percentage)

Country and first marital union	Year of survey	Current marital union				Total
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	Not in union	
Guadeloupe	1975					
Legal		88.0	(1.1)	(4.2)	(6.7)	100.0
Consensual		35.0	36.2	(15.4)	(13.4)	100.0
Visiting		48.2	11.9	25.6	14.3	100.0
Haiti	1977					
Legal		77.1	(5.3)	(0.8)	(16.8)	100.0
Consensual		9.7	69.1	(5.0)	16.2	100.0
Visiting		21.3	37.5	26.2	15.0	100.0
Jamaica	1975-1976					
Legal		88.2	(1.7)	(2.8)	(7.3)	100.0
Consensual		32.5	46.9	(7.0)	13.6	100.0
Visiting		27.3	27.6	26.3	18.8	100.0
Martinique	1976					
Legal		86.2	(2.8)	(0.9)	(10.1)	100.0
Consensual		42.7	34.4	(9.9)	(13.0)	100.0
Visiting		44.6	11.9	28.2	15.3	100.0
Trinidad and Tobago	1977					
Legal		82.6	7.2	3.0	7.2	100.0
Consensual		34.0	46.6	(9.3)	(10.1)	100.0
Visiting		40.5	16.7	30.2	12.6	100.0
Guyana	1975					
Legal		84.0	5.4	1.6	9.0	100.0
Consensual		37.1	42.9	(9.8)	(10.2)	100.0
Visiting		41.6	16.0	28.8	13.6	100.0

Source: United Nations, Some Relationships between Nuptiality and Fertility in Countries of the West Indies (ST/ESA/SER.R/46) (New York, 1984), pp. 10-12, tables 2 and 3.

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on fewer than 30 observations.

where these percentages were 69.7 and 50.6, respectively. Most women currently in legal union had originally entered into a visiting union, demonstrating the importance of this type of union as an initial access to sexual relations. In Haiti and Martinique, as many as three quarters of the women currently in a legal union had first entered a visiting union. Furthermore, from 85 to 96 per cent of women currently in a visiting union had first entered such a union. Of the women not currently in a union most had previously been in visiting unions, indicating a greater instability for this form of union. Most women currently in a consensual union had also first entered into a visiting union. 14/ Interestingly, only small proportions, about 13.0 per cent or fewer of women currently in a legal union, had first entered into a consensual union. A better understanding of such a varied marital status process could be achieved if detailed nuptiality histories were available by type of union. Some additional light can, however, be shed by examining this process from the point of view of the first marital union.

Table 22 provides a partial description of the process of change between the first and the current union of women aged 15-49 who had ever been in a union. A three-way pattern emerges from these data. First, women who originally enter into a legal union tend to stay in such a union. Between 77 and 88 per cent of the women who had originally married legally were still in that category at the time of the survey. Secondly, of those who had first entered into a visiting union, in general from 40 to 50 per cent were currently legally married. Thirdly, of those who had first entered into a consensual union, about one third were found in a legal union, and from 35 to 45 per cent were still in the same type of union, except in Haiti, where the percentage was almost 70. The intermediate marital statuses, if any, engaged in between first and current unions are not known, and neither can one guess the future marriage behaviour of these women.

Table 23 presents the mean age at entry into first union among women aged 25 or over who had entered into a union before age 25. These data partially confirm the hypothesis that non-legalized unions take place at an earlier age than legal marriages, at least for the truncated cohorts examined. In Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago, where the Indian population is associated with early marriage norms, mean age at first union was about the same--about 17 years--for all types (last column). On the other hand, in Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica and Martinique, women who had first entered into a legal union were from one to two years older than those who had been in a consensual or visiting union. A second feature is that the mean ages at first union of women who had entered into a consensual or a visiting union were relatively similar and quite young: most were about 17-18 years. A third feature is that women who were currently in a consensual union had the lowest mean age at first union, at least one year less than women in a visiting or a legal union. In Guadaloupe and Martinique, where age at entry into first union is comparatively higher than in the other countries, 30 per cent of all women had entered a union before 18 years and 50 per cent before 20 (Léridon and Charbit, 1981). Thus, these data for the Caribbean are consistent with findings for Latin America showing that non-legalized unions take place at younger ages than legal unions (Lira, 1981; Quilodr n, 1985).

Table 23. Mean age at entry into first marital union of all women ever in a marital union, aged 25 or over, whose first union was before age 25, by type of first and current marital union, some Caribbean countries and Guyana, 1975-1977

(Year)

Country and first marital union	Year of survey	Current marital union			All women
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	
Guadeloupe	1975				
Legal		20.2	19.6	19.0	..
Consensual		18.5	18.1	17.6	..
Visiting		18.4	17.6	17.9	..
All women		19.1	17.9	18.0	..
Haiti	1977				
Legal		20.1	(19.8)	(20.3)	19.8
Consensual		18.4	18.2	(16.9)	18.1
Visiting		18.7	18.0	19.0	18.3
All women		18.9	18.0	18.9	18.3
Jamaica	1975-1976				
Legal		20.8	(19.0)	(19.8)	20.7
Consensual		17.8	17.9	(18.1)	17.9
Visiting		17.8	17.0	17.6	17.5
All women		18.3	17.2	17.7	17.8
Martinique	1976				
Legal		21.2	19.1	16.0	..
Consensual		18.6	18.3	17.3	..
Visiting		18.9	17.0	18.9	..
All women		19.1	17.4	18.7	..
Trinidad and Tobago	1977				
Legal		17.9	16.4	17.8	17.7
Consensual		17.3	17.4	(15.9)	17.2
Visiting		17.8	16.8	18.1	17.7
All women		17.9	16.9	17.9	17.7

Table 23 (continued)

Country and first marital union	Year of survey	Current marital union			All women
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	
Guyana	1975				
Legal		17.3	15.9	(17.7)	17.2
Consensual		16.5	17.3	(16.8)	17.0
Visiting		17.8	16.9	18.0	17.8
All women		17.4	16.7	17.8	17.4

Source: United Nations, Some Relationships between Nuptiality and Fertility in Countries of the West Indies (ST/ESA/SER.R/46) (New York, 1984), p. 16, table 5.

Note: Figures in parentheses are based on fewer than 30 observations. For Guadeloupe and Martinique, the number of observations in individual cells was not available.

Table 24 describes trends in the proportion of women in a consensual union for age groups 15-19 and 15-49 in selected countries. In the youngest age group, the data show declines in only a few of the countries examined (notably Guatemala, Puerto Rico and Venezuela), but in most countries the proportions of adolescent consensual unions actually increased (this may be a result, at least in part, of better reporting).

When all women of reproductive ages (15-49 years) are considered, large declines in consensual unions are observed in some countries, in particular, Guatemala, Paraguay and Puerto Rico. On the other hand, several countries with low levels of non-legalized unions report increments, notably Argentina and Costa Rica. A striking feature is the continuous high level of consensual unions, 30 per cent or more, observed at fairly recent dates in Guatemala, Haiti and Panama (see table 24).

C. Nuptiality differentials

1. Education

Data drawn from the World Fertility Survey support the hypothesis that in Latin America, and the Caribbean as elsewhere, more educated women marry at a relatively later age than those with less education (table 25). Differences in SMAM as large as four to five years between women with no schooling and women with seven or more years of education are found in many of these countries. Typically, SMAMs increase steadily with the number of years of schooling achieved (United Nations, 1987a). For the uneducated group, SMAMs are under age 20 in all but two countries, with the lowest levels in Guyana, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago--about 17 years. The highest SMAM is in Peru: 25 years, among those with seven years or more of schooling. Almost all SMAMs in this education category are over 20 years. These differences in age at first marriage are most probably due to changes in marriage norms acquired through education as well as to the mere withdrawal of many young girls from the early-marriage market.

The foregoing observations should be interpreted with caution, however, due to the possible association between education and type of marital union which, as discussed earlier, has an impact on age at entry into union. Table 26 presents this relationship for three Caribbean countries and Guyana and shows that the question whether higher education is associated with a given type of marital union is difficult to ascertain from available information. In Haiti and Jamaica, the proportion of women entering into a legal marital union first is larger among the more educated than among non-educated: 15.7 and 7.4 per cent, respectively, for women with seven or more years of education as compared with 4.5 and 5.0 per cent, respectively, for women with no education. In these two countries, however, preference for a legal marriage is very low. Most women first enter into a visiting union, with the more educated doing so in greater proportions than the less educated: 76.3 and 70.5 per cent of the non-educated and 82.3 and 82.1 per cent of the most educated women in these two countries, respectively.

Table 24. Percentage of women in consensual unions among all women in age groups 15-19 and 15-49, Latin America and the Caribbean, selected countries, 1950-1985

Country	Year of census	Age group 15-19		Age group 15-49	
		Earliest reading	Most recent reading	Earliest reading	Most recent reading
Argentina	1960 - 1980	2.0	3.2	4.9	7.8
Chile	1952 - 1982	0.9	1.2	3.7	3.8
Costa Rica	1950 - 1984	3.0	5.6	8.2	10.5
Cuba	1953 - 1981	11.8	15.2	23.7	23.6
Ecuador	1950 - 1982	5.8	7.7	15.0	17.1
Guatemala	1950 - 1981	24.6	14.7	44.6	29.8
Haiti	1950 - 1982	4.4	4.8	41.8	34.5
Mexico	1960 - 1980	4.0	5.4	9.9	8.8
Panama	1950 - 1980	17.0	13.7	35.1	30.7
Paraguay	1950 - 1982	4.9	4.4	23.7	12.7
Peru	1961 - 1981	6.7	7.9	15.9	15.3
Puerto Rico	1950 - 1980	6.3	1.9	16.2	2.9
Venezuela	1950 - 1981	9.6	6.4	22.8	17.9

Sources: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (United Nations publication, Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8), table 12; Demographic Yearbook 1987 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E/F.88.XIII.1), table 29.

Table 25. Singulate mean age at marriage a/ of women aged 15-49 ever in a union, by selected levels of education, various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1975-1979
(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Duration of schooling		Difference (years)
		No schooling	Seven or more years of schooling	
Colombia	1976	19.5	24.7	5.2
Costa Rica	1976	19.4 b/	23.3	3.9
Dominican Republic	1975	18.0	22.7	4.7
Ecuador	1979	19.1	24.1	5.0
Guyana	1975	17.7	20.2	2.5
Haiti	1977	21.5	22.6	1.1
Jamaica	1975	18.3 b/	19.1	0.8
Mexico	1976	17.4	21.9	4.5
Panama	1975	19.1	23.1	4.0
Paraguay	1979	18.5	23.4	4.9
Peru	1977	21.0	25.0	4.0
Trinidad and Tobago	1977	17.3	21.0	3.7
Venezuela	1977	19.0	23.0	4.0

Source: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development. Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 119.

a/ Including legal and non-legalized unions.
b/ From one to three years of schooling.

Table 26. Distribution of women aged 15-49 ever in a union, by type of initial union and years of education, some Caribbean countries and Guyana, 1975-1977

(Percentage)

Country and years of education	Year of survey	Type of initial union			Total
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	
Haiti	1977				
No schooling		5.0	18.6	76.3	100
1-3 years		6.1	12.3	81.6	100
4-6 years		7.5	5.7	86.9	100
7+ years		15.7	2.0	82.3	100
Jamaica	1975-1976				
No schooling		4.5	25.0	70.5	100
1-3 years		2.3	27.9	69.8	100
4-6 years		2.7	22.7	74.6	100
7+ years		7.4	10.4	82.1	100
Trinidad and Tobago	1977				
No schooling		74.1	9.8	16.1	100
1-3 years		61.5	13.9	24.5	100
4-6 years		50.1	13.5	36.4	100
7+ years		27.8	5.8	66.3	100
Guyana	1975				
No schooling		80.3	13.9	5.8	100
1-3 years		79.5	9.8	10.7	100
4-6 years		71.2	9.8	19.0	100
7+ years		43.4	6.3	50.3	100

Source: World Fertility Survey standard recode tape.

Conversely, in Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago, the largest proportions of women who had entered into a legal union first are found among those with no education--80.3 and 74.1 per cent, respectively--and the smallest proportions, 43.4 and 27.8, respectively, were among those with seven or more years of education. In these two countries, legal unions are favoured by the less educated women (with the opposite effect with respect to entering into a visiting union). The ethnic composition of the population accounts largely for the patterns observed. Indeed, data show that in Guyana 85 per cent of the population who enter into marriage first are of East Indian origin; and in Trinidad and Tobago, this figure is 76 per cent (United Nations, 1984b; Roberts and Braithwaite, 1962; Guyana, n.d.).

The question whether type of union and level of education are linked through appurtenance to a particular social stratum or population category is difficult to ascertain. Sometimes, certain types of union are observed more frequently in low-status populations and other types in other population strata. In general, the more affluent achieve higher educational levels than the poorer classes. In most instance, however, the relations between educational level, social origin and socio-economic group and marital union have not yet been properly determined (Lira, 1977; da Trinidade Henriques, 1982; Charbit, 1987).

2. Occupation

The effect of women's participation in the labour force before marriage on the mean age at first marital union is far from being straightforward. Both positive and negative relations can exist between work and marriage timing, depending upon the social and economic development stage and upon the cultural background of the populations studied (United Nations, 1988a). In Latin America and the Caribbean, levels of female labour force participation prior to marriage are comparatively high, 15/ and this work does not represent an alternative to early marriage. When women enter the labour force prior to marriage, work is not likely to affect the timing of their marital union, for social pressure as well as social tolerance towards consensual unions will permit them to find a spouse or a union partner, whether they work or not.

The relationships between the timing of first marriage and work before marriage are difficult to untangle when non-legalized unions prevail. For instance, an unmarried woman can readily enter a visiting union regardless of her work status, because this type of union does not require economic assistance from the partner and her work status therefore is not likely to influence the decision (da Trinidade Henriques, 1982). Table 27 presents relevant data for ever-married women, with all types of marital unions (legal, consensual and visiting) combined.

Although the subpopulation studied is truncated, 16/ a clear timing pattern emerges. It can be seen that never-married women who did not work before marriage have the lowest age of entry into a union: the mean ages in their case vary from 17.9 years in the Dominican Republic to 19.4 in Costa Rica. Only slightly higher average ages are shown by women who work in traditional occupations. It is obvious that, in current cultural circumstances, women in these two categories have similar marriage patterns.

Table 27. Mean age at first union for ever-married women, by occupation before union, selected countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, a/ 1975-1980

(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Type of occupation b/				
		No work	Modern	Mixed	Transitional	Traditional
Colombia	1976	19.1	21.8	21.1	20.7	20.7
Costa Rica	1976	19.4	22.8	21.8	21.3	21.0
Dominican Republic	1975	17.9	20.3	19.7	18.4	18.6
Ecuador	1979/80	18.8	21.3	20.7	20.1	20.2
Haiti	1977	19.1	21.6	20.5	20.0	20.9
Mexico	1976/77	18.6	21.2	20.4	19.6	18.3
Panama	1975/76	18.5	21.7	20.4	19.8	18.9
Paraguay	1979	19.2	23.1	21.6	20.7	19.7
Peru	1977/78	18.9	22.1	20.7	19.9	20.0
Venezuela	1977	18.3	21.1	21.3	19.4	19.4

Source: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 129.

a/ Ever-married women aged 23 years or over. Means adjusted for education.

b/ Modern = professional and clerical work; mixed = skilled manual and clerical workers; transitional = service and household work; traditional = agricultural workers (self-employed and paid workers).

On the other hand, data show that women who work before marriage in modern or even in "mixed" or "transitional" occupations have, on average, a later age of entry into a first union. In the case of "modern" occupations, their SMAM is about three years higher than that of non-working women. Among women in the mixed and transitional categories, ages at first entry into union are more heterogeneous. These differences probably also reflect different marriage norms as well as the underlying impact of time spent in training to achieve a given qualification.

3. Urban or rural residence

The more modernized populations of urban areas enter into a marital union later than rural populations. Different marriage-timing norms, as well as greater opportunities for more schooling and modern occupations account for this difference (United Nations, 1988a). This pattern is confirmed for Latin America and the Caribbean. As can be seen in table 28, in most countries, the mean age at entry into first union is higher in urban than in rural areas. 17/ Apart from these, SMAMs in the rural areas range from 19.0 years in the Dominican Republic to 21.7 in Peru, as compared with urban areas, where the minimum is 20.8 years in the Dominican Republic and the maximum to 23.3 in Costa Rica. Thus, urban mean ages exceed rural mean ages by from one to two years and by as much as two and a half years in Costa Rica and in Panama, respectively. In Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago, the higher SMAMs in rural areas also certainly reflects the marriage norms of the East Indian rural population.

As was the case for education and occupation, the relationship between type of marital union and place of residence is not uniform and confirms the importance of marriage norms in deciding upon the type of union adopted (table 29). In such countries as Haiti and Jamaica, where visiting unions are favoured as the initial form of marital union, urban/rural differences in the proportions of women first entering into a visiting union are very small. Conversely, in Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago, more women enter into a legal union first in the rural areas, 66.8 and 43.5 per cent, than in urban areas, 28.0 and 26.3 per cent, mainly because the majority of the East Indian population, which favours legal unions, is concentrated in the rural areas (Guyana, n.d.; Trinidad and Tobago, 1981).

D. Concluding remarks

In the Latin American and Caribbean countries, a major feature of the institution of marriage is the very high prevalence of consensual unions. There is also a high degree of prevalence of visiting unions in the anglophone and francophone Caribbean countries. Although these two types of marital unions are socially recognized as marriage forms, their prevalence makes it considerably more difficult to estimate reliably both the age at entry into first union and the overall prevalence of marriages, because current or previous non-legalized unions are not always reported as marital unions.

Table 28. Singulate mean age at union [a/] of women by current urban or rural residence, various countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, 1975-1980

(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Type of residence		Difference in singulate mean age at marriage (Years)
		Rural	Urban	
Colombia	1976	20.6	22.7	2.1
Costa Rica	1976	20.8	23.3	2.5
Dominican Republic	1975	19.0	20.8	1.8
Ecuador	1979/80	21.1	22.9	1.8
Guyana	1975	20.3	19.8	-0.5
Haiti	1977	21.5	22.3	0.8
Jamaica	1975/76	19.5	18.9	-0.6
Mexico	1976/77	20.6	22.6	2.0
Panama	1975/76	19.6	22.2	2.6
Paraguay	1979	21.1	23.2	2.1
Peru	1977/78	21.7	23.2	1.5
Trinidad and Tobago	1977	21.5	20.7	-0.8
Venezuela	1977	19.9	22.2	2.3

Source: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 101.

a/ Indicator is computed as a singulate mean age at marriage, with all marital statuses combined.

Table 29. Distribution of women aged 15-49 years ever in a union, by type of first union and urban or rural residence, some Caribbean countries and Guyana
(Percentage)

Country and place of residence	Year of survey	Type of first union			Total
		Legal	Consensual	Visiting	
Haiti	1977				
Urban		6.5	13.3	80.2	100
Rural		5.8	16.6	77.6	100
Jamaica	1975-1976				
Urban		8.9	9.2	81.9	100
Rural		4.1	17.2	78.7	100
Trinidad and Tobago	1977				
Urban		26.3	6.6	67.1	100
Rural		43.5	7.8	48.8	100
Guyana	1975				
Urban		28.0	6.5	65.5	100
Rural		66.8	7.8	25.4	100

Source: World Fertility Survey standard recode tape.

In terms of overall timing of marital union among women, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are distinguished by relatively early mean ages of first union. In the 1950s and 1960s, female SMAMs in Central and South America varied from around 18 to around 22 years, with the countries of Central America at the lower end (approximately 18-21 years) and those of Temperate South America, where economic development had progressed to a greater extent, at the upper end (22 years or over). In the Caribbean subregion, much higher SMAMs are recorded, plausibly as a result of misreporting and unreporting of consensual and visiting unions.

More recently, in the 1970s and 1980s, estimates suggest that female SMAMs have increased in most countries, except in Temperate South America, where a slight decline is recorded, which may well be due to better reporting of women in consensual unions.

The prevalence of consensual unions is considerable, especially among the young. Among women aged 15-19 who were already in a union, the proportions in a consensual union exceed 50 per cent in almost half of the countries and are as high as 70 or 80 per cent in certain countries of Central America and the Caribbean. These unions appear to be a socially established way to engage in a conjugal life; and to a varying extent, although not everywhere, women in consensual and visiting unions have their union legalized.

The socio-economic determinants of marriage timing in Latin America are similar to those of Africa and Asia: positive relationship with education; urban residence; and pre-marital work in a modern occupation. However, preference for a type of union appears to interact with factors of a more cultural nature, such as ethnic group.

Because changes in marriage patterns take place within the process of family formation, a major difficulty in assessing the future direction of marriage patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean is the slight knowledge of the dynamics of family formation in these regions. The origin of social acceptance of consensual and visiting unions and the undetermined conditions which have maintained such norms from the colonial era to the present have not been often addressed (e.g., Hareven, 1978; Roberts and Sinclair, 1978), which makes interpretation of the available marriage data a complex undertaking (Smith, 1978; Cancian, Goodman and Smith, 1978). Another aspect that brings uncertainty to the future marriage patterns is the effect of male labour force out-migration, which has in the past affected the sex ratio of the marriageable population in certain Caribbean countries (Nag, 1971; Guengant, 1985). The fertility implications of the various union types in Latin America and the Caribbean should also be borne in mind. 18/

Notes

1/ When census data for two points in time are available only for legal unions, only legal unions are compared (notably in some Caribbean countries). When more detailed survey data of the various marriage forms are available, all types are examined for at least one point in time.

2/ Unreported and unknown marital status is often a source of bias. Another source of error is the misreporting of type of marital status. This occurs when women in a consensual or visiting union are classified as single and when women from a dissolved, non-legalized marital union (separated or widowed) are reported as never married rather than as separated or widowed ("divorce" pertains to legal marriages). In recent censuses and surveys, however, special classifications were devised for non-legalized unions and dissolved non-legalized unions, where such categories as "no longer with partner" and "never had a husband or partner" have been used. Likewise, non-legalized religious marriages are sometimes explicitly included in the category "married". When men and women who have ever been in a marital union (legalized or not) are reclassified as never married, they increase erroneously the proportions never married; in fact, it is not uncommon to observe that in the last two or three five-year age groups of the reproductive span, the proportions never married increase.

3/ As a result of underreporting of consensual unions and of reporting them as never married, age at first marriage tends to be overestimated and marriage prevalence underestimated. Vital statistics data are not sufficiently reliable to be used for adjusting the marriage data, mainly because information on consensual or visiting unions, which, by definition, are marital forms not reported in any registrar, remain outside the realm of vital statistics adjustments. None of the data used have thus been corrected for misreporting or underreporting.

4/ Guyana, a multi-ethnic country which has all three types of marital unions (legal, consensual, visiting) is examined in more detail in section B along with the anglophone and francophone Caribbean countries, which also have the three types of marital unions.

5/ Surveys undertaken in Guadeloupe (1975-1976) and Martinique (1976), which took all unions into account (legal, consensual and visiting), report that over 90 per cent of ever-married women aged 15-19 were not in a legalized union (Charbit and Léridon, 1980). Likewise, the 1977 Haitian Fertility Survey, which included all three types of unions, reports that at least 20 per cent of all women in age group 15-19 stated that they were in a marital union (Haiti, 1981). The Jamaican Fertility Survey (1975/76) reports that almost 80 per cent of the women aged 15-19 currently in a union, were in a non-legalized union (Jamaica, 1979). Even when all types of marital unions are considered, variations in classification hamper proper comparison. The surveys of Guyana and Jamaica, for instance, excluded single women who were full-time students in primary or secondary schools; the surveys of Panama and Peru also used modified procedures (McDonald, Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1981). In certain Caribbean censuses, single women were counted as being in a visiting union only if they were unmarried and had had a child in the 12 months preceding the census.

6/ The 1970 census provides detailed data on common-law and visiting unions, but only for women who were not attending school. On that population basis, the proportion of women ever married at ages 15-19 in Guyana was 26.2 per cent (Caribbean Community, 1975). The 1980/81 census of Guyana provides similar data for all women, and the estimated proportion of adolescent women in a marital union was 33.4 per cent (Caribbean Community, 1985). Although these various estimates are not directly comparable (and hence are not shown in table 16), they provide an order of magnitude of the importance of early union in this country and of the difficult data problems encountered in assessing correct levels.

7/ The expression "singulate mean age at marriage" is used to maintain uniformity of concepts even though the term "marriage" as used here covers all types of marital unions.

8/ It should be noted that SMAMs for the Dominican Republic and El Salvador pertain to the 1970s and may have further increased in the 1980s.

9/ Age differences in SMAM in countries of the Caribbean and in Guyana need to be viewed cautiously because of the incompleteness of recording of all types of marital unions.

10/ The most common signs of the underestimation of marriage prevalence are very low proportions married at ages 45-49 and 50-54, often fewer than 90 per cent (for reasons discussed in footnote 2), as well as increases in proportions never married in successive five-year age groups. In Brazil, an assessment of marital-status reporting errors was undertaken by estimating the proportion of women declared never married who had children and might have been in a previous union. In 1970, 24.5 per cent of the women in age group 50-54, who were reported as never married had an average of 4.1 children as compared with 6.6 for the group reported as married (do Valle Silva, 1979), suggesting that this large proportion of "never-married" mothers had been previously in a marital union. Another source of difficulty is the change in definition of marriage over time. In various countries, consensual unions were or are still included in the never married (da Trinidade Henriques, 1982). Comparisons between survey results and census enumerations--even when consensual unions are counted separately in both data collections--have revealed substantial and varying levels of overestimation of those never married in the census data (Flórez and Goldman, 1980; Guzmán, 1980; Ordorica and Potter, 1981; Vielma, 1982). This, of course, also affects SMAM estimates because their calculation is based on proportions never married.

11/ Percentages at age 50 are estimated as the arithmetical mean of percentages for age groups 45-49 and 50-54 years.

12/ Corroboration on these points is only partially available, notably as concerns the increase in legal unions (Juarez, 1989; Rosero-Bixby, 1990).

13/ Problems related to the underreporting and classification of marital status, described earlier, affect the study of consensual unions even more. For instance, large differences in widowhood between countries of similar mortality may indicate an additional source of bias in reporting of consensual unions (Arretx, 1971), either because previously married widows who later entered in consensual unions are still reported as widows instead of being in a union or because the surviving spouse who was in a consensual union is classified as "widowed" rather than "no longer in union". Differentials in errors according to sex should also be taken into consideration (Mortara, 1963).

14/ A recent study in Jamaica suggests that the birth of a child reduces the probability that women in a visiting union will switch to a more stable union (Wright, 1989).

15/ Data from the World Fertility Survey illustrate these high occupation rates. More than 50 per cent of the ever-married women at ages 15-49 surveyed in the countries covered by the World Fertility Survey are reported to have engaged in an occupation before marriage, with a minimum of 34.9 per cent in the Dominican Republic and a maximum of 69.8 in Peru. Still higher proportions--58.8 per cent in the Dominican Republic to over 80.0 in Haiti, Jamaica and Peru--are reported to have ever worked at the time of the surveys (United Nations, 1985b). Although the labour force data utilized here have not been evaluated, it should be borne in mind that as in other world regions, the quality of data on the female labour force in Latin America remains of variable reliability (Recchini de Lattes and Wainerman, 1982).

16/ The data shown in table 27 pertain only to ever-married women aged 23 or over at the time of the survey. The age restriction is designed to prevent biases resulting from too high proportions of young married women in the sample. The mean ages shown in the table have been controlled for education, using multiple classification analysis (United Nations, 1987a).

17/ In the World Fertility Survey of Guyana and Jamaica, girls still in school were not interviewed. For Guyana and for Trinidad and Tobago, further analysis is needed because the East Indian population, which has low marriage-timing norms, is mostly rural (Guyana, n.d.; Trinidad and Tobago, 1981).

18/ One study observed that exposure of married women to risk of conception was highest because less time was lost between different partnerships despite a higher mean age at first marriage (Lightbourne and Singh, 1982). This accounted for situations when legal unions were characterized by higher fertility than other unions. On the other hand, higher fertility observed in consensual than in legal unions was "explained" by the greater number of partners in the former category. One hypothesis is that in consensual union, the male partner leaves when the woman becomes pregnant; another is that when a new partner is accepted, a new conception occurs. Lastly, it may simply be that family size norms are higher among women who favour consensual unions. With shifts by women from one type of union to another, it is difficult to ascertain in what type of union a woman was at the time of a conception (United Nations, 1984b). Marriage in Latin America and the Caribbean should be studied in the context of the family system (De Vos, 1987).

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IV. ASIA

A. Levels and trends in marriage patterns

In Asia, couples celebrate their marriage through a formal event (civil or religious), which is recognized by law after registration or sometimes even without civil registration. Even when not registered, marriages, including common-law unions, are recorded as marriages when so reported in a census or a survey. In general, non-legalized marital unions are recorded explicitly as marriages in a number of countries. 1/ Marital status is thus relatively well defined in most Asian countries and data are usually well recorded (Blayo, 1978). 2/ There are, however, some aspects of marriage to be noted. Polygyny, for instance, although much less common than in Africa, is still practised in a number of Asian countries. Currently, polygyny is most likely to be reported in some countries of Western Asia (Prothro and Diab, 1974; Chamie, 1986).

Another feature of Asian marriages is the custom of child (pre-puberty) marriages. Among the Hindus, for instance, such practice is associated with a double marriage ceremony: an initial formal ceremony is followed some months or years later by a "return" ceremony, after which cohabitation with the husband is permitted (D'Souza, 1982; Bloom and Reddy, 1986). In such cases, there is a formal and an effective marriage date, and age at first marriage pertains generally to the first ceremony even though only the second leads to the formation of the family. 3/

The widespread practice of arranged marriage for girls is another important feature of marriages in Asia, although a changing one. Moreover, traditionally an "arranged" marriage was as much the selection of a daughter-in-law for the parents as a wife for the son (Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell, 1983). Currently, the changing nature of matchmaking to accommodate the preferences of the young may be more important than the actual survival of this custom.

1. Timing of marriage

Traditionally, marriage norms in Asia very strongly favoured early marriages for girls, and this custom has remained common in several countries. In the case of boys, although in the past very early marriage norms also existed (Goode, 1963), few societies currently adhere to this custom. As in the previous regions, the timing of marriage is examined in terms both of PEM at ages 15-19 and of SMAM. The early-marriage pattern for girls is first examined in table 30 for the region as a whole. The early timing emerges clearly, although a number of countries had no data for the period prior to 1970. In the 1950s and 1960s, of 21 Asian countries for which data were reported, only one third (eight countries) had levels of female adolescent marriage under 20 per cent. On the other hand, of the 27 countries for which more recent data were available (1970s and 1980s), about two thirds (16 countries) had fewer than 20 per cent of ever-married women in age group 15-19. However, adolescent marriages in excess of 50 per cent still existed in 5 of these 27 countries.

Table 30. Distribution of countries according to percentage of women ever married aged 15-19, Asia, 1950-1985

Percentage ever married aged 15-19	Prior to 1970	Country	Since 1970	Country
Fewer than 10				
	1960	Cyprus	1987	Brunei Darussalam
	1961	Hong Kong	1982	China
	1955	Japan	1976	Cyprus
			1986	Hong Kong
			1983	Israel
			1985	Japan
			1985	Republic of Korea
			1980	Singapore
10-19				
	1962	Cambodia a/	1981	Sri Lanka
	1961	Israel	1985	Indonesia
	1960	Philippines	1981	Jordan
	1955	Republic of Korea	1985	Kuwait
	1960	Thailand	1980	Malaysia
			1983	Myanmar b/
			1980	Philippines
			1980	Thailand
20-39				
	1960	Brunei Darussalam	1976	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)
	1957	Iraq	1977	Iraq
	1961	Jordan	1981	Pakistan
	1957	Malaysia	1981	Syrian Arab Republic
	1957	Singapore	1980	Turkey
	1953	Sri Lanka		
40-49				
	1966	Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	1981	India
	1965	Kuwait		
	1960	Syrian Arab Republic		
	1955	Turkey		
50 or over				
	1961	India	1979	Afghanistan
	1961	Nepal	1981	Bangladesh
	1951	Pakistan	1981	Nepal
			1975	United Arab Emirates
			1981	Yemen c/

Source: Annex table A.3.

a/ Formerly called Democratic Kampuchea.
b/ Formerly called Burma.
c/ Based on data for the former Yemen Arab Republic.

When nuptiality in age group 15-19 is examined for each sex according to subregion (table 31 and annex table A.3), data show that percentages for male adolescent marriage in Eastern Asia have been low since mid-century. Likewise, in South-eastern Asia, relatively small proportions of men are in a union before age 20.

The Asian countries with very high levels of male adolescent marriage are found in Southern Asia. In India (1961) and Pakistan (1961), prevalence at ages 15-19 was more than 20 per cent; and in Nepal, it reached a peak of 36.7 per in 1961. These levels of prevalence in adolescent marriage are some of the highest reached among men. The prevalence level declined by 1981, but nevertheless remained high in India (12.5 per cent) and Nepal (25.9 per cent). In Nepal, in particular, child marriages among boys apparently continue to be widely performed; and according to the 1981 census, the proportion of married boys at even younger ages (10-14 years) was about 15 per cent (United Nations, 1988b). 4/ Western Asia shows divergent prevalence levels in the 1950s and 1960s, with high levels observed in Iraq in 1957 (10.4 per cent), in the Syrian Arab Republic in 1960 (16.4) and in Turkey in 1955 (18.0). These high levels have since declined substantially, notably in the Syrian Arab Republic, where the rate was 3.8 per cent in 1981.

Adolescent nuptiality varies more widely among women than among men; and in the early part of the period examined (1950s-1960s), the proportions of women married before age 20 reached both exceptionally high levels in some regions and exceptionally low levels in others (table 31 and annex table A.3). As was the case for males, the highest prevalence of female adolescent marriages is found in Southern Asia. At the beginning of the period under study, more than 70 per cent of the girls in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan (and as many as 75.5 per cent in Bangladesh in 1974) were married before age 20 (annex table A.3). In Bangladesh and Nepal, the 1981 censuses still reported as many as 68.8 and 50.8 per cent, respectively, of women aged 15-19 as ever married. Such high levels result from somewhat different patterns of early marriage: in Nepal, it arises from the considerable number of child marriages and the 1981 census shows that 14.3 per cent of girls aged 10-14 were married, whereas in Bangladesh, only 7 per cent of those in age group 12-14 had entered matrimony. In India, 2.6 million, or 6.5 per cent, of girls in age group 10-14 were married at the time of the 1981 census (United Nations, 1988b). 5/

The magnitude of the decline in marriage prevalence among adolescent females in the countries of Southern Asia, shown in table 31 and figure 15, is impressive: almost 1 percentage point per annum in Bangladesh and between 1.1 and 1.4 in the other countries, except in Sri Lanka, where the absolute decline is small only because the percentage ever married before age 20 was already comparatively low as early as 1953. Despite these reductions in the prevalence of early marriage in countries of Southern Asia, adolescent nuptiality remains high among females, usually above 30 per cent.

In the other subregions, lower levels are noted. Eastern Asia, with its very low adolescent marriage levels, represents by Asian standards the late-marriage norm among women. Except for the Republic of Korea, which experienced 14.8 per cent adolescent marriages in 1955, marriages among those aged 15-19 did not exceed 7.0 per cent in the past, and current levels fluctuate at about 1-2 per cent. The rate in the Republic of Korea was even

Table 31. Percentage ever married aged 15-19, by sex, Asia, 1950-1985

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married aged 15-19				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
			Men		
Eastern Asia					
Japan	0.1	1955	0.6	1985	0.02
Hong Kong	1.4	1961	0.6	1986	-0.03
Republic of Korea	5.6	1955	0.1	1985	-0.18
South-eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	2.6	1960	4.6	1987	0.07
Indonesia	5.1 a/	1971	1.8	1985	-0.24
Malaysia	4.8	1957	1.3	1980	-0.15
Myanmar b/	6.9 a/	1973	6.7	1983	-0.02
Philippines	3.0	1960	3.4	1980	0.02
Singapore	1.6	1957	0.4	1980	-0.05
Thailand	7.1	1960	7.1	1980	0.00
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	7.7 a/	1974	6.7	1981	-0.14
India	23.8	1961	12.5	1981	-0.57
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	5.7	1966	6.5	1976	0.08
Nepal	36.7	1961	25.9	1981	-0.54
Pakistan	23.8	1951	7.5	1981	-0.54
Sri Lanka	1.2	1953	0.9	1981	-0.01
Western Asia					
Cyprus	1.9	1960	0.5	1976	-0.09
Iraq	10.4	1957	6.0	1977	-0.22
Israel	2.2	1961	1.1	1983	-0.05
Jordan	2.6	1961	0.8	1981	-0.09
Kuwait	3.1	1965	2.6	1985	-0.03
Syrian Arab Republic	16.4	1960	3.8	1981	-0.60
Turkey	18.0	1955	7.9	1980	-0.40

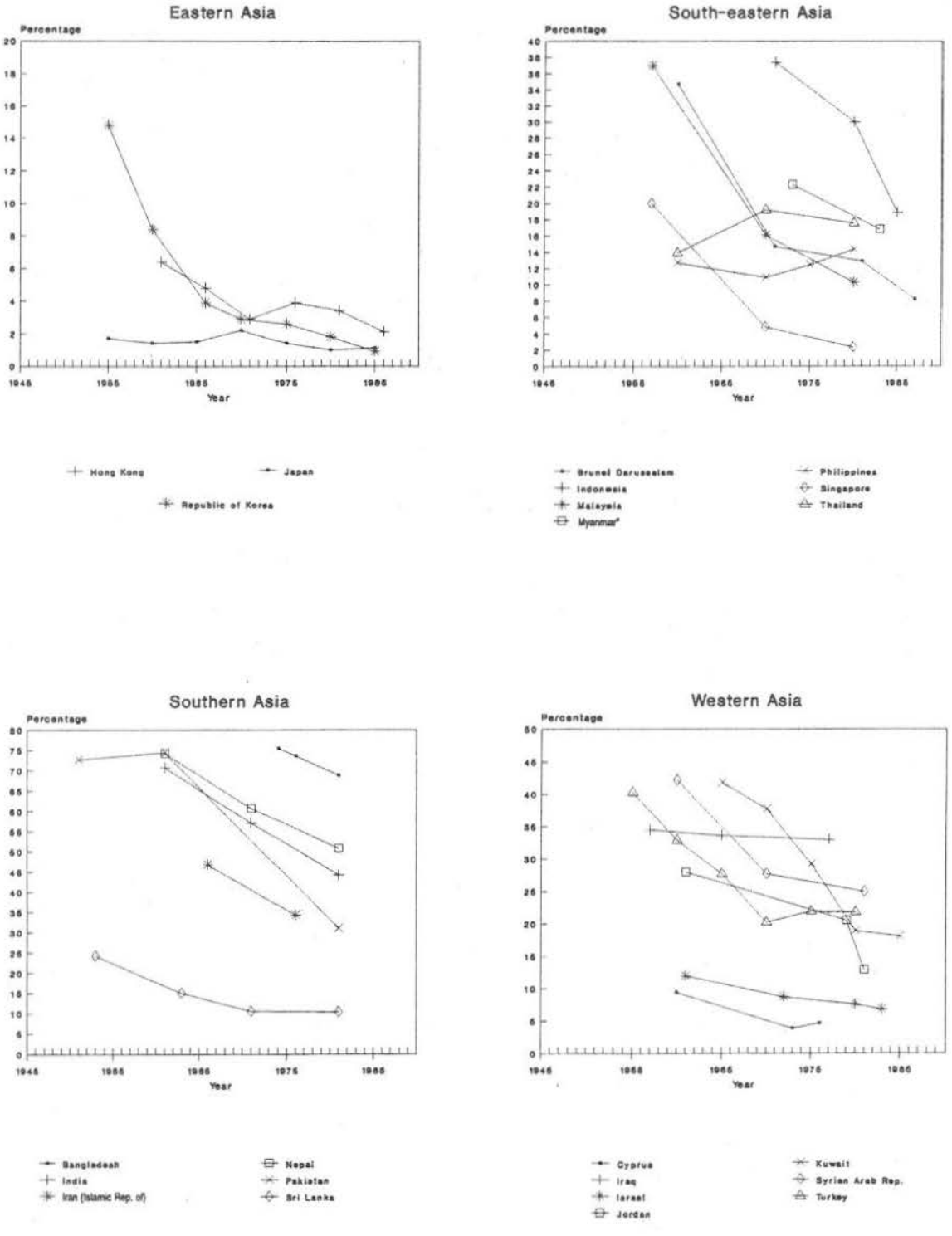
Table 31 (continued)

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married aged 15-19				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
			Women		
Eastern Asia					
Japan	1.7	1955	1.1	1985	-0.02
Hong Kong	6.4	1961	2.1	1986	-0.17
Republic of Korea	14.8	1955	0.9	1985	-0.46
South-eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	34.7	1960	8.2	1987	-0.98
Indonesia	37.4 a/	1971	18.8	1985	-1.33
Malaysia	37.0	1957	10.3	1980	-1.16
Myanmar b/	22.3 a/	1973	16.8	1983	-0.55
Philippines	12.7	1960	14.3	1980	0.08
Singapore	20.0	1957	2.3	1980	-0.77
Thailand	13.9	1960	17.5	1980	0.18
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	75.5 a/	1974	68.8	1981	-0.96
India	70.8	1961	44.2	1981	-1.33
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	46.8	1966	34.3	1976	-1.25
Nepal	74.3	1961	50.8	1981	-1.18
Pakistan	72.7	1951	31.1	1981	-1.39
Sri Lanka	24.3	1953	10.4	1981	-0.50
Western Asia					
Cyprus	9.4	1960	4.6	1976	-0.30
Iraq	34.5	1957	33.0	1977	-0.08
Israel	12.0	1961	6.8	1983	-0.24
Jordan	28.0	1961	12.9	1981	-0.76
Kuwait	41.8	1965	18.1	1985	-1.19
Syrian Arab Republic	42.2	1960	24.9	1981	-0.82
Turkey	40.3	1955	21.8	1980	-0.74

Source: Annex table A. 3.

a/ Earliest data available.
b/ Formerly called Burma.

Figure 15. Trends in percentage ever married for women aged 15–19, Asia, 1945–1987



Source: Annex table A.3.

*Formerly called Burma.

fewer than 1 per cent in 1985; the decline was considerable (annex table A.3 and figure 15). In Japan, where the initial level of adolescent marriage was very low, 1.7 per cent in 1955, the amount of decline is negligible (table 31).

South-eastern Asia and Western Asia occupy an intermediate position in female adolescent marriage levels. In South-eastern Asia in the 1980s, prevalence ranged between 2.3 in Singapore and 18.8 in Indonesia. These levels were much higher in the 1950s and 1960s, except in the Philippines and Thailand, where it is not clear whether the small increments reported are genuine or not (table 31 and figure 15).

In Western Asia, recently reported levels vary from 4.6 per cent in Cyprus to over 50 per cent in the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. 6/ Although available data indicate a decline in prevalence over the period reviewed in all countries of this subregion, prevalence remains high in virtually all the Muslim countries, notably excepting Jordan.

In summary, although some high levels of adolescent nuptiality among girls still exist, there has been a considerable and general shift away from very early marriage, especially where previous levels were very high.

When marriage timing is examined in terms of singulate mean age of marriage, the data confirm the patterns reflected by PEM at ages 15-19 years. Thus, by Asian standards, both men and women marry late in Eastern Asia and very early in Southern Asia, with South-eastern Asia and Western Asia in an intermediate position. These patterns are reflected in table 32 both for the early period (prior to 1970) and for more recent years.

As concerns male patterns, SMAMs were already relatively high in Eastern Asia during the 1950s and had further increased by the 1980s. The level of 25.2 years for China in 1982 is the lowest for the subregion, compared with more than 29 years in Japan and Hong Kong in the mid-1980s (annex table A.3). The early-marriage pattern for males observed in Southern Asia is represented prior to 1970 by SMAMs as low as 20.1 years in Nepal (1961) and 20.6 and 22 years in India and Pakistan, respectively, in 1951. Sri Lanka, an exception in this subregion, belongs to the late pattern, with a level of 27 years in 1947 (table 32). The range of SMAM in this subregion shifted to 21-25 years in the 1980s, with Sri Lanka again emerging as an exception.

In South-eastern and Western Asia, SMAMs for men are intermediate, ranging approximately from 23 to 26 years prior to 1970 and from 24 to 28 since then. Singapore, with SMAMs of 26.0 in 1957 and 28.4 in 1980, was outstanding at the upper end of the distribution during the entire period, and the pace of increase in age at marriage, namely, 0.1 of a year per annum, is among the largest in Asia (table 32).

Changes in male marriage behaviour have led to small but sustained marriage delays in most countries, as can be seen from table 32 and figure 16. The average increase in SMAM per annum tends, with some exceptions, to remain below one-tenth of a year. The more pronounced increments are not limited to any specific subregion; annual increments of 0.1 year or more are reported in

Table 32. Singulate mean age at marriage, by sex, Asia, 1946-1985
(Years)

Subregion and country	Singulate mean age at marriage: Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Singulate mean age at marriage: Since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (years)
		Men			
Eastern Asia					
Japan	27.0	1955	29.5	1985	0.08
Hong Kong	28.7	1961	29.2	1986	0.02
Republic of Korea	24.6	1955	27.8	1985	0.11
South-eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	25.8	1960	26.1	1987	0.01
Indonesia	23.8 a/	1971	24.8	1985	0.07
Malaysia	24.2	1947	26.6	1980	0.07
Myanmar b/	24.1 a/	1973	24.6	1983	0.05
Philippines	25.0	1948	25.3	1980	0.01
Singapore	26.0	1957	28.4	1980	0.10
Thailand	24.3	1947	24.7	1980	0.01
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	24.0 a/	1974	23.9	1981	-0.01
India	20.6	1951	23.4	1981	0.09
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	24.9	1966	24.2	1976	-0.07
Nepal	20.1	1961	21.5	1981	0.07
Pakistan	22.3	1951	24.9	1981	0.09
Sri Lanka	27.0	1946	27.9	1981	0.03
Western Asia					
Cyprus	24.6	1960	26.3	1976	0.11
Iraq	26.4	1957	25.2	1977	-0.06
Israel	25.7	1961	26.1	1983	0.02
Jordan	24.8	1961	26.8	1981	0.10
Kuwait	25.1	1965	25.2	1985	0.01
Syrian Arab Republic	25.2	1960	25.7	1981	0.02
Turkey	22.5	1955	23.9	1980	0.06

Table 32 (continued)

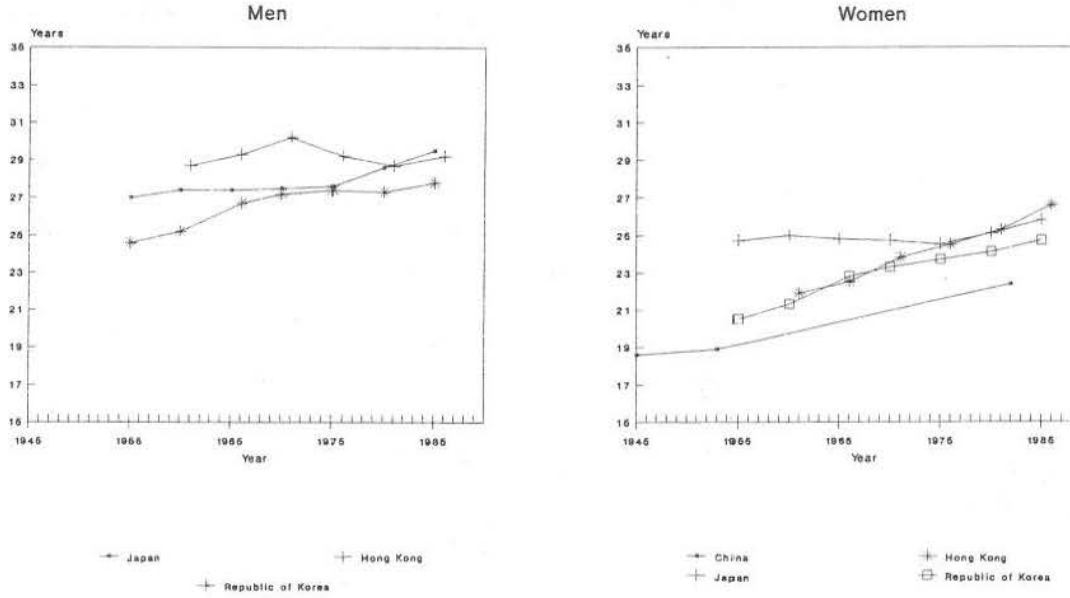
Subregion and country	Singulate mean age at marriage: Prior to 1970	Year of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	Average change per annum (years)
		Women			
Eastern Asia					
China	18.6	1945	22.4	1982	0.10
Japan	24.7	1955	25.8	1985	0.04
Hong Kong	21.9	1961	26.6	1986	0.19
Republic of Korea	20.5	1955	24.7	1985	0.14
South-eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	19.5	1960	25.0	1987	0.20
Indonesia	19.3 a/	1971	21.1	1985	0.13
Malaysia	18.4	1947	23.5	1980	0.15
Myanmar b/	21.3 a/	1973	22.4	1983	0.11
Philippines	22.1	1948	22.4	1980	0.01
Singapore	20.3	1957	26.2	1980	0.26
Thailand	21.1	1947	22.7	1980	0.05
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	16.4 a/	1974	16.7	1981	0.04
India	15.3	1951	18.7	1981	0.11
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	18.5	1966	19.7	1976	0.12
Nepal	16.6	1961	17.9	1981	0.07
Pakistan	16.9	1951	19.8	1981	0.10
Sri Lanka	20.7	1946	24.4	1981	0.11
Western Asia					
Cyprus	22.7	1960	24.2	1976	0.09
Iraq	20.6	1957	20.8	1977	0.01
Israel	21.4	1961	23.5	1983	0.10
Jordan	20.4	1961	22.8	1981	0.12
Kuwait	18.9	1965	22.4	1985	0.18
Syrian Arab Republic	19.6	1960	21.5	1981	0.09
Turkey	18.9	1955	20.7	1980	0.07

Source: Annex table A. 3.

a/ Earliest data available.
b/ Formerly called Burma.

Figure 16. Trends in singulate mean age at marriage, Asia, 1945–1987

Eastern Asia



South-eastern Asia

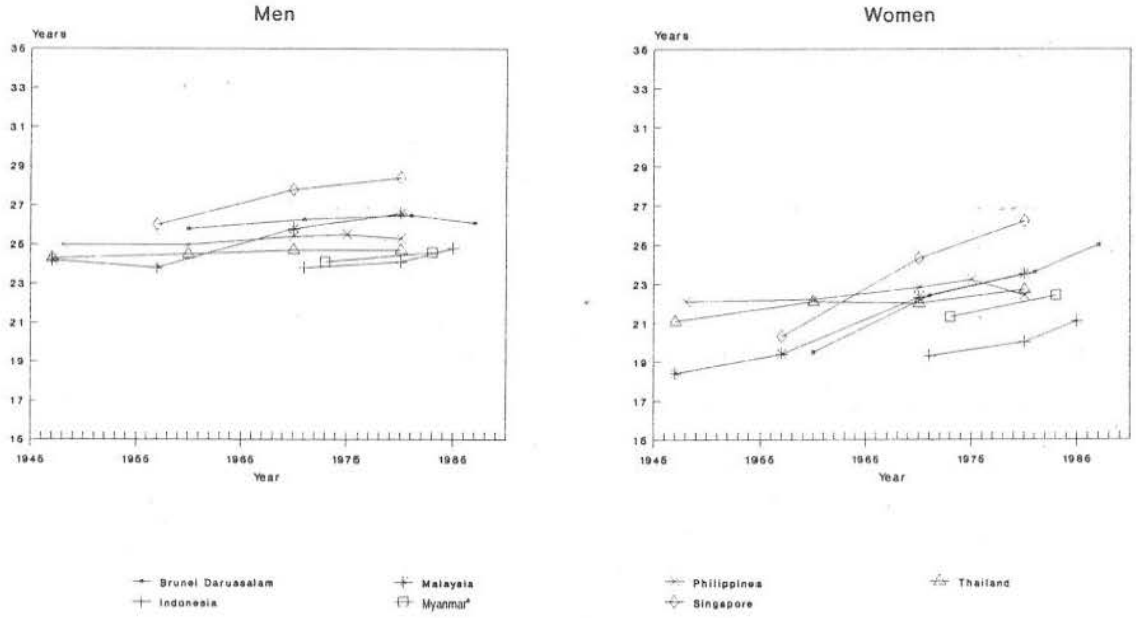
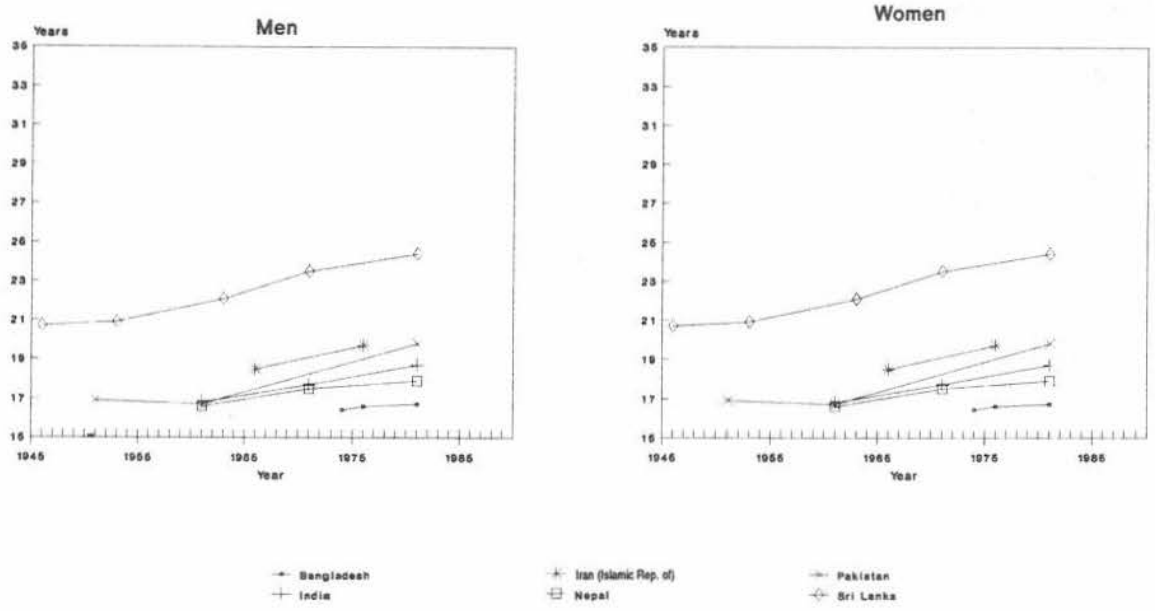
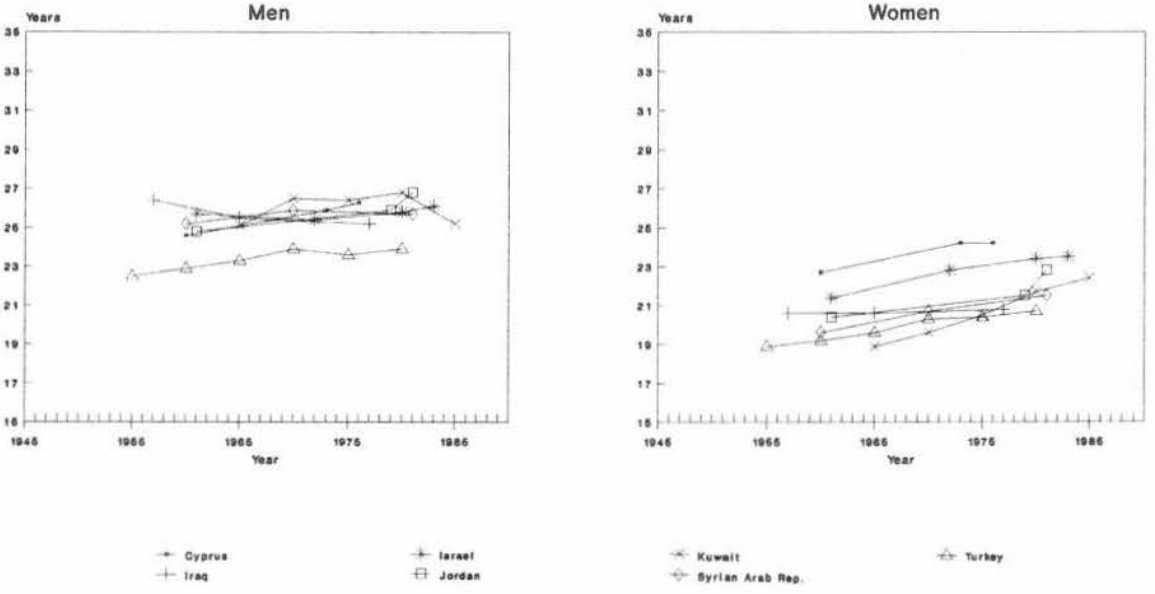


Figure 16. *(continued)*

Southern Asia



Western Asia



Source: Annex table A.3.

[a]Formerly called Burma.

Cyprus, Jordan and the Republic of Korea, in addition to Singapore (table 32). Japan, with a level of 29.5 years in 1985, has experienced the highest current average among men. In three countries--Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq--age at first marriage among men shows a decline which may represent erratic reporting, although no evidence on this point is available.

Female SMAMs also reflect the age patterns identified on the basis of adolescent nuptiality, as might be expected. Rising levels have paralleled male trends but at a somewhat steeper pace. During the 1950s and 1960s, SMAMs already exceeded 20 years in many countries, although there were a number of exceptions. Among the latter group, almost all the countries of Southern Asia (not including Sri Lanka) had very early female marriages in the 1950s-1960s; SMAMs were 16.6 years in Nepal (1961), 15.3 in India (1951) and 16.9 in Pakistan (1951), corresponding to the high proportions of adolescent marriages (70 per cent or more ever married before age 20) mentioned above (see table 32 and annex table A.3). During the same early period, SMAMs of under 20 years were found in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in South-eastern Asia, and in Kuwait, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey in Western Asia. In Eastern Asia, Japan had the highest early SMAM for women, 24.7 years in 1955, and China the lowest, 18.6 in 1945.

More recent data (1970s-1980s) show that among women, SMAMs are currently over 20 years in all Asian countries except those in Southern Asia. The lowest recent SMAMs are found in countries of this subregion, notably 17.8 years in Afghanistan (1979) (annex table A.3), 16.7 in Bangladesh (1981) and 17.9 in Nepal (1981). Somewhat higher, but still relatively low SMAMs are observed in Pakistan, 19.8 years (1981); and in India, 18.7 years (1981). Sri Lanka, with 24.4 years in 1981, again is the exception. The late marriage in this country is attributed to a "marriage squeeze" (an imbalance between marriageable men and women) unfavourable to women, as well as to unemployment among men (Fernando, 1975; Caldwell and others, 1989).

In studying the timing of marriage in India and other countries of Southern Asia, the impact of double marriage ceremonies, referred to earlier, should be realized. For girls married before age 15, available tabulations for 1957 show an average interval of 27 months in rural areas and 19 months in urban areas between the two ceremonies (D'Souza, 1982). A study of girls in Rajasthan, India, in 1981 reported an average age at first marriage of 13.4 years and an average age at consummation of 15.4 years (Sinha, 1985). After age 15, the double ceremony has less significance. A study conducted in 1972 gives a breakdown by religion and place of residence; it shows the small effect of these two factors on the interval between formal and effective marriage (see table 33).

In Bangladesh, age at formal marriage was estimated at 12.7 years and age at cohabitation at 13.1 years (Bangladesh, 1978). In Nepal, the 1965-1966 health survey reported that 65 per cent of the girls aged 14 were already formally married (Blayo, 1978).

Table 33. Median age of Indian women at formal marriage and at consummation, by type of residence and religion, India, 1972
(Years)

Religion	Urban		Rural	
	Formal marriage	Consummation	Formal marriage	Consummation
Hindu	16.9	17.2	16.2	16.9
Muslim	16.8	17.0	16.4	16.8
Christian	19.4	19.4	18.7	18.8

Source: David E. Bloom and P. H. Reddy, "Age patterns of women at marriage, cohabitation and first birth in India", Demography (Alexandria, Virginia), vol. 23, No. 4 (November 1986), table 1.

High SMAMs are reported in Eastern and South-eastern Asia, notably in Japan (1985), where levels reached almost 26 years; and in Singapore (1980) and Hong Kong (1986), where they were over 26 years. In Japan, there seems to be an even greater potential for later marriage. A recent nation-wide opinion survey (1988) reported that 40 per cent of the women interviewed wanted to be married between ages 25 and 29 (Ozaki, 1989), which reflects the strong late marriage-norms for women prevailing today.

Female SMAMs have increased in all the countries examined (table 32 and figure 16). The increments have been substantial, with from about 0.1 to 0.2 year increase in SMAM per annum. The largest increments in mean age at first marriage (about 0.2 year per annum) were recorded in Singapore, with an absolute change in SMAM of about five or six years (from 20.6 to 26.2 years) between 1957 and 1980, in Brunei Darussalam (from 19.5 to 25) and in Hong Kong (from 21.9 to 26.6) from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s. On the other hand, the small increments recorded in Bangladesh and Nepal are attributable to very strong early-marriage norms for girls, as illustrated by the low SMAMs (under 18 years), which still characterize these two countries (table 32).

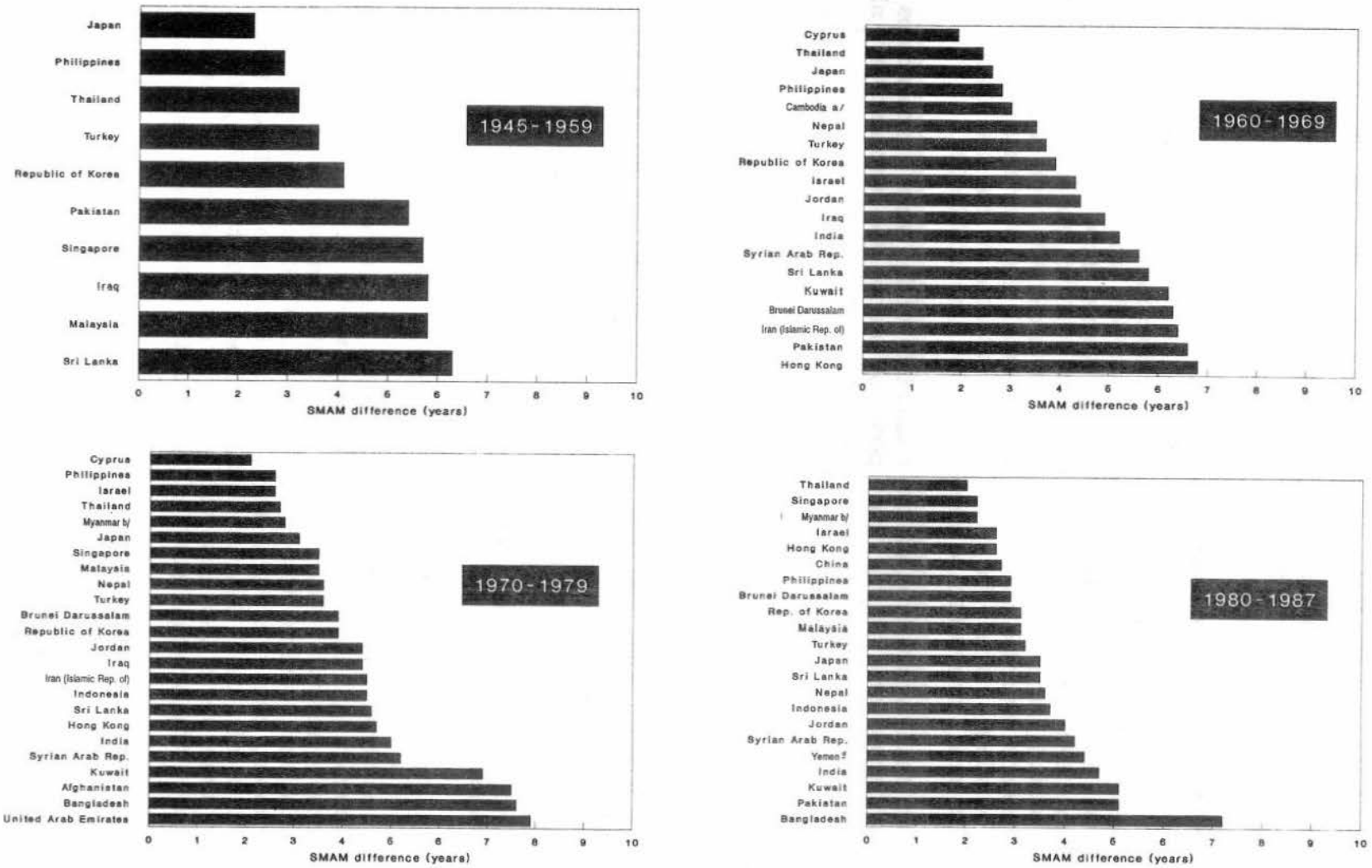
In Southern Asia, where most of the countries with large proportions of adolescent marriages are found, the pace of change was comparatively slow. Thus, increases on the order of 0.1 year per annum were seen in Nepal, Bangladesh, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, but in none of these countries did SMAMs reach the 20-year threshold. In Sri Lanka, however, the already high level rose by 3.7 years between 1946 and 1981. In Western Asia, annual increments exceeding 0.1 year were observed only in Israel, Jordan and Kuwait.

In summary, female SMAMs have moved upward in the various Asian subregions. In Eastern Asia, the SMAM range, which varied from 18.6 to 24.7 years at the beginning of the period under study, is currently between 22.4 and 26.6 years. South-eastern Asia, with a previous range of 18.4 to 22.1, currently has a range from 21.1 to 26.2 years. Similarly, Western Asia, with SMAMs originally ranging from 18.9 to 22.7, now has a range between 20.7 and 24.2 years. It is only in Southern Asia (except Sri Lanka) that there has been little change (table 32).

2. Difference between sexes in age at first marriage

The data on the difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage, presented in figure 17 and annex table A.3, do not reflect any specific regional pattern. Relatively large differences were found in a number of countries during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Prior to 1970, the largest differences, over six years, were in Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait and Sri Lanka. In the 1970s, differences exceeding even seven years were observed in countries for which no prior data were available: Afghanistan (1979); Bangladesh (1976); and the United Arab Emirates (1975).

Figure 17. Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage, Asia, 1945–1987



Source: Annex table A.3.

Note: SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

[a]Formerly called Democratic Kampuchea.
[b]Formerly called Burma.
[c]Based on data for former Yemen Arab Republic.

In most countries, SMAM differences declined substantially after the 1970s, sometimes to half or less of their initial magnitude. Cases in point are Hong Kong, where between 1961 and 1986, the difference declined from 6.8 to 2.6 years; Brunei Darussalam, where it is reported that the difference fell from 6.3 years in 1960 to 1.1 years in 1987, although this very small difference in SMAM is not corroborated. Similar reductions are observed in other countries, notably in Singapore, where the difference fell from 5.7 in 1957 to 2.2 years in 1980; Malaysia, from 5.8 in 1947 to 3.1 in 1980; and Sri Lanka, from 6.3 in 1946 to 3.5 in 1981 (see annex table A.3).

As can be seen in figure 17, the observations made in the 1960s and 1970s show many differences between sexes exceeding four or five years. By the 1980s, only a few countries had SMAM differences of more than four years. In Bangladesh, this difference still exceeded seven years in 1981 and has remained stable over the past 25 years (Chaudhury and Ahmed, n.d.). The unusually small difference of three years estimated in Kuwait in 1985 is due to an increase in female SMAM and a decline in male SMAM, which have not been corroborated.

There is no consistent pattern of SMAM differences according to whether female marriage is early or late. For instance, in Japan and Hong Kong, which were both countries of comparatively late marriage in the 1960s, the difference in SMAM between men and women was about 2.4-2.6 years in Japan but 6.8 years in Hong Kong. Likewise, the differences in SMAM are about five or six years in India and Pakistan, where SMAMs are under 17 years, and also in Iraq, where they are over 20 years.

3. Prevalence of marriage

In terms of proportions ever married, there is nearly universal marriage for both sexes in Asia. With few exceptions, marriage prevalence by age 50 exceeds 95 per cent among men and 96 per cent among women (table 34 and annex table A.3). Among women, prevalence levels as high as 98 and 99 per cent are common and are reached or exceeded even in such countries as Japan and the Republic of Korea, where mean age at first marriage is late. During the 1950s, exceptions to high prevalence among men were found in Iraq, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka, with levels of from 92.0 to 93.8 per cent ever married by age 50. Among women, exceptions in the early 1960s are found in Hong Kong and the Philippines, with 92.2 and 92.6 per cent, respectively, ever in a union (table 34).

The exceptions are difficult to assess. In Hong Kong (1961), only 92.2 per cent of the women were ever married by age 50, compared with 95.4 per cent of the men. Conversely, the 1986 census reports 98.0 per cent for women and only 92.8 per cent for men ever married. Migration may be a contributing factor to a marriage market imbalance that was unfavourable to women in the 1960s and to men in the 1980s. In Sri Lanka, with from 92.6 to 93.1 per cent male prevalence throughout the period under study, prevalence has remained very low by Asian standards, a situation which has been partially attributed to the influence of Buddhism (Smith, 1980) and to the high male unemployment observed at certain points in time (Fernando, 1975). However, Myanmar and

Table 34. Marriage prevalence, by sex, Asia, 1950-1987

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married at age 50				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Years of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
			Men		
Eastern Asia					
Japan	98.8	1955	96.1	1985	-0.09
Hong Kong	95.4	1961	92.8	1986	-0.10
Republic of Korea	99.7	1955	99.5	1985	-0.01
South-eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	95.3	1960	95.2	1987	-0.00
Indonesia	98.2 a/	1971	98.2	1985	0.00
Malaysia	93.0	1957	96.3	1980	0.14
Myanmar b/	96.6 a/	1973	96.5	1983	-0.01
Philippines	96.9	1960	95.7	1980	-0.06
Singapore	92.5	1957	94.1	1980	0.07
Thailand	97.8	1960	97.6	1980	-0.01
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	99.0 a/	1974	98.6	1981	-0.06
India	96.8	1961	97.7	1981	0.05
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	98.5	1966	98.8	1976	0.03
Nepal	98.5	1961	92.9	1981	-0.28
Pakistan	97.6	1951	95.0	1981	-0.09
Sri Lanka	92.6	1953	93.1	1981	0.02
Western Asia					
Cyprus	96.0	1960	97.7	1976	0.11
Iraq	93.8	1957	95.3	1977	0.08
Israel	96.7	1961	96.9	1983	0.01
Jordan	96.5	1961	99.2	1981	0.14
Kuwait	96.0	1965	97.7	1985	0.09
Syrian Arab Republic	95.6	1960	97.9	1981	0.11
Turkey	96.7	1955	98.0	1980	0.05

Table 34 (continued)

Subregion and country	Percentage ever married at age 50				Average change per annum (percentage points)
	Prior to 1970	Years of census or survey	Since 1970	Year of census or survey	
		Women			
Eastern Asia					
Japan	98.5	1955	95.6	1985	-0.10
Hong Kong	92.2	1961	98.0	1986	0.23
Republic of Korea	99.8	1955	99.7	1985	-0.00
South-eastern Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	94.4	1960	94.5	1987	0.00
Indonesia	99.0 a/	1971	98.8	1985	-0.01
Malaysia	98.5	1957	97.4	1980	-0.05
Myanmar b/	94.4 a/	1973	94.1	1983	-0.05
Philippines	92.6	1960	93.1	1980	0.03
Singapore	94.2	1957	96.5	1980	0.10
Thailand	97.6	1960	96.2	1980	-0.07
Southern Asia					
Bangladesh	99.7 a/	1974	99.1	1981	-0.09
India	99.5	1961	99.6	1981	0.01
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	99.2	1966	99.2	1976	0.00
Nepal	99.4	1961	96.8	1981	-0.13
Pakistan	99.0	1951	97.9	1981	-0.04
Sri Lanka	95.5	1953	95.6	1981	0.00
Western Asia					
Cyprus	95.3	1960	95.2	1976	-0.01
Iraq	97.1	1957	97.1	1977	0.00
Israel	97.3	1961	97.1	1983	-0.01
Jordan	97.2	1961	98.2	1981	0.05
Kuwait	98.2	1965	98.5	1985	0.02
Syrian Arab Republic	97.2	1960	97.1	1981	-0.00
Turkey	97.7	1955	98.6	1980	0.04

Source: Annex table A.3.

a/ Earliest data available.
b/ Formerly called Burma.

Thailand, which are also Buddhist countries, do not display such low marriage prevalence. The male prevalence figure of 92.9 per cent reported in Nepal (1981) is questionable, because this country is known to conform to universal marriage norms for both sexes.

The pace of change in marriage prevalence among both sexes has been limited, even when prevalence was previously high (see table 34 and figure 18). In Southern Asia, countries where female marriage prevalence levels exceeded 99 per cent have maintained that level. Elsewhere in Asia, generally small changes both upward and downward are observed in both male and female prevalence. As a whole, Asia remains a region where conformity to universal marriage norms has been maintained and prevalence of marriage for both sexes has remained very high in most countries.

B. Polygamy

Unlike sub-Saharan Africa, where polygamy is widespread and its prevalence very high, this marriage institution appears to be much less widely practised in Asia. Although found in a number of countries of Southern Asia, polygamous marriages prevail primarily in several Muslim countries of Western Asia. A rigorous assessment of polygamy in Asia is difficult to achieve because of the lack of relevant data in most countries.

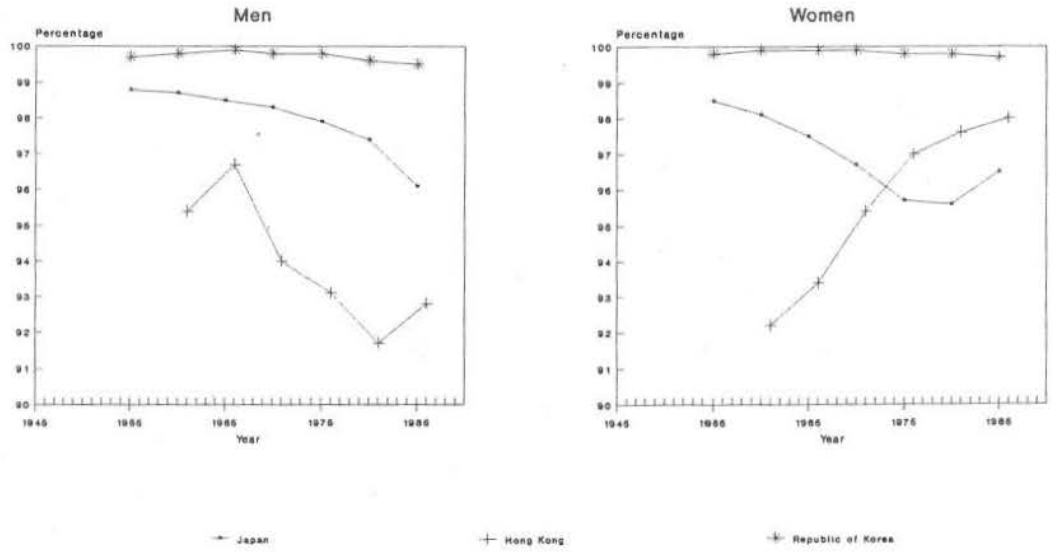
In India, although polygyny was permissible among Hindus until 1955 and is still allowed for Muslims, its prevalence is relatively low and levels vary among ethnic or religious groups. Data compiled on the basis of a non-random sample of Indian census returns suggest that polygyny has declined among the major religious groups in India. When data for the marriage cohort of 1931-1940 are compared with those for the cohort of 1951-1960, they show that the percentage of polygynous marriages among all marriages has fallen from 10.9 to 8.1 among Buddhists, from 6.7 (among the 1911-1920 cohort) to 5.1 among Hindus and from 7.3 to 4.3 among Muslims (India, 1974). Polyandry has also been reported in India, but is considered rare and is confined to some tribal populations (Majundar and Das Gupta, 1969).

In Malaysia, polygyny is not common among the Chinese but is reported to be widespread among Malay Muslim women (Lee, 1982). In Bangladesh, a study of Shibpur, a rural area, estimated the percentages of those ever married aged 50 or over who were in a polygamous union at 11.3 for men and 6.3 for women (Huzzayyin, 1981). In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the 1956 and 1966 censuses, respectively, showed that roughly 1.1 and 1.0 per cent of married men had two wives (Momeni, 1975).

For the populations of Western Asia, the available census data permit a better overview of polygyny. These data indicate the relatively modest incidence of this marriage institution among Arab Muslims. The earliest estimate available, pertaining to Iraq (1957), shows that 5.4 per cent of married Muslim men were in a polygamous union. During the 1970s, the highest polygamy level was observed in Kuwait (1975), with 11.7 per cent polygamous married Muslim men, and the lowest in the Syrian Arab Republic (1976), with

Figure 18. Trends in percentage ever married by age 50, Asia, 1945–1987

Eastern Asia



South-eastern Asia

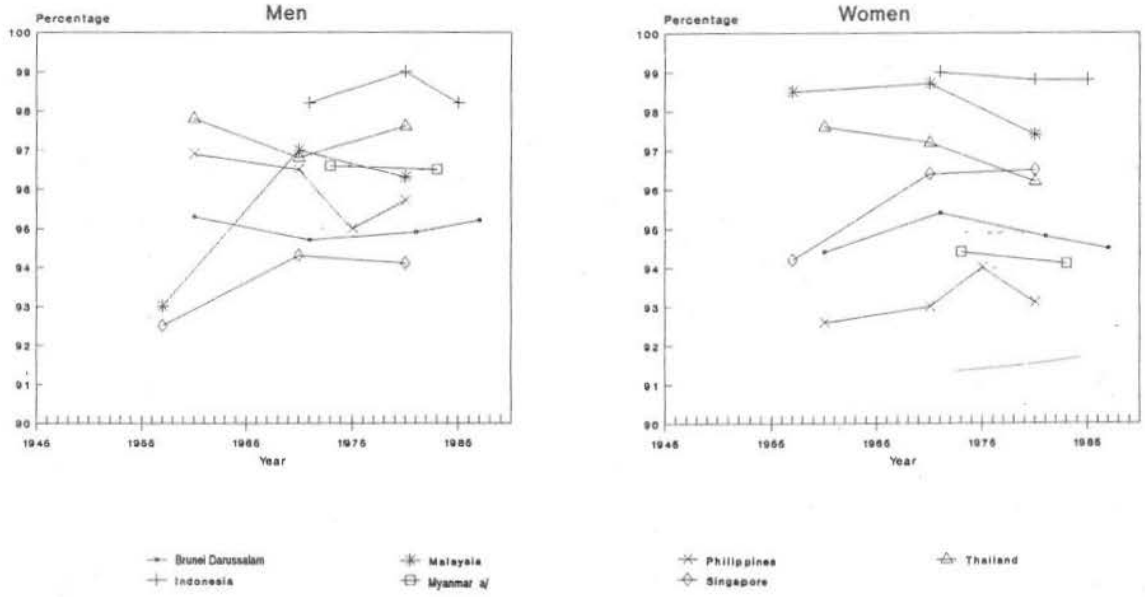
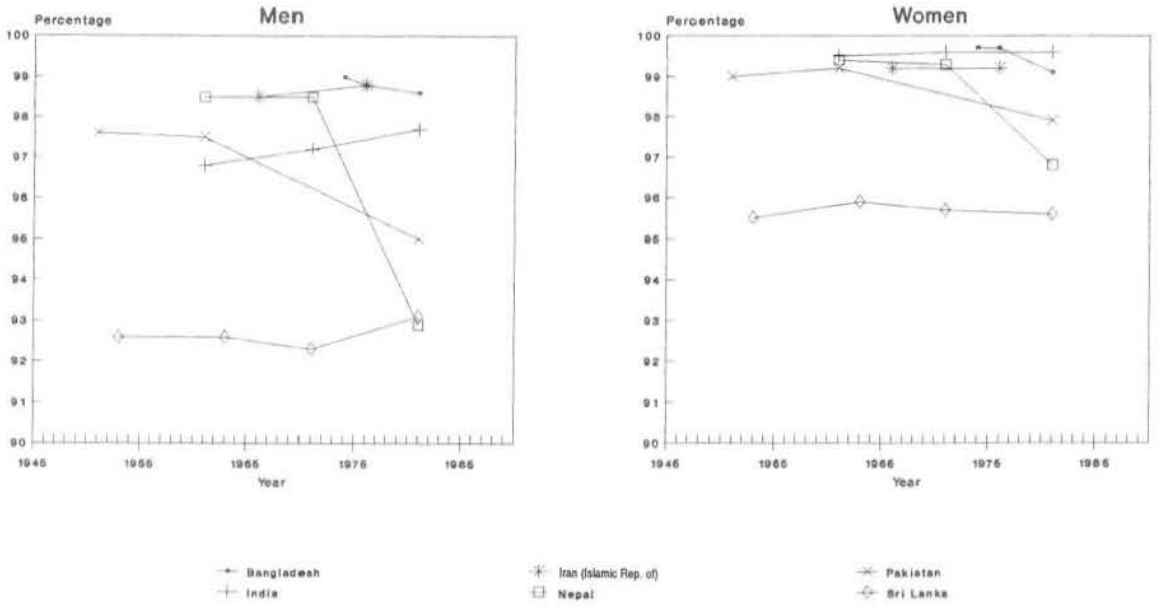
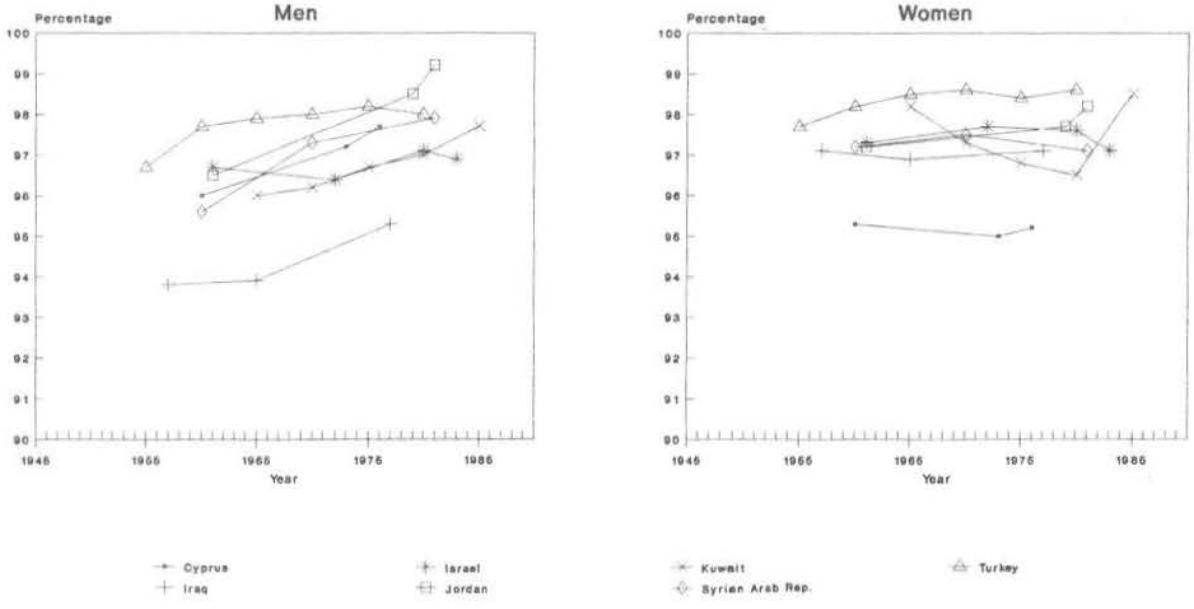


Figure 18 *(continued)*

Southern Asia



Western Asia



Source: Annex table A.3.

[a]Formerly called Burma.

just 1.9 per cent. During the same decade, various countries held an intermediate position: Lebanon (1971); Jordan (East Bank only) (1979), Yemen (1975); and the United Arab Emirates (1975), had corresponding polygamy levels of 3.7, 3.8, 4.5 and 6.0 per cent, respectively. A recent estimate for Bahrain (1981, nationals only) stands at 5.4 per cent (Chamie, 1986).

Polygyny in Western Asia is more similar to the Northern African experience (which is not surprising given the common culture and religion) than to that of sub-Saharan Africa, where the lowest incidence of polygyny is considerably higher than the highest levels observed in Western Asia (see chapter II, section B). Another difference is that in Western Asia, most polygynous men have only two wives, whereas in sub-Saharan Africa having three or more wives is relatively common (Chamie, 1986). A final trait is that when data for several years exist, polygamy in Asia almost always shows a downward trend, whereas in Africa a decline is difficult to ascertain and the overall level remains high.

Socio-cultural conditions of polygyny in Asia differ from the African ones. Polygamy in the Muslim tradition is based on strict conditions set in the Koran, for example: no more than four wives; economic support; equal treatment (Bianquis, 1986). When co-wives do not participate in the labour force, the advantages of polygyny lie in the status of husband, the need for making alliances or the desirability of acquiring land. On the other hand, the custom for co-wives to work the land creates support for the continuance of polygyny (Goode, 1963). Attempts to analyse the link between social status and polygyny are hindered by lack of data. However, results from a survey of personnel of a firm in the Islamic Republic of Iran concluded that the higher the occupational status, the higher the level of polygyny, but also the higher the educational status, the lower the level of polygyny (Miller and Windle, 1977).

Among Hindus, the cultural ideal of marriage tends towards monogamy, and it is believed that the acceptability of an additional wife arose from the first wife's sterility and the need for a son (Goode, 1963). However, the enactment of laws prohibiting this marriage arrangement, notably the Hindu Marriage Acts of 1872 and of 1955, suggests that its incidence was not negligible. In China, monogamy was the only legal form of marriage, although concubines were socially acceptable (Goode, 1963). Little is known about the origins of polyandry and its sustaining conditions. In some regions of the Indian subcontinent, this practice is believed to include fraternal polyandry and was justified by economic considerations. Even before industrialization began, however, this institution was in decline (Goode, 1963; Fernando, 1981). The determinants of change, if any, of the institution of polygamy in the countries reviewed cannot be examined without additional information.

C. Nuptiality differentials

Unlike Africa, where traditional marriage norms still prevail to a very large extent in many cultures, a continuous delay in the timing of women's marriage is assumed to have developed in a number of Asian countries as a result of industrialization and modernization. The timing of this process

varies, of course, and not all countries began this trend from a similar starting-point. Japan, for instance, illustrates the accomplished transition to late marriage, but social change has not affected marriage prevalence, which remains high among women, as noted earlier. This case illustrates the difficulty of identifying factors of nuptiality change and of untangling the variables affecting marriage timing and marriage prevalence differently. 7/

Marriage behaviour is clearly not affected by socio-economic factors alone. Religious, ethnic and other cultural factors that shape marriage norms interact with economic variables to exert their influence on marriage decisions, and in some cases political factors also should be taken into consideration. 8/ Furthermore, a political system that can achieve a high degree of compliance with its marriage laws through a well-organized and efficient administration may be more able to enforce its legislation concerning minimum legal age at marriage.

Thus, the differences in marriage behaviour in Asia are expected to be influenced by socio-economic determinants, such as education, occupation and urban or rural residence, and by the cultural factors with which they interact, such as parental control, religion, ethnic group, dowry obligations and the changing role of women in society. Some aspects concerning these factors are briefly examined below.

1. Education

As in many other developing countries, in Asian countries, education is closely related to female marriage patterns, in particular to the timing of their marriage. As is illustrated in table 35, there is a positive association between time spent in school and age at entry into matrimony, and the difference in SMAM between women with no education and those with the highest educational level is quite substantial. Although in the Philippines, where women marry late, this difference is small (1.3 years in 1975), it exceeded six years in Pakistan (1974). In the other countries, SMAM differences between women with no education and those with seven or more years of schooling ranged from 2.0 to 4.5 years.

In all countries, the level of education constitutes one of the most important determinants of delayed marriage. Other analyses have reached similar conclusions. For instance, this was found to be the case in the Republic of Korea (Kim and Stinner, 1980). A multivariate analysis for the Philippines also found a strong positive relationship between age at marriage and education when controlling for a number of other factors (de Guzman, 1984). A close positive link between age at first marriage and literacy has also been observed in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Thailand (Smith, 1980; Cheung and others, 1985).

Aside from the striking SMAM differences between the two extreme levels of education, differences among women with the same level of education in different countries should be noted, bearing in mind that the educational levels achieved in different countries after the same duration spent in school

Table 35. Singulate mean age at marriage, by selected level of education, various countries of Asia, 1974-1978
(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Duration of schooling a/		Difference
		No schooling	Seven or more years	
Bangladesh	1975/76	15.0	19.5	4.5
Jordan	1976	19.2	23.2	4.0
Malaysia	1974	21.9	25.5	3.6
Pakistan	1975	18.9	25.7	6.8
Philippines	1978	24.1	25.4	1.3
Republic of Korea	1974	21.7	24.2	2.5
Syrian Arab Republic	1978	20.5	22.8	2.3

Sources: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5), table 119.

a/ Years of schooling completed.

are not strictly comparable. In Bangladesh (1975-1976), among women with no schooling, SMAM was as low as 15.0 years, compared with 24.1 years in the Philippines (1978). For the most educated category, SMAMs ranged from 19.5 in Bangladesh to 25.7 in Pakistan (1975). The overall impact of any given level of education is thus strongly associated with the culture and level of development. More specifically, this relationship is assumed to be strongly influenced by the prevailing status of women and by new economic opportunities for them. Indeed, motivation for parents to encourage or accept their daughters' education and for girls to continue this education is linked to the enhanced status provided by schooling to both parents and daughters. If girls have better opportunities to make "good" marriages or pay a lower dowry as a result of their schooling, there is an incentive to stay in school. Likewise, if there are more work opportunities for educated women, the incentive to attend school increases, as does the probability of marrying later. Hence, SMAM differentials at a given level of education are likely to vary among countries of different levels of modernization, women's status and normative marriage constraints. This implies greater tolerance by society for women to marry later, which in turn favours the "likelihood of girls staying on at school, which will itself be a further force for raising the age at marriage" (Caldwell Reddy and Caldwell, 1983, p. 361). Thus, there are both reciprocal effects and interacting effects which are easy to assume but difficult to assess quantitatively. This point is illustrated by a study conducted in the Republic of Korea, which concluded that in a group of women surveyed in 1971, both urban residence and Christian origin delayed marriage through the effect of higher levels of education (Kim and Stinner, 1980).

2. Occupation

The difficulties encountered in ascertaining the work status of women in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean are also found in Asia. 9/ As a determinant of age at first marriage, the work status of the woman is assumed to be significant during her pre-marital life. It is, therefore, the work activity of single women which is examined to ascertain its effect on age at first marriage. The expectation of a woman to be able to work after marriage may also influence her decision on marriage timing: if a single woman is not assured that she will be able or allowed to work after she marries, she may delay her marriage in order to keep her job. On the other hand, as was reported for Sri Lanka, the employment situation may be such that women are expected to work after marriage, in which case marriage would be delayed until the woman is employed (Caldwell and others, 1989). Various studies confirm, however, the delaying effect of pre-marital work. An analysis of the Indian female labour force of Greater Bombay found that work participation before marriage did indeed delay mean age at first marriage (Bhargava and Saxena, 1985). A study in Malaysia found a similar effect but concluded that duration of pre-marital work had a more substantial impact on delaying age at first marriage than did occupational status per se (Lee, 1982).

Table 36 presents more recent data on marriage timing as related to women's work status prior to marriage, as well as by type of occupation. Although the lowest mean ages at first marriage are found among women who did not work before marriage, in many countries the mean age at first marriage of women involved in traditional--agricultural--occupations is only slightly higher and probably not significantly different from those of women in the non-working category. On the other hand, data confirm the very important

Table 36. Mean age at first marriage of ever-married women, a/ by type of occupation before marriage, selected countries of Asia, 1974-1979
(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Type of occupation b/				
		No work	Modern	Mixed	Transitional	Traditional
Bangladesh	1975-1976	12.5	17.4 c/	13.6	12.3	15.0
Jordan	1976	17.4	21.1	20.0	21.2 c/	18.1
Malaysia	1974	17.9	21.5	21.1	21.4	18.6
Nepal	1976	15.6	14.8 c/	16.6	15.7 c/	17.4
Pakistan	1975	16.6	19.4	17.1	16.5	16.5
Philippines	1978	19.9	23.9	21.8	21.7	19.9
Republic of Korea	1974	20.1	21.4	21.7	21.8	20.4
Sri Lanka	1975	19.3	23.1	21.4	22.2	19.7
Syrian Arab Republic	1978	18.7	21.8	20.6	23.0 c/	19.3
Thailand	1975	19.0	21.3	20.6	21.1	19.7
Yemen a/	1979	16.3	..	18.4	14.5	16.6

Sources: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5.), table 129.

a/ Refers to ever-married women 23 years or over. Means adjusted for education.

b/ Modern = professional and clerical work; mixed = skilled manual and clerical workers; transitional = service and household workers; traditional = agricultural workers (self-employed and paid workers).

c/ Fewer than 20 observations.

d/ Data for former Yemen Arab Republic.

association between mean age at first marriage and work in a modern occupation. For each country, women involved in that type of work are characterized by the highest mean ages. Given the fact that the means have been controlled for education, the type of work constitutes a significant predictor of delayed marriage in its own right. This association does not, however, imply a direct causal relationship but more probably an overall change in marriage norms whereby women who have acquired a better education normally tend to engage in modern occupations and to marry later. 10/ Except in a few countries, such as the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, differences between the "transitional" and the "mixed" categories are small and may not be statistically significant.

There are, however, difficulties in assessing the nature of the relation between age at first marriage and women's work because in population subgroups where there are high levels of women's work participation and where pressure to marry early is high, as is the case in certain areas of South-eastern Asia, notably Indonesia and Thailand (Hull, 1977), increased participation of women in the labour force is not likely, by itself, to delay marriage.

3. Urban or rural residence

Studies of differences in SMAM between urban and rural women in Asia show, in general, that rural residents marry earlier (Smith, 1980; D'Souza, 1982; Cheung and others, 1985). Table 37, which presents urban/rural differences in SMAM for women in selected countries that participated in the World Fertility Survey, confirms this expectation. 11/ Again, the interesting feature of this comparison is the underlying set of marriage norms. The rural environment remains subject to the normative constraints of the prevailing culture and allows a wide range of differences in SMAM within either of the two types of residence. In Bangladesh, where social pressure to marry early is very strong, the rural SMAM was 15.5 years in 1975-1976, as compared with 25 years in rural Sri Lanka in 1975. This latter level is, in fact, higher than the urban levels in many of the countries examined. Bangladesh also had the lowest urban SMAM--17.2 years--whereas urban SMAMs of 25 years or over were reported in Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. The differences between the rural and urban SMAMs also vary widely. In Sri Lanka, for instance, the difference between the two was less than one year, whereas in Jordan (1976), Malaysia (1974) and Thailand (1975), it was over two years; and in Indonesia (1976), it exceeded three years.

Difficulties exist in ascertaining the nature of these differences not only because of differences in urban/rural classification but because not all urban areas have the conventional urban features. 12/ In addition, rural-urban migrations, which account for much of the new forms of urban settlements, may also influence aggregate estimates of SMAM 13/ and create a mix of different marriage-timing norms, as well as influence the sex ratio in the marriage market.

The presence in metropolitan areas of large squatter settlements is a major source of variation in marriage behaviour within the urban areas proper. A study undertaken in cities of Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, which distinguished urban squatter women from urban middle-class women, found differences in SMAM between the two population subgroups ranging

Table 37. Singulate mean age at marriage, all women by type of current residence, selected countries of Asia, 1974-1978
(Years)

Country	Year of survey	Type of residence		Difference (years)
		Rural	Urban	
Bangladesh	1975-1976	15.5	17.2	1.7
Indonesia	1976	18.5	21.9	3.4
Jordan	1976	19.8	22.1	2.3
Malaysia	1974	22.1	25.0	2.9
Pakistan	1975	19.2	20.7	1.5
Philippines	1978	23.4	25.3	1.9
Republic of Korea	1974	22.2	23.7	1.5
Sri Lanka	1975	25.0	25.3	0.3
Syrian Arab Republic	1978	21.5	22.6	1.1
Thailand	1975	22.1	24.4	2.3

Sources: Fertility Behaviour in the Context of Development: Evidence from the World Fertility Survey, Population Studies, No. 100 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XIII.5.), table 101.

from one to two years (table 38). Overlap of the residence criterion with the education factor is also made clear in this table and reflects the importance of the latter variable of the social structure in these two population subgroups. The study also shows that when arranged marriages prevail, as is the case in rural areas, girls marry early. Conversely, when girls choose their bridegroom and courtship takes place, as happens more often in urban areas, age at first marriage is delayed. Data from this same study tend to support the hypothesis that when courtship is practised in villages and a mate is chosen by the girl herself, marriage timing will become more similar in rural and urban areas (Cheung and others, 1985).

4. Religion and ethnic group

Religion is usually considered an important transmission channel of marriage norms. Because Asia has very large populations adhering to some of the major world religions--Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity--one can expect differences in marriage timing between population subgroups which partially conform to different religions. But variations exist even within the same religious groups, and the range of acceptable religious norms concerning marriage evidently vary with social and economic conditions. For instance, in Sri Lanka, in 1953, the average age at first marriage of Muslim women was 18.3 years, but there actually was a range from 16.3 to 21.6 years in different districts of the country (Abhayaratne and Jayewardene, 1967).

Some of the religious differentials within countries during the second half of the 1970s are illustrated in table 39. Within five of the six countries shown, Muslim women had the lowest mean age at first marriage. In Nepal and Sri Lanka, Muslims were followed by Hindus and Buddhists. On the other hand, in Malaysia, the lowest age at marriage was observed among Hindus, followed by Muslims and Buddhists. Christians are usually associated with higher ages of entry into matrimony. Other data have shown that in India, age differences between Hindus and Muslims in cities are very small, with slightly higher ages for Hindu women (Prabhakar, Lamba and Taskar, 1975; India, 1976).

Buddhism is also found to favour delayed marriage (even celibacy) and has been considered influential in producing the lower levels of marriage prevalence observed in countries with Buddhist majorities, such as Myanmar and Sri Lanka (Smith, 1980). In Thailand, it is reported that around age 20, Buddhist men may spend some time in the priesthood before marriage, which may result in delaying their marriage (Limanonda, 1979). To what extent this custom is followed and influences the overall mean age at first marriage of women is not indicated.

Of course, the effect of religious values is also bound to interact with other cultural characteristics. This is notably the case in India, where a study of Eastern Uttar Pradesh revealed substantial differences in mean age at effective marriage of women when some 35 different Hindu castes are classified in three groups (Singh, 1989). This is also the case when there is overlap between religion and ethnic groups, as happens in many countries. For instance, in Sri Lanka (table 40), there was total coincidence of marriage behaviour when marriage timing was examined according to ethnic and religious subgroups; these two overlapping factors were found to be powerful explanatory variables of differences in mean age at first marriage, ranking just below education (Ogawa and Rele, 1981).

Table 38. Differences in mean age at first marriage of women, a/ selected cities of Asia, 1979-1980

City		Type of urban population			
		Urban squatters		Urban middle class	
		Mean age at first marriage	Average years of schooling	Mean age at first marriage	Average years of schooling
Lahore	(Pakistan)	18.2	3.5	20.1	9.0
Samarang	(Indonesia)	17.2	3.7	18.4	6.2
Bangkok	(Thailand)	20.2	3.2	22.5	5.5
Manila	(Philippines)	21.4	7.7	22.7	10.2

Source: Paul Cheung and others, "Cultural variations in the transition to marriage in four Asian societies", in International Population Conference, Florence, 1985, vol. 3 (Liège, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1985), tables 1 and 2. Estimates derived from the 1979-1980 Asian Marriage Survey.

a/ Ever-married women aged 45 or under.

Table 39. Mean age at first marriage of ever-married women, by religion, selected countries of Asia, 1975-1978
(Year)

Country	Year	Religion			
		Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Christian
Bangladesh a/	1975/76	..	..	13.0	..
Jordan b/	1976	..	..	16.2	17.2
Malaysia c/	1974	19.6	16.2	16.6	..
Nepal c/	1976	17.1	15.0	14.2	..
Philippines c/	1978	..	..	18.4	19.6
Sri Lanka c/	1975	18.5	17.3	16.6	18.6

Sources: **Bangladesh:** Ministry of Health, Bangladesh Fertility Survey, 1975-1976 First Report (Dacca, Population Control and Family Planning Division, 1978), table 5.6.

Jordan: Department of Statistics, Jordan Fertility Survey 1976: Principal Report, vol. I (Amman, 1979), table 4.6.

Malaysia: Department of Statistics, Malaysian Fertility and Family Survey 1974: First Country Report (Kuala Lumpur, National Family Planning Board, 1977), table 5.7.

Nepal: Ministry of Health, Nepal Fertility Survey 1976: First Report (Kathmandu, Nepal Family Planning and Maternal Child Health Project, Central Office, 1977), table 4.2.

Philippines: National Census and Statistics Office, Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey 1978: First Report (Manila, University of the Philippines Population Institute, 1979), table 4.3.

Sri Lanka: Ministry of Plan Implementation, World Fertility Survey--Sri Lanka, 1975: First Report (Colombo, Department of Census and Statistics, 1978), table 4.4.

a/ Ever-married women aged 20 or over who had first married after age 9 but before age 20.

b/ Ever-married women aged 20 or over who had first married before age 20.

c/ Ever-married women aged 25 or over who had first married before age 25.

Table 40. Mean age at first marriage of women, a/ by religion and by ethnic group, Sri Lanka, 1975
(Year)

Religion	Mean age at first marriage	Ethnic group	Mean age at first marriage
Buddhist	18.5	Sinhalese	18.6
Hindu	17.3	Tamil	17.3
Muslim	16.6	Moors	16.5

Source: Sri Lanka, Ministry of Plan Implementation, World Fertility Survey--Sri Lanka, 1975: First Report (Colombo, Department of Census and Statistics, 1978), table 4.4.

a/ Ever-married women aged 25-49 who had married before age 25.

Table 41. Ethnic differences in percentage single among women aged 15-19, Singapore, 1947-1970

Year	Chinese	Malay	Indian
1947	80.2	32.7	35.7
1957	87.4	46.6	52.0
1966	96.7	82.9	84.3
1970	96.5	89.5	91.9

Source: Yves Blayo, "Les premiers mariages féminins en Asie", Population (Paris), vol. 33, No. 4-5 (July-October 1978), table 14.

Similarly, in Peninsular Malaysia, which is also a multi-ethnic society, ethnic differences accounted for differences in mean age at first marriage, with the Chinese marrying latest and the Malays earliest. In 1947 and 1957, female SMAM was around 18 years for Malays, who are mostly Muslims, and from 22 to 23 years among the Chinese (Véron, 1978). A more recent analysis of the 1974 Malaysian Fertility Survey confirmed that ethnicity remained a major factor behind differences in mean age at first marriage, even when other socio-economic variables are controlled (von Elm and Hirschman, 1979; Lee, 1982; Tan and Chak, 1987). Modernization and social change also interact with the marriage behaviour of ethnic groups. This is illustrated by the levels of adolescent nuptiality among the three main ethnic groups in Singapore: in 1947, more than 60 per cent of Malay and Indian women aged 15-19 were married, as compared with only 20 per cent of the Chinese in the same age group (see table 41). By 1970, only about 10 per cent of the Malays and Indians were reported in a marital union in that age group.

In Israel, a country with great variety of population subgroups and cultural traditions and hence, different marriage norms, the pattern of increasing mean age at first marriage among women observed in all Israeli communities can be attributed to the combined effect of such factors as enforcement of the laws concerning legal minimum age at marriage, education and military service, although the lower ages at first marriage observed in the Arab population appear to be attributable, at least in part, to a more traditional approach to the marriage formation process (Matras, 1973).

D. Arranged marriages

The custom of arranged marriage is an important determinant of early marriage in Asia as it is in Africa (Goode, 1963; Prothro and Diab, 1974; United Nations, 1988a). This custom, often associated with the prevalence of the extended family, 14/ leads, in general, to very young marriages. In Asia, however, the practice is very diverse; and the interrelations between family type, marriage formation process and women's mean age at first marriage present a great variety of situations. In China in the past, for instance, when marriage of girls was arranged and couples were expected to live with the groom's family, child marriage was not the norm, although early marriage was favoured (Goode, 1963).

After the revolution in 1948, the early-marriage norms in China evolved only slowly, and the average age at first marriage for women remained under 20 years until the mid-1960s (Zhao and Yu, 1984; Banister, 1984); even though the proportion of couples who did not have an arranged marriage increased considerably (Pasternak, 1986).

Data from a marriage survey in a sample of villages and among urban middle-class women in Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand observed very striking and very different patterns of marriage partner choice. Among rural women, parental decision was mentioned by 98.7 per cent of the respondents in Pakistan, 52.8 per cent in Indonesia, 11.1 per cent in Thailand and 1.4 per cent in the Philippines (Cheung and others, 1985); and the corresponding mean ages at marriage were, respectively, 17.2, 16.3, 21.9 and 21.4 years. 15/

In urban areas, although parental decision was also the custom among 78.7 per cent of urban middle-class women in Pakistan and among only 26.2 per cent of such women in Indonesia, the mean ages at first marriage in these two urban subgroups were 20.1 and 18.4 years, respectively. On the other hand, the daughter's decision, with or without parental approval, was acknowledged by as few as 3.8 per cent of the Pakistani urban middle-class women and by as many as 55.8 per cent of this class in Indonesia. Such differences clearly underscore the complexity of the relationship between type of marriage decision-making, social group and age at first marriage in different cultural contexts (Cheung and others, 1985).

In Malaysia, a study conducted in 1974 showed that parental intervention in arranging marriage in selected villages ranged from 30 to 50 per cent of total Malay marriages (Lee, 1982).

In Thailand and the Philippines, it was found that the proportions of marriage decisions made by daughters were, respectively, 74.8 and 96.0 per cent among urban women and 71.0 and 96.4 per cent among those in the rural areas, thus showing a negligible difference indeed between urban or rural residence (Cheung and others, 1985).

In the Philippines, in particular, free choice is becoming the norm for all places of residence; and the 1983 National Demographic Survey reported that about 90 per cent of the women in both urban and rural areas declared that they had been courted by one or more men apart from their first husband. About 20 per cent of the ever-married women interviewed in this survey also reported elopement, i.e., they had left the parental home with a suitor in order to get married (Cabigon, 1988).

In Thailand also, the three approaches to entry into marriage exist: parental involvement; self-choice; and elopement, with the last usually leading to a common-law union (Limanonda, 1983; Cherlin and Chamratrithirong, 1988). Increasingly, parents play only an advisory role, and the expectation of economic independence of the young couple (even when there is a temporary co-residence with parents) probably accounts for the trend towards later marriages (Pramualratana, Havanon and Knodel, 1985).

Nevertheless, the actual role of the courtship process, its outcome and the impact on age at first marriage remain difficult to study, whether there is free choice or arranged marriage (Montgomery and others, 1988). Aside from the fact that arranged marriages may mean arrangements through a matchmaker or through the family with or without the children's consent, free-choice marriages and "love" marriages often are an uncertain concept. In Japan, it was recently reported that 60 per cent of women and 50 per cent of men favour "love" marriages (Kurado, 1989), and greater "freedom" in marital choice had already been reported in Hong Kong and in Singapore among the Chinese population (Mitchell, 1971; Yeh, 1966). In practice, however, the concepts of "freedom" and "love" in marriage matters often pertain to "arranged-with-consent" marriages and do not always refer to finding a spouse without parental involvement (Salaff, 1972). 16/

The social position of women in Asia, despite changes in recent decades, at least among the more urbanized, educated subgroups, is still characterized by great dependency in their marriage decision-making. Choice of marriage partner is but one factor in a complex network of social, religious, economic, cultural and political influences (India, 1974; ESCAP, 1987), and whether and to what extent greater autonomy in such decision-making would actually delay women's marriages cannot be ascertained.

Bride-wealth or dowry obligations are closely associated with the custom of arranged marriage because they constitute the economic basis that sustains the power of the family in deciding the timing of marriage. Without a dowry, couples cannot marry; and without parental help, the dowry often cannot be assembled within a reasonable time-span. Dowry has remained prevalent in India despite its illegality, mainly because it is a deep-rooted custom (Bloom and Reddy, 1986).

Changes in dowry or bride-wealth customs would thus have implications for age at first marriage because a decline in parental obligations might also mean a decline in parental power to enforce early marriage norms and a greater say by young couples if they want to marry later. But interactions between marriage arrangements, parental choice, bride-wealth and dowry customs, and mean age at first marriage are difficult to untangle. This problem is illustrated by the case of southern India. In this area, where bride-wealth has traditionally prevailed among Hindus, passage from a bride-wealth to a dowry system (along with a substantial increase in dowry requirements) has been observed. This change is believed to have arisen primarily because the marriage market is favourable to men and because parents want their daughters "to marry educated men with urban jobs", which gives a greater say to the family of the bridegroom. The rise in age at first marriage of women in this area of India is thus attributed both to the longer time that girls stay in school and to the longer time needed to collect the money for the dowry. Hence, female child marriage has virtually disappeared there (Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell, 1983). A similar trend concerning the more favourable status of the groom is reported in Bangladesh (Lindenbaum, 1981). But the consequence of a marriage market favourable to men is that it is likely to affect to a certain extent female age at first marriage regardless of whether the marriage is arranged (Langford, 1981; and Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell, 1983).

E. Legislation

Attempts to prevent child marriages among girls and to raise women's age at first marriage by increasing the minimum legal age at marriage were undertaken in a number of Asian countries. Legislative changes in marriage and family law in Bangladesh (1961), China (1950 and 1980), India (1929, 1955 and 1978), Indonesia (1974) and Pakistan (1961) are among the best known efforts to influence age at first marriage (Szykman, 1988). The legislative effort began early in India, where as early as 1860, intercourse with a wife younger than 10 years was considered rape. In 1894, arranged marriage of girls under 8 years of age was prohibited. In 1904, the Baroda "Early Marriage Prevention Act" established 12 years as the minimum legal age at marriage for girls and did allow petitions if their age was above 9 years (Goode, 1963). The legal minimum age at marriage for girls, which had been 14 years since 1929, was raised to 15 years in 1955 for Hindus and Christians

(puberty age was maintained for Muslims) and to 18 years in 1978. But numerous difficulties arose in application, resulting from resistance to the new measures. There was usually a spate of marriages of girls which took place earlier than planned to avoid the new, more restrictive law (D'Souza, 1982; Caldwell and others, 1983), sometimes to the point of reducing the country's overall mean age at first marriage (Lindenbaum, 1981).

In India, the proportion ever married among girls in age group 10-14 was 9.5 per cent in 1951, and it was still 5.1 per cent in 1961 despite a legal minimum of 15 years established in 1955. In Bangladesh, the proportion of ever-married girls in that age group was 32.4 per cent in 1961, even though the legal minimum for women was 14 years and was raised to 16 years in 1961 (Szykman, 1988); it was still 7.0 per cent at those ages in the 1981 census. The legal minimum has recently been further increased to 18 years (Bangladesh, 1984). In Nepal, this proportion was 14.3 per cent in 1981 (United Nations, 1988b).

In China, in 1950, the minimum legal age at marriage for girls was raised to 18 years, along with measures to reduce parental decision-making power (Chesnais and Liu, 1986; Liu, 1988). From 1950 to 1954, however, from 42 to 48 per cent of all women still entered a first union before 18 years; and between 1955 and 1960, this proportion fluctuated between 32 and 37 per cent (Wen and Wei, 1984). The legal minimum age was raised to 20 years for women in 1980, but the 1982 census reported 4.4 per cent (about 2.7 million) of ever-married women younger than 20 years. It is believed that knowledge of the coming rise in the minimum legal age produced a wave of early marriages before enforcement of the new legislation, which may have contributed to a decline in mean age at first marriage. On the other hand, family planning regulations recommended marriages at least three years above the legal minimum for both men and women (Calot, 1984; Chen and Kols, 1984). Age at first marriage is reported to have further declined as a result of weak enforcement of this legislation (Banister, 1984; Zhao and Yu, 1984). This situation underscores the strength of traditional marriage-timing norms. Hence, measures that would encourage women to marry later call for more than changes in the civil legislation, and merely increasing the minimum legal age at marriage would not be sufficient. In countries where traditions are strongly supportive of early marriage of girls, there is little reason to expect new legislative action to be successful and marriage timing to change at a faster pace, even when there is an explicit intention to delay marriage beyond traditional norms (Fricke, Syed and Smith, 1986; Momeni, 1972; Tashakkori, Thompson and Mehryar, 1987). 17/ In countries where a large number of girls marry below the minimum legal age at marriage, enforcement of existing laws is certainly a priority.

F. Concluding remarks

By world standards, Asia remains a continent of early marriage among women and universal marriage among both sexes. In the post-war period, male marriage patterns were not too different from those of other less developed regions, although in certain countries of Southern Asia, levels of adolescent marriages among men were comparatively high. Currently, few countries have more than 10 per cent of male marriages prior to age 20. Among women, however, despite the general delay of entry into matrimony, more than 10 per cent still marry before age 20 in two thirds of the Asian countries; and in

certain countries of Southern Asia, this proportion still exceeded 30 or 40 per cent in recent years. Attempts to legislate a minimum legal age at marriage for girls have met with very limited success and early marriage norms for girls remain of considerable strength. In the Eastern Asian countries, however, where urbanization and modernization have evolved much more rapidly and have attained much higher levels than in most other regions, the marriage-timing pattern is similar to that of any developed region, although overall marriage prevalence remains very high despite late marriage.

Contrary to the situation prior to 1970, when most countries had female SMAMs of 21 years or under, currently, except in Southern Asia, SMAMs generally exceed 21 years. Marriages have thus been delayed to varying degrees among the female populations of Asia, partially as a result of urbanization and modernization and partially as a result of more education among women. Traditional values favouring parental intervention in the process of marriage formation and values associated with religious beliefs appear to play a considerable role in influencing the timing of female marriages. Nevertheless, the fact that marriages were delayed at all suggests that social change has begun to have an impact and that the advantages of later matrimony are increasingly perceived. However, the continuous high marriage prevalence levels among men and women observed in most Asian countries, even when marriages are delayed, indicate the importance that continues to be attached to marriage in this region.

Notes

1/ Marital status data for Asia published by the United Nations indicates when the category "married" include consensual unions, provided this information is available. This is the case, in particular, for Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand (United Nations, 1988b). In Sri Lanka, common-law unions were sometimes reported separately. In 1971, they amounted, for each sex, to about 10 per cent of the population aged 15 or over (18 per cent of all marital unions) (Sri Lanka, 1974). In Thailand, non-legalized relationships with "minor wives" are often accorded some kind of social recognition (Knodel and Prachuabmoh, 1973), but the extent to which they are reported as marriages by the women has not been ascertained. In China, both consensual and legal unions are considered marriages (Zhao, 1984). A detailed assessment of differential definitions of categories of marital status in different Asian countries for censuses of different years is presented in Agarwala (1971).

2/ This does not preclude the existence of inaccuracies due to underenumeration of the population, digit preferences and age-misreporting which will also affect classification of the never-married and ever-married population. In China, for instance, in recent years, regional surveys and the 1982 census have contributed data on marriage. However, successive changes in the legal minimum age at marriage and the possibility of couples reporting higher ages at marriage than the real ones in order to be in conformity with the law are sources of bias of unknown magnitude (Goodstadt, 1978; Chesnais and Liu, 1986).

3/ Among Hindus in India, motivation for child marriage is derived from the belief of divine sanctions against girls who do not marry before puberty, and also against their families. The initial marriage is thus more a marriage contract rather than a marriage, because consumation usually does not take place until a subsequently auspicious time, when a second marriage ceremony is performed. Among Muslims, a study in southern India reported that 95 per cent of marriages were consummated within 48 hours (Goode, 1963; Caldwell Reddy, and Caldwell, 1983).

4/ This percentage may be even higher if one assumes that digit preferences tend to classify persons who are 14 years old as already being 15 years. This same type of tendency would also shift the men and women aged 19 into age group 20-24.

5/ It is interesting to note, however, that the minimum legal age at marriage among women in Bangladesh, India and Nepal are 18, 18 and 16 years, respectively (United Nations, 1988a).

6/ Data pertain to the former Yemen Arab Republic.

7/ The time-lag between a socio-economic change and its translation into marriage behaviour change is probably the most difficult element to ascertain in order to link marriage behaviour and its determinants, especially when traditional marriage norms are very rigid.

8/ If the case of China is examined, for instance, the impact of sociological factors on marriage behaviour is difficult to separate from the effect of the political revolution. Complete abolition of the feudal system occurred in the early 1950s, and collective modes of production were instituted together with changes taking place in marriage customs (Pasternak, 1986; Liu, 1988). Although such changes could be expected to have an impact on family structure, their effects were not immediate, even in the large cities. A survey of the five largest cities reported that nuclear families (including one-person households) represented 64.0 per cent of all families in 1937 and 64.2 per cent in 1954-1957 (Zeng Yi, 1986).

9/ As concerns the World Fertility Survey data presented in table 36, variations in the relevant question constitute a major source of non-comparability and bias in work status. In Bangladesh, for instance, only work for cash was reported; in Pakistan, family farm work was omitted; in Nepal, housework was not included; in the Republic of Korea, questions referred to current work only (United Nations, 1985; S. Singh, 1980). When questions on work take into account the seasonability of agricultural work, much higher levels of women's work participation are recorded. The same is true when less constraining definitions of family work are used (Hull, 1977).

10/ Estimates for Nepal given in table 36 suggest that women in traditional occupations marry much later than women in modern occupations and that the mean age at first marriage in the latter category is an implausible 14.8 years, compared with 17.4 years in the former. This difference may be due to data inconsistencies, such as misclassification of occupational category or bias resulting from the small number of observations available in the "modern" category.

11/ These findings are generally based on data on current urban or rural residence, which is interpreted as the place of usual residence, an assumption often not supported in large metropolitan conglomerations where rural-urban migrations are substantial.

12/ Shanghai, for instance, encompasses a large rural sector; a recent survey there reported differences in mean age at first marriage as large as four years between urban and rural female birth cohorts. A particular feature of China is also that school graduates went to rural areas in the 1960s and later returned to urban areas, thus affecting measurements of urban/rural differentials at different points in time (China, 1986).

13/ Young rural migrants moving to cities may still conform to their customary marriage norms and marry younger than city dwellers, hence lowering the aggregate estimate of mean age at first marriage. On the other hand, the influx of young single rural migrants may increase the unmarried population and bias upward the estimated mean age at first marriage in urban areas (United Nations, 1980, chap. I; Arnold, Retherford and Wanglee, 1977).

14/ Nuclear families were prevalent in Asia even in the past (United Nations, 1988a). In certain regions of China, notably in He Bei province, the proportion of nuclear families in 1930 was estimated at 51.5 per cent (Ma Xia, 1984, cited in Zeng Yi, 1986).

15/ Differences resulting from culture-specific marriage norms still emerge. With almost similar mean ages at first marriage among girls in villages in Pakistan and Indonesia, the parents chose the spouse in 98.7 per cent of the cases in the former country and only in 52.8 per cent in the latter (Cheung and others, 1985).

16/ When attitudes towards arranged or free-choice marriages are studied by age cohorts, new attitudes emerge more readily. In a study undertaken in the Republic of Korea in the 1960s, a majority of the respondents interviewed favoured marriages where parents proposed a bride. But decomposition by generations showed that the younger age groups were much more likely to want to exercise their own judgement (Lee, 1971).

17/ In the Islamic Republic of Iran, for instance, a study showed that in urban areas, one third of the children of respondents married earlier than the expressed ideal age at marriage (Paydarfar, 1977).

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V. NORTHERN AMERICA, EUROPE, OCEANIA AND THE USSR

A. Levels and trends in marriage patterns

This chapter deals with the European countries and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Canada and the United States of America; and the developed countries of Oceania, namely, Australia and New Zealand. In chapter I, it was noted that these countries were characterized, in the first decades of the twentieth century, by a late-marriage/low-prevalence pattern, except in some countries of Eastern Europe and in the United States, which displayed a pattern intermediate between that of the developing and the developed countries.

During that period, the traditional late-marriage/low-prevalence pattern was evolving towards earlier marriages and higher prevalence; and by the mid-1930s and 1940s, SMAM levels had already declined substantially in Northern America, in Oceania and in a large number of European countries, except in Southern Europe (tables 1 and 2). This trend was especially noticeable among women.

By the time the first censuses were taken after the Second World War, SMAM had declined further, as is shown by data given in tables 1 and 2 and annex table A.4. This shift is presumably the result of various demographic, political and economic events that preceded or took place during the Second World War. 1/ The period of the 1940s is not examined because of the lack of relevant data and because of problems of comparability between pre-war and post-war marriage indicators arising from border changes after the war. 2/

1. Timing of marriage

Changes in marriage timing are assessed here in terms both of proportions ever married between ages 15 and 19 and of singulate mean age at marriage. Table 42 presents percentages married at ages 15-19 only for women because they are more likely than men to enter into a marital union before age 20. Overall levels and trends are examined later for both sexes. The data given in table 42 underscore the large number of countries where adolescent nuptiality among women is very low. In more than three quarters of the countries examined, both at the beginning and at the end of the period reviewed fewer than 10 per cent of the women were married at ages 15-19. In the 1950s, adolescent fertility rates exceeded 10 per cent in several countries in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia), and those in Albania and Romania (1966) even exceeded 20 per cent, placing these countries in the intermediate marriage-timing pattern. In 1950, the United States also had a comparatively high percentage (17.1) of early marriages,

Table 42. Distribution of countries according to percentage of women ever married aged 15-19, Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR, 1950-1986

Percentage ever married aged 15-19	Prior to 1970	Country	Since 1970	Country
Fewer than 10	1951	Austria	1981	Australia
	1947	Australia	1981	Austria
	1947	Belgium	1981	Belgium
	1951	Canada	1986	Canada
	1947	Czechoslovakia	1980	Czechoslovakia
	1950	Denmark	1981	Denmark
	1951	England and Wales	1982	France
	1950	Finland	1981	England and Wales
	1946	France	1980	Finland
	1950	German Democratic Republic a/	1981	German Democratic Republic a/
	1950	Germany, Federal Republic of a/	1980	Germany, Federal Republic of a/
	1951	Greece	1981	Italy
	1951	Ireland	1981	Ireland
	1951	Italy	1981	Luxembourg
	1947	Luxembourg	1981	Northern Ireland
	1947	Netherlands	1980	Norway
	1951	Northern Ireland	1980	Netherlands
	1950	Norway	1986	New Zealand
	1951	New Zealand	1981	Portugal
	1951	Portugal	1984	Poland
	1960	Poland	1981	Spain
	1951	Scotland	1980	Sweden
	1950	Spain	1980	Switzerland
	1950	Sweden	1980	United States of America
	1950	Switzerland	1985	USSR
10-19	1956	Bulgaria	1975	Bulgaria
	1949	Hungary	1980	Hungary
	1950	United States of America	1981	Greece
			1977	Romania
	1948	Yugoslavia	1981	Yugoslavia
20 or over	1955	Albania		
	1966	Romania		

Source: Annex table A.4.

a/ The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

which placed that country in the same intermediate category. The other non-European developed countries (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), although classified with the rest of Europe, fall at the upper end (about 8 per cent or more) of the "fewer than 10 per cent" category (annex table A.4). During the 1980s, there were few changes. By world standards, low adolescent marriage prevalence still prevails among women in Europe and also applies to the USSR, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. Only a handful of countries of Eastern Europe, as well as Greece and Yugoslavia, have high levels of female adolescent marriages.

When one examines trends in adolescent nuptiality of both sexes from 1950/51 to 1980/81 (table 43), overall changes are found to be small. Among men, the shape and direction of the trends vary from country to country without any regional pattern. In Northern America, for instance, Canada displays an upward trend, whereas the United States has an upward-downward trend. In Eastern Europe, the trend is erratic and difficult to assess because of missing points of observation; and in Southern Europe, it is upward except in Yugoslavia. In the rest of Europe, the trend between 1950 and 1980 in male adolescent marriages expresses the post-war recovery, with upward and downward fluctuations, which peaked around 1960 or 1970. Thereafter, adolescent nuptiality declined throughout the late 1970s, remaining above the 1950 level in most countries and below that level in a few. When only the last two censuses (1970 and 1980) are considered, however, a significant decline is observed in almost all countries, except Canada and some countries of Eastern and Southern Europe.

When data for women are examined (table 43 and figures 19 and 20), an inverted V-shaped trend is seen in most countries of Northern and Western Europe. This trend means that there was an increase in adolescent nuptiality after the Second World War, as compared with the pre-war period; then, after reaching a peak, it subsequently declined during the 1970s. This trend, however, is absent in Eastern and Southern Europe, Northern America and Oceania; fluctuations are erratic in most countries and are sharply downward in the United States.

Northern America, Oceania and the USSR have levels commensurate with those of the intermediate-marriage pattern. The proportion of women ever married at ages 15-19 ranged, in general, from 7 to 9 per cent in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and from 17 to 12 per cent in the United States until 1970.

In the United States, there was a continuous decline in female adolescent nuptiality, with prevalence falling from 17.1 per cent in 1950 to 8.8 in 1980, an average annual decline of about 0.3 percentage point. In the USSR, levels remained relatively stable, with 9.8 and 9.5 per cent estimated for 1979 and 1985, respectively. In Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the decline in adolescent marriage took place between 1970 and 1980.

In Northern Europe, there was a continuous increase in young marriages during the post-war period in Ireland, as well as in Northern Ireland (United Kingdom). During the period studied, the highest proportions ever married at

Table 43. Percentage ever married aged 15-19, by sex, Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR, 1950/51-1980/81

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (percentage points)
		Men			
Northern America					
Canada	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.6	0.02
United States of America	3.3	3.9	4.1	2.8	-0.02
Europe					
Eastern Europe					
Bulgaria	5.1 a/	4.0 b/	4.3 c/	..	-0.04
Czechoslovakia	0.5 d/	0.8	1.0	1.3	0.02
German Democratic Republic e/	0.6	..	1.3	0.7	0.00
Hungary	1.1 f/	1.2	1.4	2.2	0.04
Poland	..	0.9	0.6 g/	0.6 h/	-0.01
Romania	..	2.5 i/	2.9 j/	..	0.04
Northern Europe					
Denmark	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.00
Finland	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.3	-0.02
Ireland	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.02
Norway	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.2	-0.01
Sweden	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	-0.01
United Kingdom					
England and Wales	0.5	1.1	2.8	1.1	0.02
Scotland	0.4	1.2	3.2	1.6	0.04
Northern Ireland	0.3	0.7	..	1.1	0.03
Southern Europe					
Greece	1.4 k/	1.1 k/	..	1.0	-0.01
Italy	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.01
Portugal	0.6	0.7	1.3	1.6	0.03
Spain	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.8	0.05
Yugoslavia	5.1 l/	..	3.2	2.0	-0.11
Western Europe					
Austria	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.01
Belgium	0.7 d/	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.00
France k/	0.7 m/	0.3 n/	0.4 c/	0.2 o/	-0.02
Germany, Federal Republic of e/	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.01
Luxembourg	0.3 d/	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.00
Netherlands	0.6 d/	0.6	0.6	0.3	-0.01
Switzerland	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.00

Table 43 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum 1950/51-1980/81 (percentage points)
Oceania					
Australia	0.8 m/	0.9	1.4	0.6	-0.01
New Zealand	0.7	1.3	2.3	2.0	0.04
USSR	..	..	2.2 p/	2.0 q/	0.0
			Women		
Northern America					
Canada	7.9	8.7	7.5	6.7	-0.04
United States of America	17.1	16.1	11.9	8.8	-0.28
Europe					
Eastern Europe					
Bulgaria	19.2 a/	18.5 b/	17.8 c/	..	-0.07
Czechoslovakia	5.8 d/	8.7	7.8	8.0	0.07
German Democratic Republic e/	3.1	..	6.8	4.2	0.04
Hungary	11.5 f/	14.7	12.5	16.1	0.15
Poland	..	8.3	4.5 g/	4.8 h/	-0.15
Romania	..	21.6 i/	16.0 j/	..	-0.51
Northern Europe					
Denmark	4.6	4.9	4.1	1.1	-0.12
Finland	4.4	5.1	5.4	2.2	-0.07
Ireland	1.1	1.1	2.1	2.3	0.04
Norway	3.1	4.8	4.9	2.4	-0.02
Sweden	3.7	2.7	2.3	0.7	-0.10
United Kingdom					
England and Wales	4.4	6.6	10.8	4.5	0.00
Scotland	3.5	5.8	9.9	5.0	0.05
Northern Ireland	2.3	3.3	..	4.0	0.06
Southern Europe					
Greece	5.0 k/	5.8 k/	..	13.9	..
Italy	3.8	4.4	6.3	4.6	0.03
Portugal	4.1	4.7	5.3	8.9	0.16
Spain	1.4	2.2	3.1	5.6	0.14
Yugoslavia	11.2 l/	13.8	16.1	11.5	-0.01

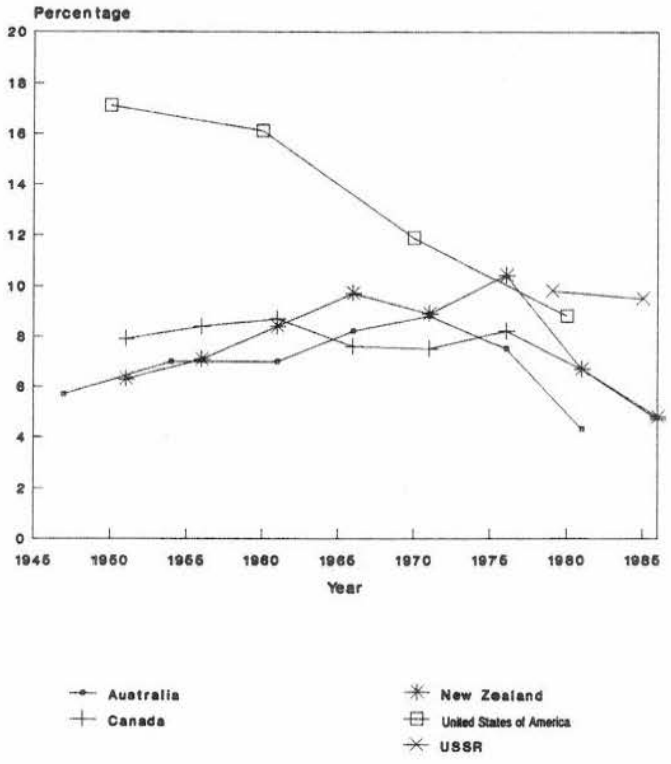
Table 43 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum 1950/51-1980/81 (percentage points)
Western Europe					
Austria	3.5	6.0	7.0	4.2	0.02
Belgium	4.6 d/	5.8	6.9	5.3	-0.02
France k/	3.8 m/	2.9 n/	3.5 c/	1.9 o/	0.07
Germany, Federal Republic of e/	2.5	5.1	8.1	3.6	0.04
Luxembourg	2.4 d/	5.0	6.1	4.4	-0.06
Netherlands	3.2 d/	3.7	4.9	2.7	-0.02
Switzerland	1.2	1.9	3.7	1.6	0.01
Oceania					
Australia	7.0 m/	7.0	8.8	4.3	-0.10
New Zealand	6.3	8.4	8.9	6.7	0.01
USSR	..	..	9.8 p/	9.5 q/	-0.5

Source: Annex table A.4.

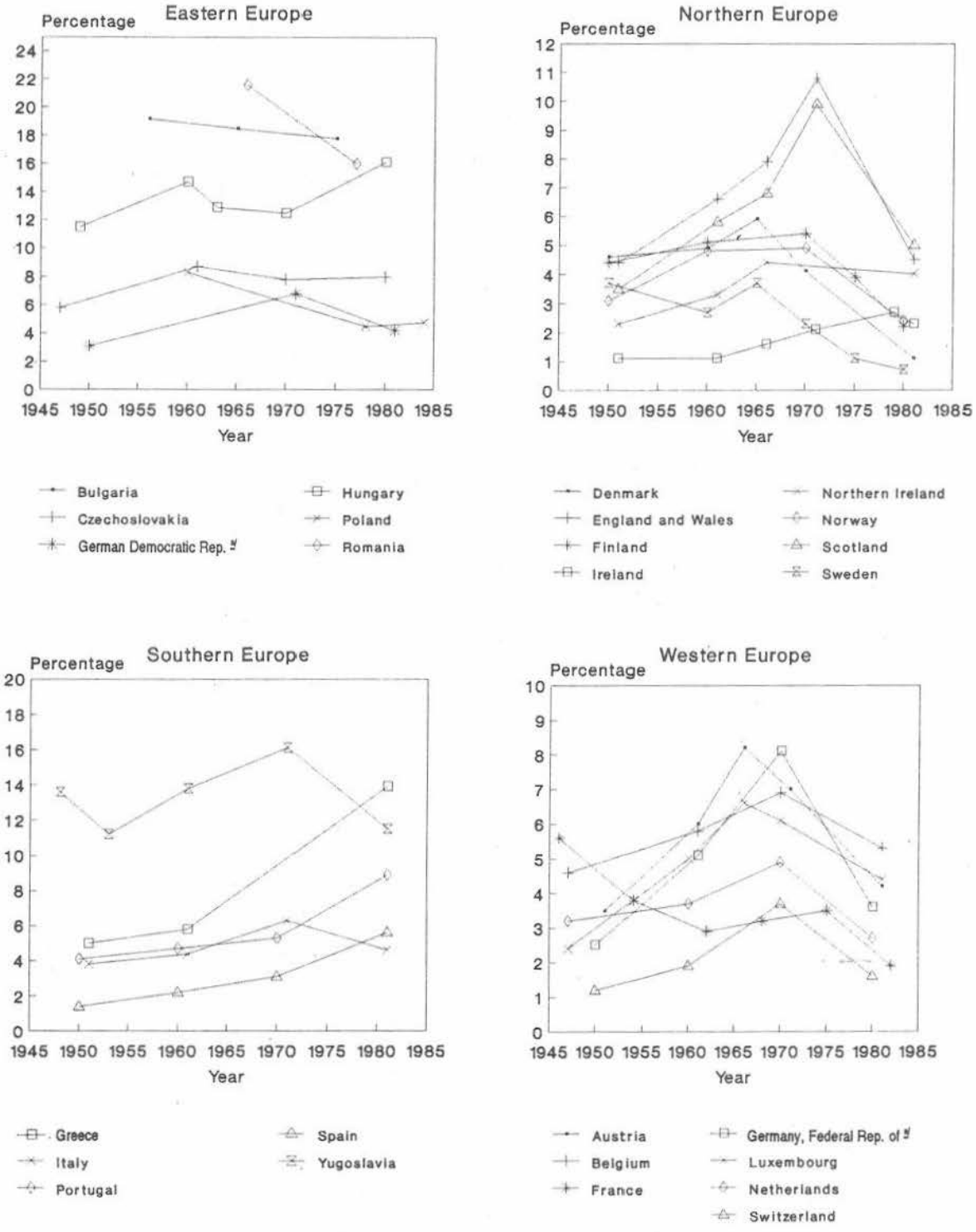
a/ 1956.
b/ 1965.
c/ 1975.
d/ 1947.
e/ The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.
f/ 1949.
g/ 1978.
h/ 1984.
i/ 1966.
j/ 1977.
k/ Age classification based on year of birth rather than on completed years of age.
l/ 1953.
m/ 1954.
n/ 1962.
o/ 1982.
p/ 1979.
q/ 1985.

Figure 19. Trends in percentage ever married for women aged 15–19, Northern America, Oceania and the USSR, 1950–1985



Source: Annex table A.4.

Figure 20. Trends in percentage ever married for women aged 15–19, Europe, by subregion, 1950–1985



Source: Annex table A.4.

*The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

ages 15-19 in both Northern and Western Europe, about 10 per cent during the 1970s, were found in England and Wales and in Scotland. As in most other countries of Northern Europe, however, the levels of marriage prevalence of young women declined by more than one half between the 1970 and 1980 censuses. Currently, Sweden, with 0.7 per cent ever married at ages 15-19 in 1980, has the lowest adolescent nuptiality in Europe.

In Western Europe, France displays irregular downward fluctuations rather than an inverted V-shaped trend. Because of the age classification (see note k/ to table 43), the indicator is not fully comparable to those of the other countries. In the other countries, female adolescent nuptiality increased after the 1950s; it peaked in the 1970s and then began to decline. During the 1970s, marriage prevalence at ages 15-19 ranged from 6 to more than 8 per cent in Austria, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and Luxembourg, quite high levels compared with the standards for 1950. Switzerland, with 1.6 per cent ever married at ages 15-19, had the lowest adolescent marriage level in Western Europe at the beginning of the 1980s. In most countries, the declines began in the late 1960s; but in Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg and Sweden, they began in the early 1960s.

Eastern and Southern Europe display different patterns. In Eastern Europe, the infrequency of observations prevents a satisfactory assessment of trends. It is possible that in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania, additional early data would show a mild inverted V-shaped trend similar to that observed in Czechoslovakia and in the German Democratic Republic. Hungary shows considerable fluctuations, with an overall level of adolescent nuptiality consistent with the traditional early-marriage pattern of this subregion, namely, a high level of female adolescent nuptiality, which exceeded 10 or 15 per cent throughout the period studied. This characteristic is also found in Bulgaria and Romania.

Southern Europe displays a continuous upward trend, except for Italy which shows a decline in 1980, Yugoslavia, with more than 10 per cent ever married, also shows a recent relative decline; but it has a high level of adolescent nuptiality that is more commensurate with the levels in Eastern Europe and does not conform to the general Southern European pattern.

Marriage timing in terms of the singulate mean age at marriage derived from data of a single census (see Hajnal, 1953) is examined in table 44 and figures 21 and 22. Under changing marriage conditions, intercensal SMAMs would be more informative as to the period effects (see annex II). Intercensal SMAMs are obtained by a modified application of Hajnal's procedure and are based on data from a hypothetical cohort in which the population of each age group is subjected to the risk of first marriage that prevailed between the two censuses (Coale, Cho and Goldman, 1982). 3/ The single-census SMAMs are utilized here, however, to permit comparability with the other world regions. They do not deviate very much from the corresponding intercensal estimates (see annex tables A.4 and A.5) and are sufficiently robust so as not to affect conclusions significantly.

Table 44. Singulate mean age at marriage by sex, Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR, 1950/51-1980/81
(Years)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (years)
			Men		
Northern America					
Canada	25.3	24.8	24.4	25.2	0.00
United States of America	23.8	23.3	23.5	25.2	0.05
Europe					
Eastern Europe					
Bulgaria	24.0 a/	24.2 b/	24.5 c/	..	0.03
Czechoslovakia	27.4 d/	25.2	24.6	24.7	-0.08
German Democratic Republic e/	25.7	..	24.7	25.4	-0.01
Hungary	26.7 f/	24.7	24.8	24.8	-0.06
Poland	..	25.3	25.7 g/	25.9 h/	0.02
Romania	..	24.5 i/	24.9 j/	..	0.04
Northern Europe					
Denmark	26.5	25.6	25.1	28.4	0.06
Finland	26.0	26.1	25.6	27.1	0.04
Ireland	31.3	29.5	25.8	24.4	-0.23
Norway	27.9	26.2	24.9	26.3	-0.05
Sweden	27.1	26.4	26.2	30.0	0.10
United Kingdom					
England and Wales	26.0	25.1	23.9	25.4	-0.02
Scotland	26.5	24.9	23.4	24.8	-0.06
Northern Ireland	28.0	26.4	..	24.8	-0.11
Southern Europe					
Greece	29.7 k/	28.9 k/	..	27.6	-0.07
Italy	28.7	28.5	27.2	27.1	-0.05
Portugal	27.1	26.4	25.6	24.7	-0.08
Spain	29.0	28.3	27.5	26.0	-0.10
Yugoslavia	24.3 l/	..	24.9	26.1	0.07
Western Europe					
Austria	27.7	26.4	26.0	27.0	-0.02
Belgium	26.5 d/	24.7	24.2	24.8	-0.05
France k/	26.3 m/	26.4 n/	25.3 c/	26.4 o/	0.00
Germany, Federal Republic of e/	27.7	26.2	26.0	27.9	0.01
Luxembourg	28.7 d/	25.9	25.6	26.2	-0.08
Netherlands	27.5 d/	25.9	25.2	26.2	-0.04
Switzerland	28.1	27.0	26.0	27.9	-0.01

Table 44 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (years)
Oceania					
Australia	25.5 m/	25.5	24.4	25.7	0.01
New Zealand	25.9	25.3	23.9	24.9	-0.03
USSR	..	..	24.2 p/	24.2 q/	0.00
			Women		
Northern America					
Canada	22.5	21.4	22.0	23.1	0.02
United States of America	20.8	20.3	21.5	23.3	0.08
Europe					
Eastern Europe					
Bulgaria	20.9 a/	20.7 b/	20.8 c/	..	-0.01
Czechoslovakia	23.0 d/	21.1	21.4	21.7	-0.04
German Democratic Republic e/	23.9	..	20.8	21.7	-0.07
Hungary	22.7 f/	20.8	20.9	21.0	-0.05
Poland	..	21.9	22.6 g/	22.8 h/	0.04
Romania	..	20.2 i/	21.1 j/	..	0.08
Northern Europe					
Denmark	21.8	21.6	22.0	25.6	0.13
Finland	22.7	22.5	22.5	24.6	0.06
Ireland	26.7	25.2	23.5	23.4	-0.11
Norway	23.0	21.4	21.9	24.0	0.03
Sweden	22.0	22.5	23.7	27.6	0.19
United Kingdom					
England and Wales	22.1	21.3	21.1	23.1	0.03
Scotland	22.4	21.4	20.7	22.5	0.00
Northern Ireland	24.2	22.9	..	22.6	-0.05
Southern Europe					
Greece	25.9 k/	25.4 k/	..	22.5	-0.11
Italy	24.6	24.2	22.6	23.2	-0.05
Portugal	24.5	24.0	23.3	22.1	-0.08
Spain	26.5	25.0	23.7	23.1	-0.11
Yugoslavia	22.3 l/	22.1	21.3	22.2	0.00

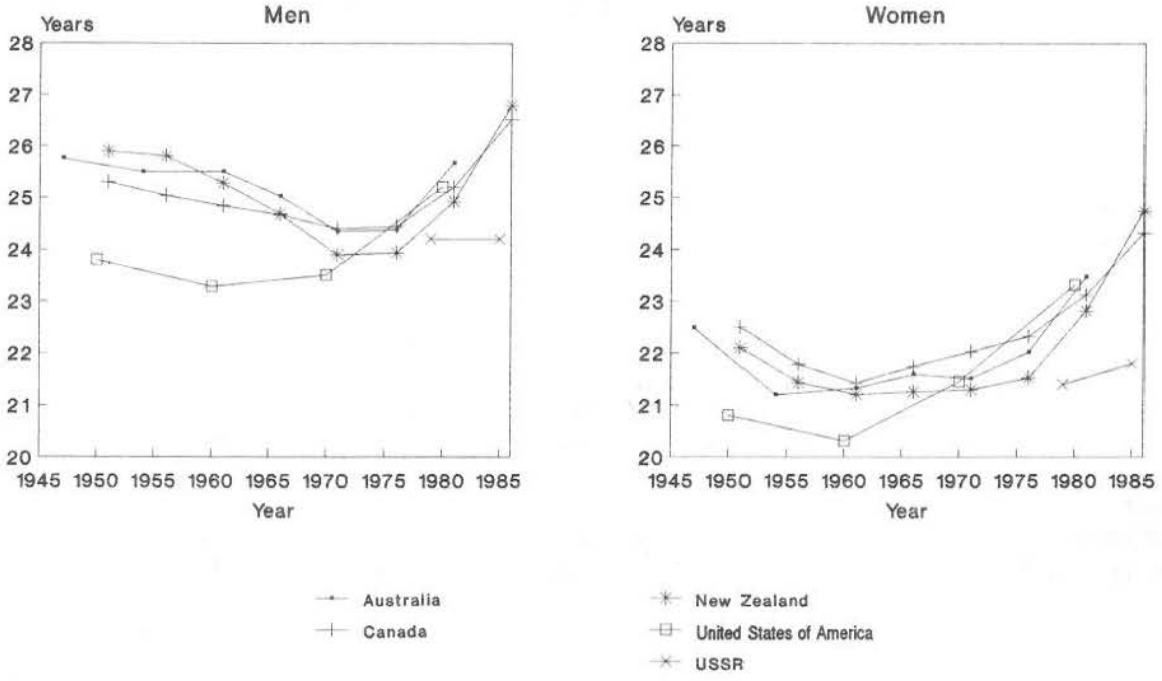
Table 44 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (years)
Western Europe					
Austria	24.5	23.3	21.9	23.5	-0.03
Belgium	23.4 d/	21.9	21.5	22.4	-0.03
France k/	23.2 m/	23.3 n/	23.0 c/	24.5 o/	0.05
Germany, Federal Republic of e/	24.5	22.8	21.4	23.6	-0.03
Luxembourg	24.6 d/	22.4	21.4	23.1	-0.05
Netherlands	24.7 d/	22.9	23.1	23.2	-0.05
Switzerland	24.7	23.6	22.6	25.0	0.01
Oceania					
Australia	21.2 m/	21.3	21.5	23.5	0.09
New Zealand	22.1	21.2	21.3	22.8	0.02
USSR	..	..	21.4 p/	21.8 q/	0.07

Source: Annex table A.4.

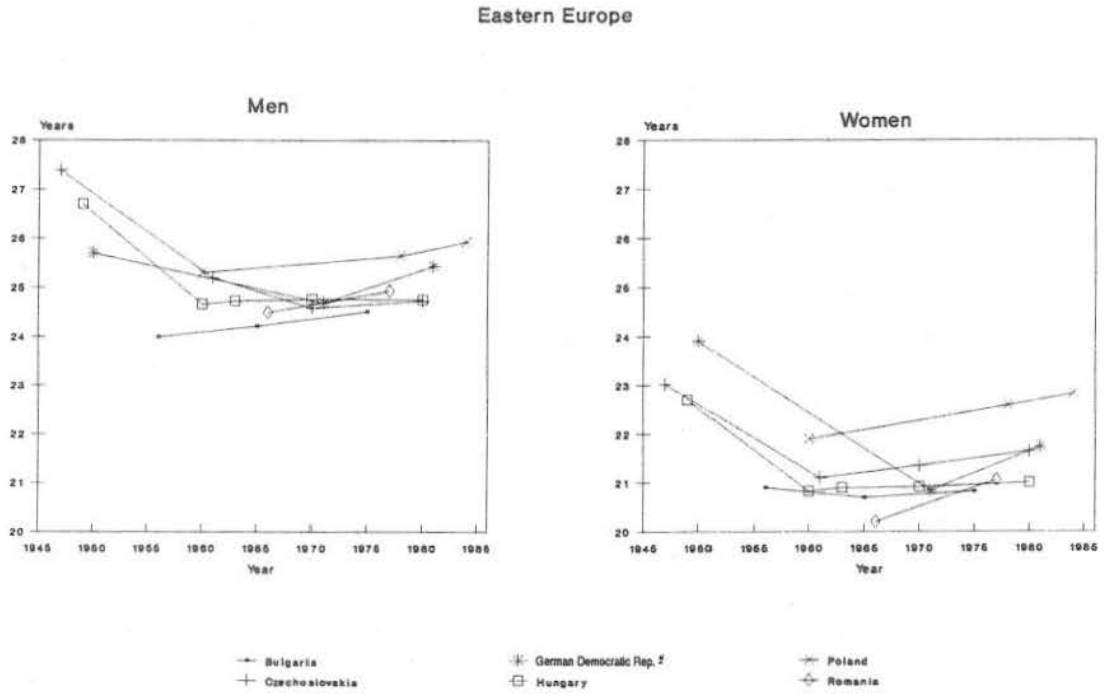
a/ 1956.
b/ 1965.
c/ 1975.
d/ 1947.
e/ The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.
f/ 1949.
g/ 1978.
h/ 1984.
i/ 1966
j/ 1977
k/ Age classification based on year of birth rather than on completed years of age.
l/ 1953.
m/ 1954.
n/ 1962.
o/ 1982.
p/ 1979.
q/ 1985.

Figure 21. Trends in singulate mean age at marriage, Northern America, Oceania and the USSR, 1950–1985



Source: Annex table A.4.

Figure 22. Trends in singulate mean age at marriage, Europe, by subregion, 1950–1985



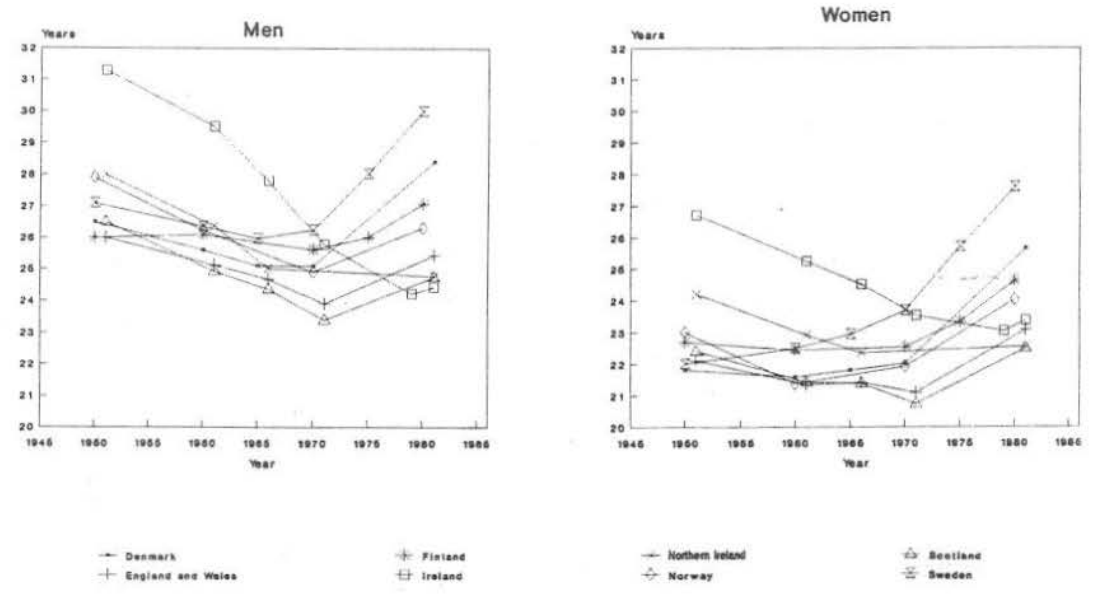
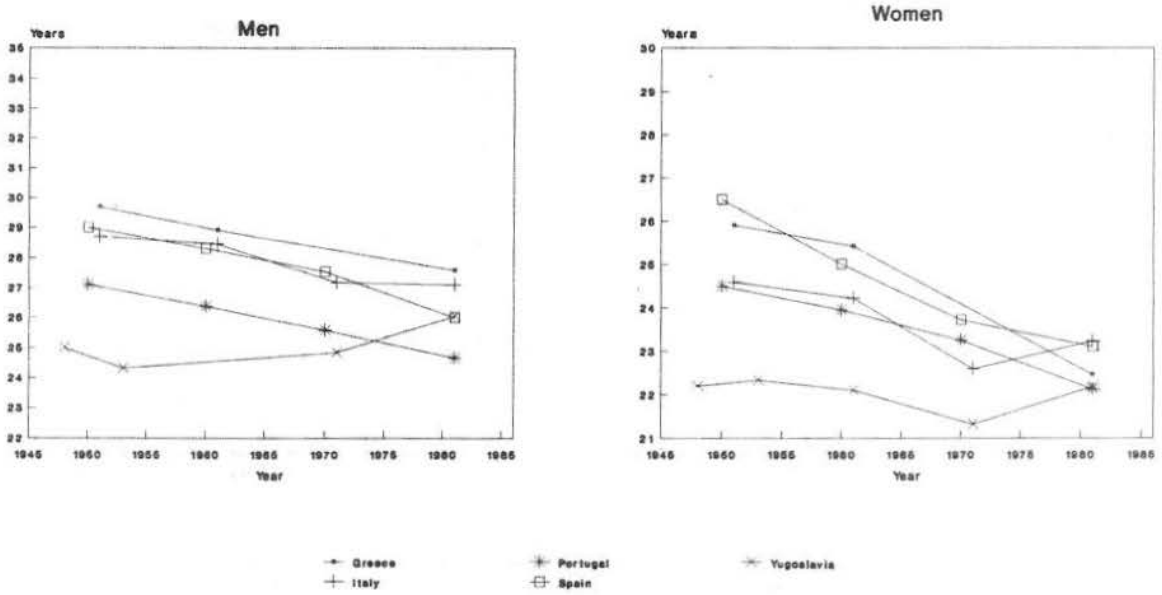
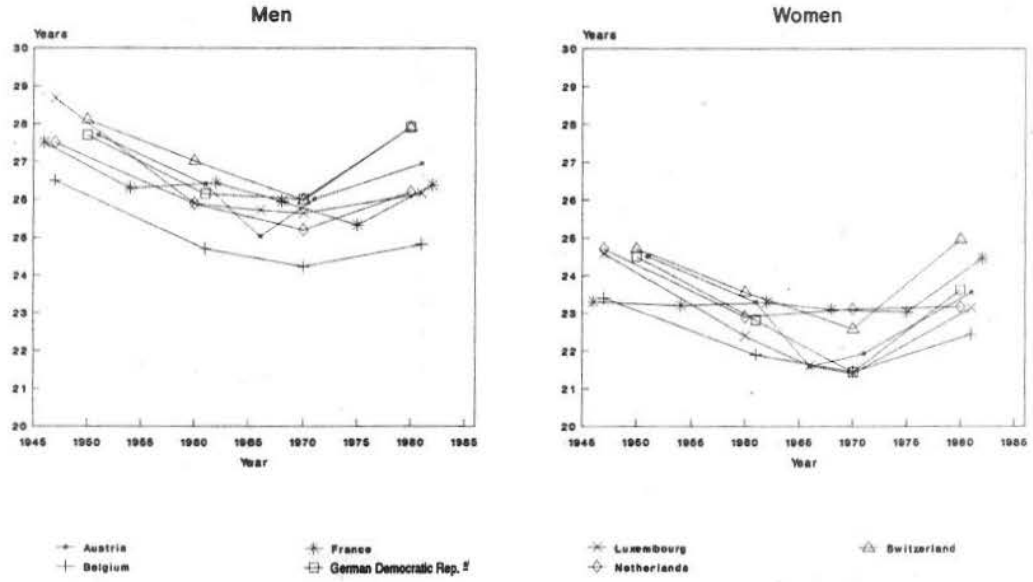


Figure 22 *(continued)*

Southern Europe



Western Europe



Source: Annex table A.4.

[a]The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

From 1950 to around 1980-1985, both male and female SMAMs evolved substantially and no longer conformed to the late-marriage pattern of the early 1900s. Although age at first marriage is still considerably later than in the other world regions, at least among women, the main characteristic of the post-war nuptiality trend is the increase in young marriages; the decline in SMAM, which reflected the relatively early marriages by European standards; the levels achieved, which varied from country to country; and the subsequent delay in first marriage among both sexes. This trend could be foreseen from the trend in adolescent nuptiality examined above. The result of this evolution is an irregular U-shaped or V-shaped curve (except in Southern Europe), with maxima and minima differing from one country to another.

During the 1950s, male SMAMs were about 25 years in the non-European developed countries (except the United States, where it had fallen to about 23 years); between 25 and 27 years in Eastern Europe (except in Bulgaria); between 26 and 28 years in Northern and Western Europe (except in Ireland, where the male SMAM exceeded 31 years); and between 27 and 30 years in Southern Europe (except in Yugoslavia). By the mid-1970s, estimated SMAMs fell by one year or more, varying at levels under 25 years in Northern America, Oceania, the USSR, and Eastern Europe (except Poland). In Northern Europe and Western Europe, the range in the 1970s was somewhat larger, from about 23 years in the United Kingdom to 26 in Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden. In Southern Europe, where male SMAMs remained high despite the decline, those in Italy and Spain did not fall below 27 years in 1970. After 1970, an increase in SMAM was observed only in Yugoslavia.

The most significant declines in male SMAM are those of Ireland, where it declined from 31.3 years to 24.4 years between 1951 and 1981; and of Northern Ireland where it fell from 28 to 24.4 years during the same period. In general, where male SMAMs increased, the increase has not yet brought the levels in most countries above that of the 1950s, as is shown by the negative change indicator (last column of table 44).

Among women, the same trend in SMAMs forming a U-shaped curve is observed between the 1950 and 1980 censuses. The initial decline in age at first marriage among women, which lasted from around 1950 to the late 1960s or early 1970s, brought female SMAMs to a low level not previously reached in the developed countries. Although in 1950 the demographic effect of the increase in younger marriages was only beginning to be felt in 1950, it had already brought female SMAMs below the 23-year level in Northern America, Oceania, Yugoslavia and two countries of Eastern and Northern Europe. Several Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden), as well as the United Kingdom, were also characterized by such low SMAMs. By the 1960s, female SMAMs were even lower, below 22 years in Northern America, Oceania, Eastern Europe and most countries of Northern Europe. With few exceptions, Western Europe reached this low level in 1970. Female SMAMs even fell below 21 years in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and the United States in 1960 and in the German Democratic Republic and Scotland in 1970. Such early first marriages are not consistent with the pre-war classification of late marriage. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, women in certain countries once again began to delay their marriages; and by the 1980 censuses, the trend towards young marriages had been reversed, except in most countries of Southern Europe.

For countries that had previously had female SMAMs of about 20 years, such as Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Scotland and the United States, the level is currently over 21 years (over 23 in the United States). Increases were substantial between 1970 and 1980, notably in Northern Europe, where increments of from one to two years are found. Delays in marriage since mid-century have been largest, more than three years, in Denmark and Sweden, with Denmark passing from 21.8 to 25.6 years and Sweden from 22.0 to 27.6 between 1950 and 1980. Sweden currently has the highest female SMAM in Europe.

Not all countries followed such a downward-upward pattern. In Eastern Europe, where census data were not available for all points between 1950 and 1980 in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, as well as in the USSR, the trend is difficult to ascertain although additional data could show the same overall U-shaped pattern. Separate studies, based on other data, including marriage rates and proportions married in successive age groups, suggest a decrease in age at first marriage in Poland in the 1950s (Aleksinska, 1982), in the Soviet Union between 1959 and 1976 (Anderson, 1982) and in Hungary between 1960 and the end of the 1970s (Klinger, 1982).

Southern Europe also deviates from the general evolution pattern of European marriages. The pre-war late-marriage pattern still prevailed in the 1950s, with female SMAMs of from 24 to 26 years, except in Yugoslavia, where the trend is closer to the Eastern European pattern. This subregion experienced a substantial net decrease in both male and female SMAMs but does not generally display the reverse upward trend observed in the rest of Europe. The decline has been substantial (see last column of table 44) with female SMAMs in Spain falling from 26.5 to 23.1 years between 1950 and 1980. In Northern Europe, Ireland, has also deviated from the general pattern, with a continuous decline from 26.7 to 23.4 years between 1951 and 1981. These were two of the largest reductions in SMAM in Europe during the post-war period.

Other studies of marriage trends (Festy, 1971; Muñoz-Perez, 1979; Council of Europe, 1985; Sardon, 1986), that used different and sometimes more specific marriage indicators, such as cohort indicators or total first marriage rates, measure different aspects of nuptiality and may reach somewhat different conclusions concerning the magnitude of change in age at first marriage or the time period to which it pertains.

An assessment of SMAM trends in these subregions on the basis of intercensal estimates was also undertaken. A comparison of single census and intercensal estimates shows that under the prevailing conditions of nuptiality change, only small differences exist between the two types of estimates, usually less than one year and often only on the order of half a year or less. In Ireland, however, a substantial difference is found for both men and women, due mainly to the large changes in marriage timing during the period 1950-1980. In general, conclusions about trends drawn from intercensal estimates are quite close to those inferred from single census estimates, although there may be some discrepancies in a few cases.

2. Difference between sexes in age at first marriage

At the beginning of the period reviewed, differences between sexes in age at first marriage were small in Europe, compared with other world regions (figure 23 and annex table A.4). During the 1950s, differences in general varied from two to four years. The German Democratic Republic, with a difference of 1.8 year, was at the lower end of the scale; Sweden, with a difference of 5.1 years (the largest observed in 1950), was at the upper end. In several countries of Eastern and Northern Europe and in Italy, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, differences exceeded the four-year level.

During the 1960s, the overall picture of age differences changed, with most countries characterized by sex differences in SMAM of from 2.5 to 4.5 years. In the 1970s, there was a new shift towards smaller differences, with the largest concentration of countries in a range from two to four years, and a small number of countries having differences exceeding four years. In 1980, the shift towards smaller differences was accentuated, with the largest number of countries characterized by differences of from two to three years. In some countries (the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece) the difference between sexes still exceeded four years, whereas others (Ireland, United States) were characterized by differences of less than two years.

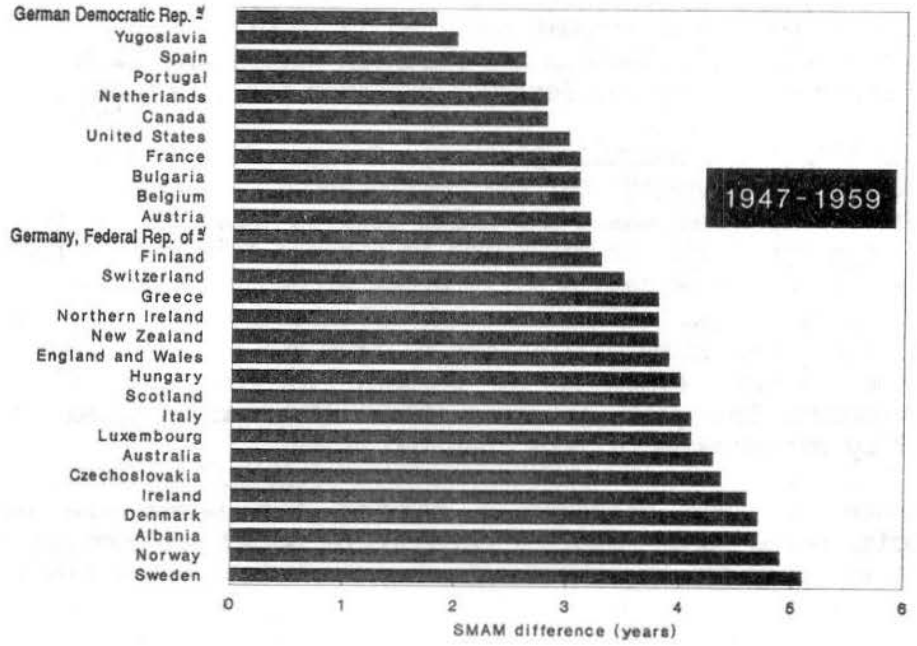
Determinants of age differences between the sexes are multiple and complex. Social norms concerning the matching of potential spouses are not as constraining as they are in many developing countries, where kinship structure and the status of women play a major role. Thus, given the freedom of selection in the more developed countries and the wide range of age differences between spouses considered socially acceptable in those countries, the magnitude and variations of differences in SMAM are believed to be much more the result of random factors within the marriage market (Elder and Rockwell, 1976, cited in Mensch, 1986; United Nations, 1988a; Cox and Wilson, 1974).

But because demographic and social factors are so intertwined, it is difficult to identify properly the particular role of the various factors (Cox and Wilson, 1974). For instance, in the United States, a study of female birth cohorts surveyed in 1976 concluded that changes in age difference between marital partners were mainly due to changing age preferences. When women marry later, they tend to marry men closer in age to themselves so that the rising age at marriage of women is associated with narrowing age differences. Likewise, the same study also observed that the more traditional the woman, the larger the age difference (Mensch, 1986).

3. Prevalence of marriage

An assessment of marriage prevalence patterns raises a number of interpretation problems due mainly to the type of indicators utilized. The percentage of persons married by age 50 derived from one census is a prevalence estimate of a group of cohorts that experienced marriage during some 35 preceding years and does not describe overall prevalence in the year of the census. 4/ For instance, the percentage ever married by age 50 in the 1950 census pertains to persons who married mostly in the 1920s or 1930s. The single census indicators used so far were adequate for the less developed regions inasmuch as marriage prevalence was assumed not to have changed very

Figure 23. Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage, Northern America, Europe and Oceania, 1947–1986



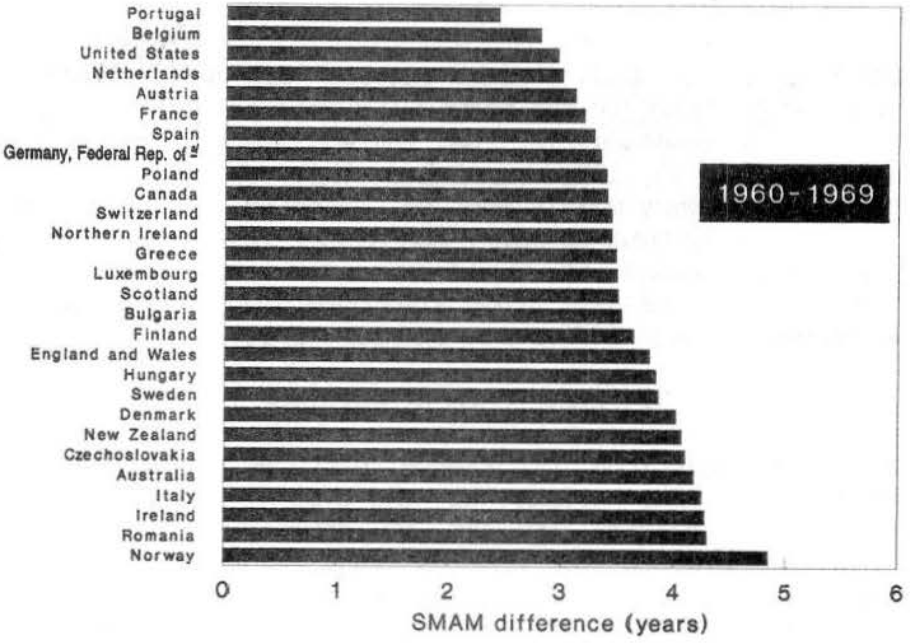
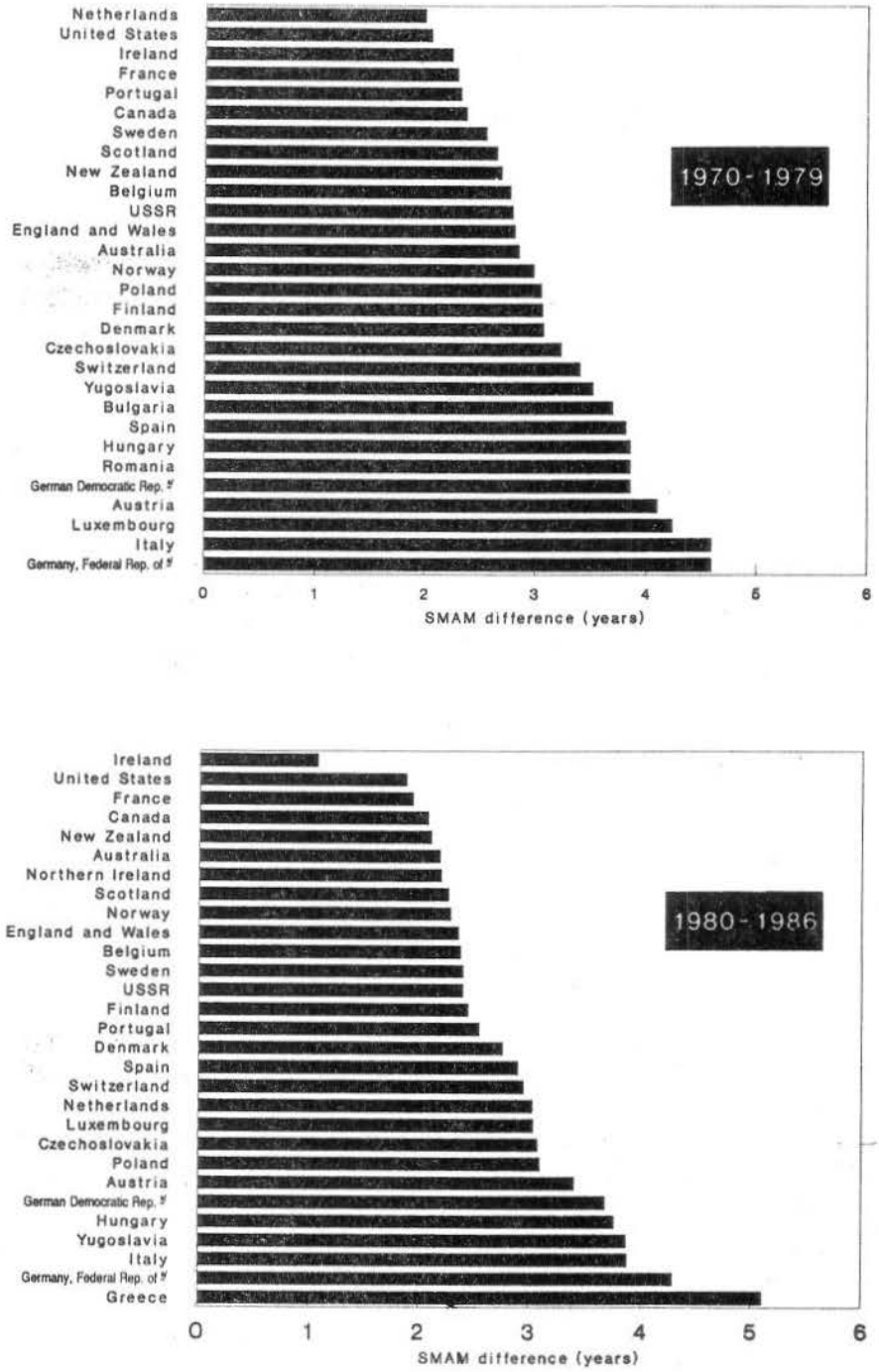


Figure 23 *(continued)*



Source: Annex table A.4.

Note: SMAM = singulate mean age at marriage.

[a] The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

much. As was shown in the preceding chapters, marriage remains universal among both men and women in most countries of Africa and Asia, suggesting that by the time they reach age 50, successive cohorts marry more or less to the same extent throughout the successive decades.

The prevalence indicators of Europe, Northern America, Oceania and the USSR (however, see table 45 and figures 24 and 25), although comparable to those used in the other world regions, do not depict satisfactorily the marriage experience of the post-war period. This inadequacy can be seen from the increasing marriage prevalence shown in these data. The highest levels are reported for the 1980 censuses, which actually reflect the marriage revival experienced by men and women after the Second World War.

To examine marriage prevalence between 1950 and 1980, intercensal estimates of marriage prevalence are preferable because they are indices of prevalence at age 50 resulting from the nuptiality that prevailed between two successive censuses. 5/ Such indices are presented in table 46 and figures 26 and 27 along with a single census estimate for 1950. The latter estimate is not directly comparable to the intercensal estimates but is included to represent, in summary, marriage prevalence during the decades before 1950.

Bearing in mind these observations, it can be said that the indices in the first column (table 46) confirm a low prevalence pattern that previously characterized most of the European and non-European developed countries (see chapter I). The censuses taken around 1950 reported approximately 90-91 per cent of males ever married in almost all countries; there were some exceptions, notably in Eastern Europe, where levels as high as 98 per cent were reported, and in Southern Europe. Among women, prevalence levels of fewer than 90 per cent and even about, or fewer than, 80 per cent were recorded in Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Switzerland. In all of the Eastern European countries, where prevalence has traditionally been higher than in the rest of Europe, more than 90 per cent of women had ever been married by age 50. Of the non-European countries, only the United States exceeded 90 per cent prevalence for both sexes in 1950.

When examining the period 1950-1980 on the basis of intercensal prevalence indicators, one sees distinct stages in marriage prevalences, characterized by an upward and then a downward trend (table 46 and figure 26-27). During the period 1950-1960, prevalence levels at age 50 had already increased and were considerably higher than in the past for both sexes, already reflecting the post-war marriage recovery (Wunsch, 1982; Coleman, 1980), except in Southern Europe. The trend for the period 1960-1970 shows the continuation of this marriage revival, with prevalence levels for both sexes even slightly higher in most, although not all, countries. Indeed, there are variations in the timing of peak prevalence levels: in some Northern European countries, the maxima appeared in the decade of the 1950s; in others, notably in Western Europe, they occurred in the 1960s. Lastly, estimates for the period 1970-1980 (or later) show that the conditions that favoured a high degree of prevalence have receded and that, except in Southern Europe, marriage prevalence has declined, in some countries quite sharply. The upward and downward trend in marriage prevalence is illustrated by the irregular inverse U-shaped curve seen in figure 23.

Table 45. Marriage prevalence by sex, percentage ever married by age 50 measured by single census estimates, Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR, 1950/51-1980/81

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (percentage points)
			Men		
Northern America					
Canada	87.1	89.5	91.1	92.4	0.18
United States of America	91.5	92.6	93.6	94.0	0.08
Europe					
Eastern Europe					
Bulgaria	98.1 a/	98.4 b/	98.1 c/	..	0.00
Czechoslovakia	94.7 d/	94.7	94.8	94.3	-0.01
German Democratic Republic e/	96.1	97.8	98.0	96.8	0.02
Hungary	94.1 f/	94.6	95.9	95.3	0.04
Poland	..	96.1	95.7 g/	94.7 h/	-0.06
Romania	..	97.4 i/	97.8 j/	..	0.04
Northern Europe					
Denmark	90.4	90.5	90.6	90.9	0.02
Finland	88.3	89.9	89.2	86.7	-0.05
Ireland	69.0	70.4	71.9	76.1	0.24
Norway	84.9	86.7	87.6	88.9	0.13
Sweden	84.3	85.6	86.7	87.2	0.10
United Kingdom					
England and Wales	90.8	90.8	90.8	90.8	0.00
Scotland	87.0	87.8	88.7	90.1	0.10
Northern Ireland	80.0	81.6	..	86.2	0.21
Southern Europe					
Greece	93.7 k/	93.0 k/	..	95.1	0.05
Italy	91.3	91.2	89.3	91.2	0.00
Portugal	88.7	88.9	91.9	94.2	-0.18
Spain	91.0	91.6	91.8	90.4	-0.02
Yugoslavia	95.6 l/	..	96.4	96.2	0.02
Western Europe					
Austria	90.8	92.1	93.4	92.7	0.06
Belgium	90.9 d/	90.9	92.0	91.9	0.03
France k/	89.7 m/	89.5 n/	89.3 c/	89.5 o/	-0.01
Germany, Federal Republic of e/	93.9	95.1	95.6	93.7	-0.01
Luxembourg	87.0 d/	88.5	91.4	91.5	0.14
Netherlands	91.5 d/	92.4	93.4	92.3	0.02
Switzerland	87.0	88.2	90.2	91.4	0.15

Table 45 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (percentage points)
Oceania					
Australia	88.4 m/	90.3	91.3	91.8	0.13
New Zealand	89.5	91.1	92.0	92.7	0.11
USSR	..	..	98.5 p/	97.9 q/	-0.10
		Women			
Northern America					
Canada	88.7	90.1	92.6	94.1	0.18
United States of America	92.2	92.9	94.5	95.3	0.10
Europe					
Eastern Europe					
Bulgaria	97.9 a/	97.9 b/	97.9 c/	..	0.00
Czechoslovakia	90.3 d/	93.5	94.9	96.3	0.18
German Democratic Republic e/	90.6	92.9	90.7	93.5	0.10
Hungary	91.8 f/	92.7	94.3	95.9	0.13
Poland	..	90.9	94.7 g/	95.5 h/	0.19
Romania	..	96.0 i/	96.4 j/	..	0.04
Northern Europe					
Denmark	85.5	89.7	92.9	94.6	0.57
Finland	81.0	85.0	87.7	89.5	0.28
Ireland	74.3	76.9	81.2	85.4	0.37
Norway	79.3	85.7	91.1	94.3	0.50
Sweden	80.9	87.7	92.0	93.1	0.41
United Kingdom					
England and Wales	84.9	88.6	91.9	93.9	0.30
Scotland	79.7	84.5	88.4	91.7	0.40
Northern Ireland	76.4	80.3	..	88.5	0.40
Southern Europe					
Greece	95.0 k/	93.8 k/	..	93.3	-0.06
Italy	85.2	86.2	86.2	90.4	0.17
Portugal	83.0	84.0	87.3	91.3	0.28
Spain	85.2	85.7	87.3	89.9	0.16
Yugoslavia	94.3 l/	93.9	94.1	95.0	0.03

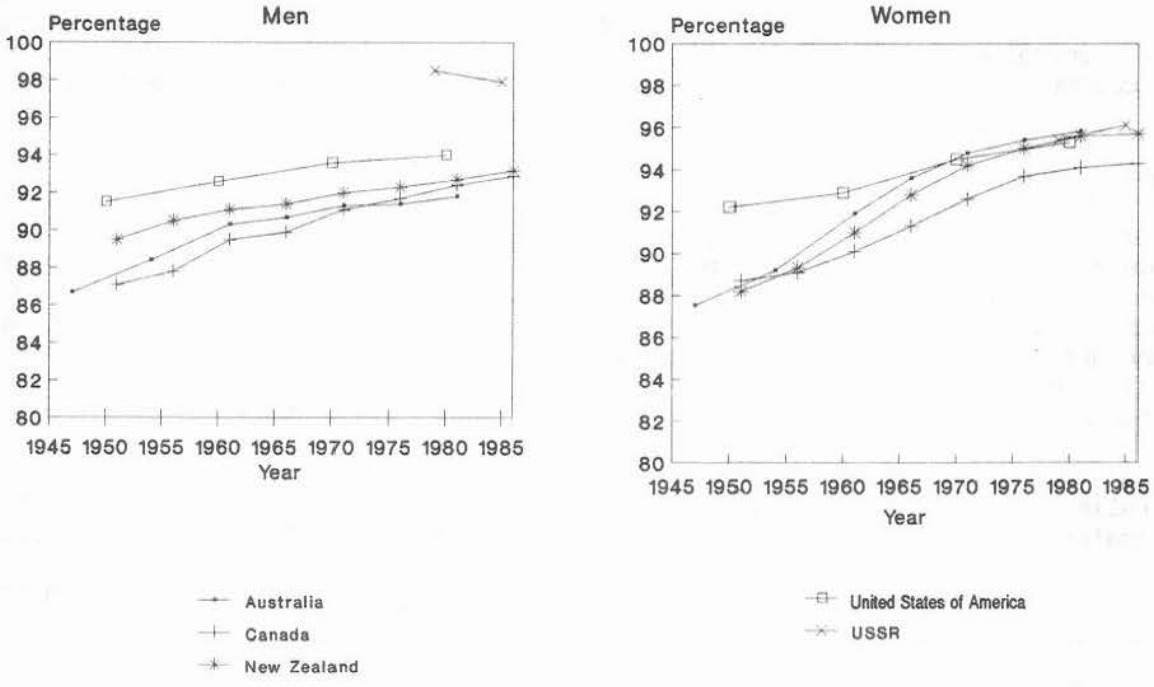
Table 45 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census 1950 or 1951	1960 or 1961	1970 or 1971	1980 or 1981	Average change per annum, 1950/51-1980/81 (percentage points)
Western Europe					
Austria	85.7	87.8	88.8	91.3	0.19
Belgium	89.6 d/	90.9	92.2	94.0	0.13
France k/	89.7 m/	90.9 n/	91.7 c/	92.9 o/	0.11
Germany, Federal Republic of	87.4	88.0	90.2	92.9	0.18
Luxembourg	85.4 d/	87.8	89.4	92.5	0.22
Netherlands	86.7 d/	88.6	95.5	93.2	0.20
Switzerland	80.8	84.1	87.4	90.3	0.32
Oceania					
Australia	89.2 m/	91.9	94.8	95.4	0.24
New Zealand	88.2	91.0	94.2	95.6	0.25
USSR	..	..	95.4 p/	96.1 q/	0.12

Source: Annex table A.4.

a/ 1956.
b/ 1965.
c/ 1975.
d/ 1947.
e/ The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.
f/ 1949.
g/ 1978.
h/ 1984.
i/ 1966.
j/ 1977.
k/ Age classification based on year of birth rather than on completed years of age
l/ 1953.
m/ 1954.
n/ 1962.
o/ 1982.
p/ 1979.
q/ 1985.

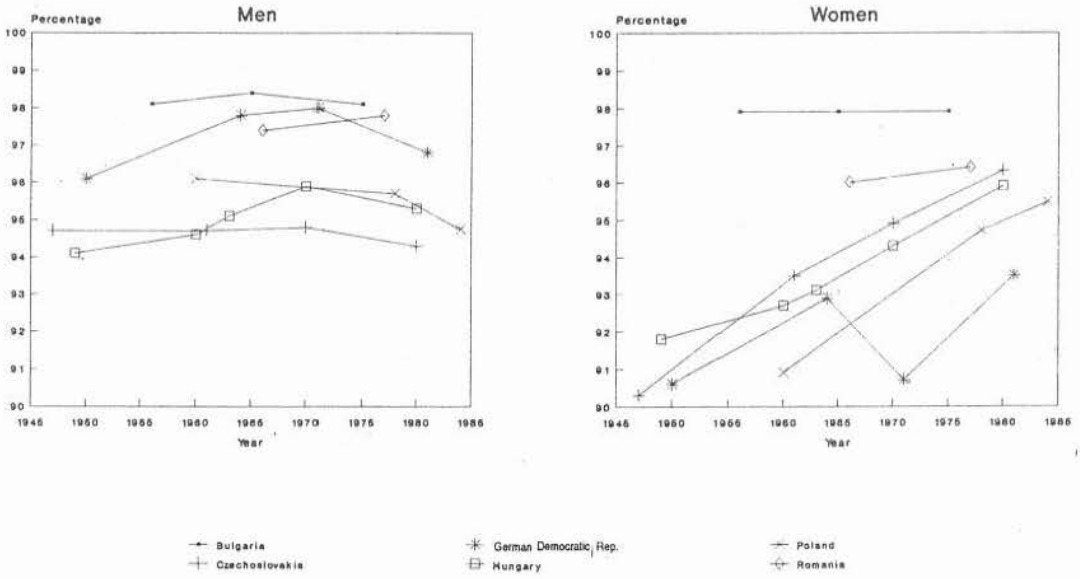
Figure 24. Trends in percentage ever married by age 50, single census estimates, Northern America, Oceania and the USSR, 1950–1985



Source: Annex table A.4.

Figure 25. Trends in percentage ever married by age 50, single census estimates, Europe, by subregion, 1950–1985

Eastern Europe



Northern Europe

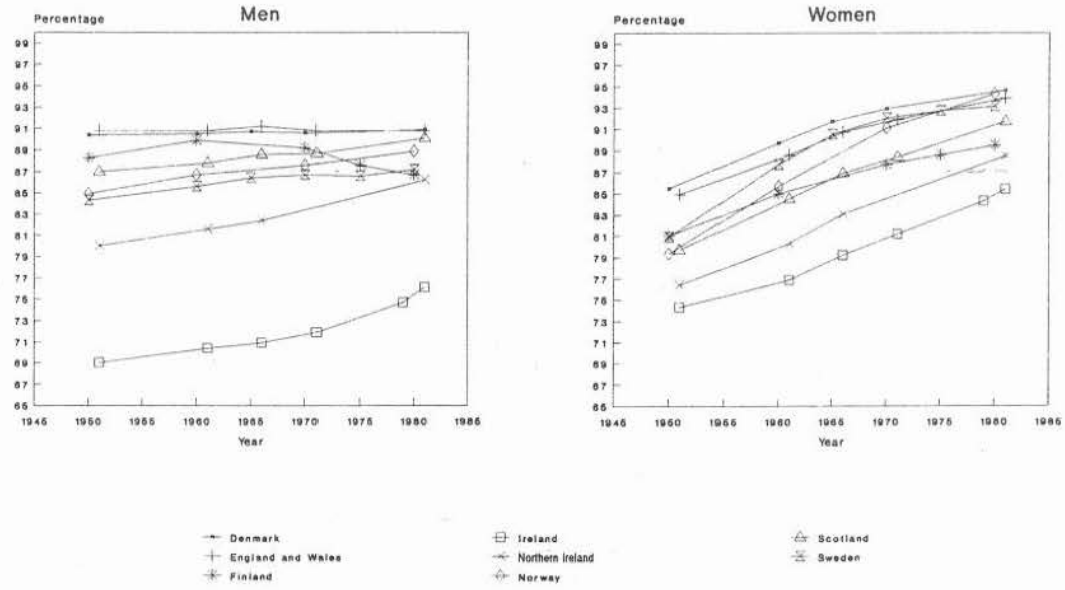
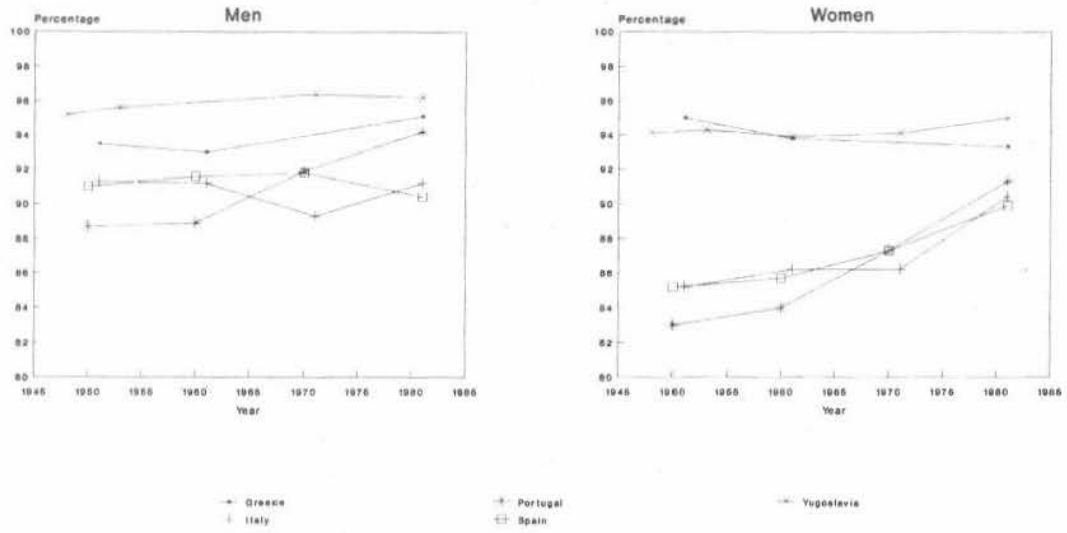
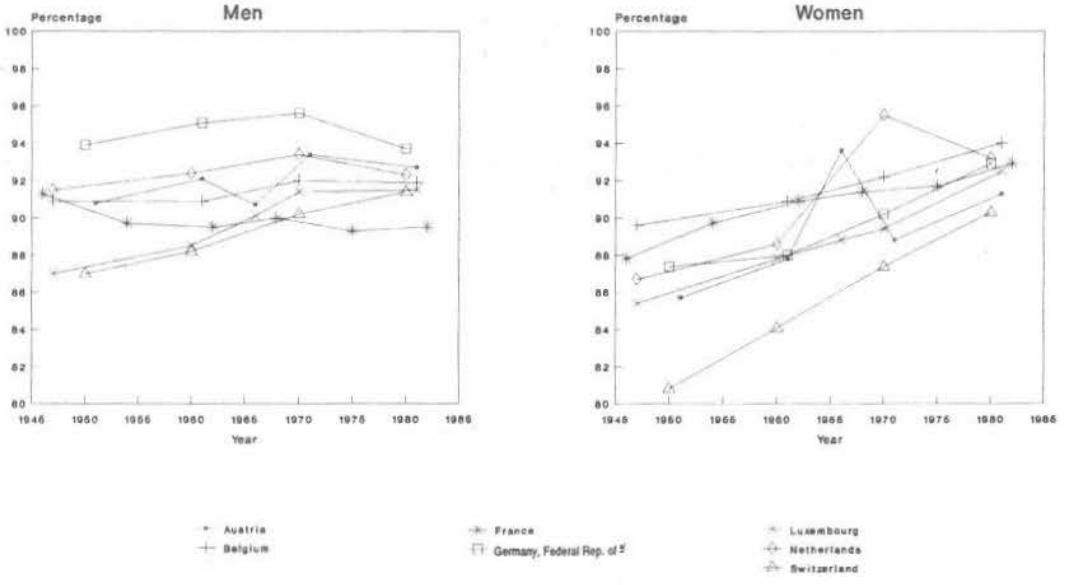


Figure 25 *(continued)*

Southern Europe



Western Europe



Source: Annex table A.4.

[a]The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

Table 46. Marriage prevalence by sex, percentage ever married by age 50 measured by intercensal estimates, Northern America, Europe and Oceania, 1950-1980

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Single census prevalence	Intercensal prevalence 1950-1960	1960-1970	1970-1980	Average change per annum 1950-1980 (percentage points)
			Men			
Northern America						
Canada	1951	87.1	92.4 a/	93.8 b/	89.8 c/	-0.11
United States of America	1950	91.5	94.8	94.1	90.0	-0.24
Europe						
Eastern Europe						
Bulgaria	1956	98.1	98.2 d/	96.8 e/	..	-0.14
Czechoslovakia	1947	94.7	..	95.6 b/	93.4	-0.24
German Democratic Republic f/	1950	96.1	..	94.9 g/	92.3 c/	..
Hungary	1949	94.1	98.2	96.1	93.3	-0.25
Poland	1960	96.1	..	95.3	92.9 h/	-0.19
Romania	1966	97.4	..	..	96.8 i/	..
Northern Europe						
Denmark	1950	90.4	92.8	91.8	80.1	-0.64
Finland	1950	88.3	90.4	88.8	80.4	-0.50
Ireland	1951	69.0	77.2 a/	85.1 b/	87.3 c/	0.55
Norway	1950	84.9	91.7	92.2	83.7 j/	-0.35
Sweden	1950	84.3	89.0	88.7	68.1 j/	-0.91
United Kingdom						
England and Wales	1951	90.8	92.4 a/	94.0 b/	87.3 c/	-0.26
Scotland	1951	87.0	92.2 a/	93.4 b/	89.0 c/	-0.16
Southern Europe						
Greece	1951	93.7	..	..	..	..
Italy	1951	91.3	91.9 a/	90.8 b/	93.6 c/	0.09
Portugal	1950	88.7	91.3	95.9	97.3 c/	0.30
Spain	1950	91.0	94.9	92.8	92.6	-0.12
Yugoslavia	1948	95.2	98.5 k/	..	93.3 c/	-0.21

Table 46 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Single census prevalence	Intercensal prevalence 1950-1960	Intercensal prevalence 1960-1970	Intercensal prevalence 1970-1980	Average change per annum 1950-1980 (percentage points)
			Men			
Western Europe						
Austria	1951	90.8	95.7 a/	93.9 b/	90.0 c/	-0.29
Belgium	1947	90.9	..	93.9	90.9	-0.30
France	1954	89.7	..	92.0 l/	87.4 m/	-0.33
Germany, Federal Republic of f/	1950	93.9	97.8	95.5	84.4 j/	-0.67
Luxembourg	1947	87.0	..	93.6	96.0 c/	0.22
Netherlands	1947	91.5	..	94.8	88.0	-0.68
Switzerland	1950	87.0	92.1	94.1	86.0	-0.31
Oceania						
Australia	1954	88.4	92.3 n/	94.7 b/	82.3 o/	-0.57
New Zealand	1951	89.5	93.4 a/	95.4 b/	88.1 o/	-0.27
			Women			
Northern America						
Canada	1951	88.7	95.1 a/	94.5 b/	90.1 c/	-0.22
United States of America	1950	92.2	96.2	93.3	90.4	-0.29
Europe						
Eastern Europe						
Bulgaria	1956	90.3	98.5 d/	98.1 e/	..	-0.04
Czechoslovakia	1947	90.3	..	96.9 b/	96.1	-0.09
German Democratic Republic f/	1950	90.6	..	95.7 g/	95.2 c/	-0.07
Hungary	1949	91.8	97.3	97.0	96.2	-0.06
Poland	1960	90.9	..	95.7	95.4 h/	-0.03
Romania	1966	96.0	..	..	96.5 i/	..
Northern Europe						
Denmark	1950	85.5	95.2	95.6	86.0	-0.46
Finland	1950	81.0	90.6	90.8	85.9	-0.24
Ireland	1951	74.3	85.0 a/	90.8 b/	92.1 c/	0.36
Norway	1950	79.3	95.6	95.5	88.6 j/	-0.32
Sweden	1950	80.9	94.1	92.9	68.7 j/	-1.15
United Kingdom						
England and Wales	1951	84.9	94.8 a/	95.4 b/	92.0 c/	-0.14
Scotland	1951	79.7	92.9 a/	94.7 b/	92.7 c/	-0.01

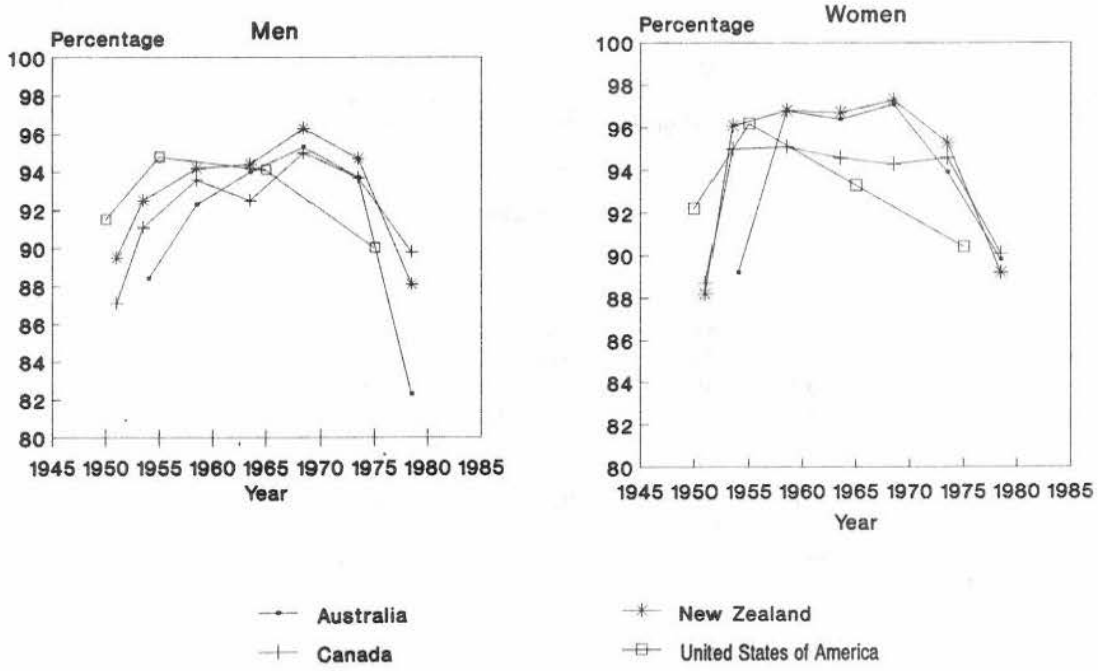
Table 46 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Year of census	Single census prevalence	Intercensal prevalence 1950-1960	Intercensal prevalence 1960-1970	Intercensal prevalence 1970-1980	Average change per annum 1950-1980 (percentage points)
			Women			
Southern Europe						
Greece	1951	95.0	..	..	..	..
Italy	1951	85.2	88.6 a/	91.9 b/	93.8 c/	0.26
Portugal	1950	83.0	87.5	93.5	96.5 c/	0.45
Spain	1950	85.2	91.0	93.4	93.8	-0.14
Yugoslavia	1948	94.1	94.4 k/	..	93.3 c/	-0.21
Western Europe						
Austria	1951	85.7	92.8 a/	93.9 b/	90.9 c/	-0.10
Belgium	1947	89.6	..	95.9	93.8	-0.21
France	1954	89.7	..	94.1 l/	91.2 m/	-0.20
Germany, Federal Republic of f/	1950	87.4	94.2	95.7	85.9 j/	-0.38
Luxembourg	1947	85.4	..	95.1	91.0 c/	0.37
Netherlands	1947	86.7	..	96.0	92.2	-0.38
Switzerland	1950	80.8	90.9	93.6	86.9	-0.20
Oceania						
Australia	1954	89.2	96.8 n/	96.8 b/	89.8 o/	-0.40
New Zealand	1951	88.2	96.5 a/	97.0 b/	89.2 o/	-0.37

Sources: Annex tables A.4 and A.5.

a/ 1951-1961.
b/ 1961-1971.
c/ 1971-1981.
d/ 1955-1961.
e/ 1965-1975.
f/ The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.
g/ 1966-1971.
h/ 1973-1984.
i/ 1967-1977.
j/ 1975-1980.
k/ 1948-1953.
l/ 1963-1968.
m/ 1977-1982.
n/ 1956-1961.
o/ 1976-1981.

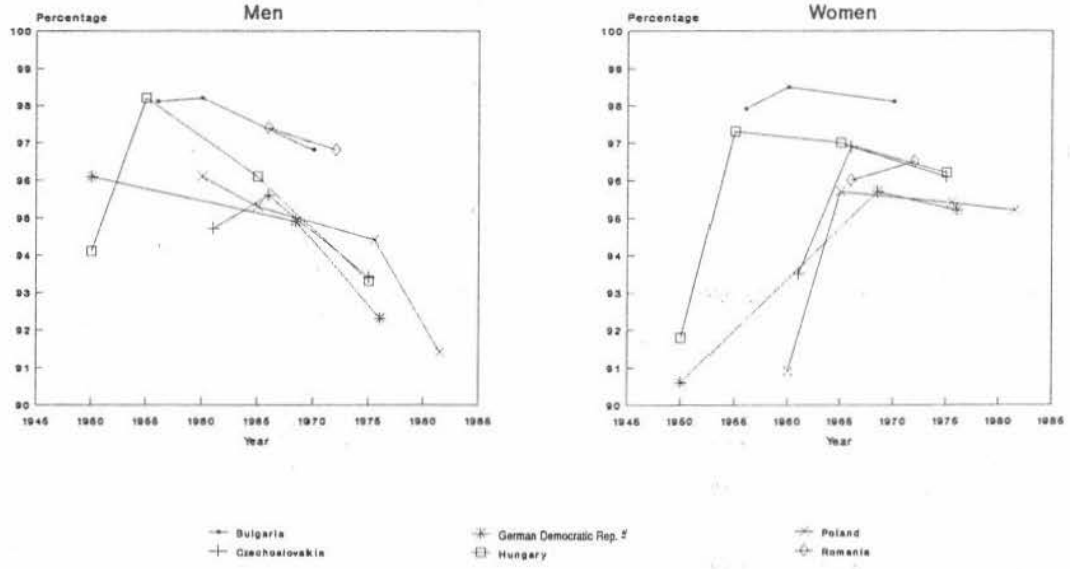
Figure 26. Trends in percentage ever married, intercensal estimates, Northern America and Oceania, 1950–1985



Sources: Annex tables A.4 and A.5.

Figure 27. Trends in percentage ever married, intercensal estimates, Europe, by subregion, 1950–1985

Eastern Europe



Northern Europe

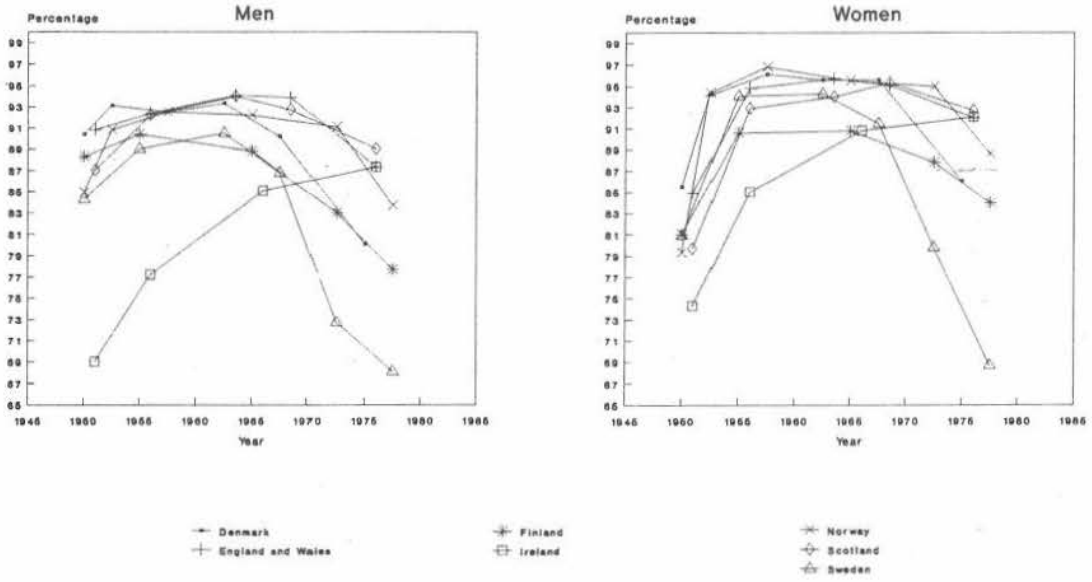
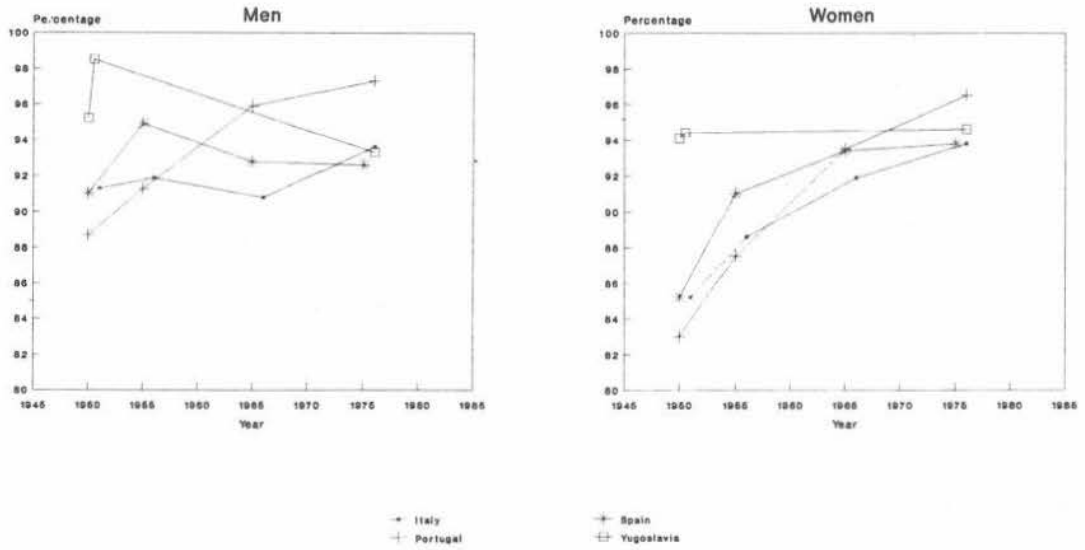
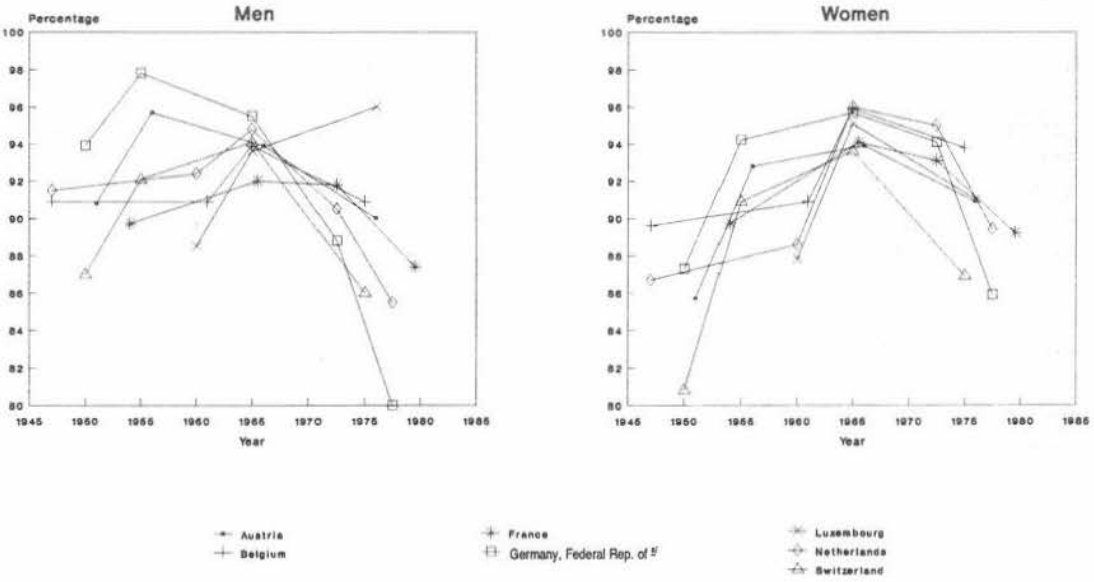


Figure 27. *(continued)*

Southern Europe



Western Europe



Sources: Annex tables A.4 and A.5.

[a]The data that relate to the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic include the relevant data relating to Berlin, for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

It should be noted that this prevalence pattern, which characterizes both sexes, emerged not only in the countries of Northern and Western Europe, but also in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. The similarity in trends is all the more noteworthy because these four countries experienced quite different economic and demographic (and political) conditions both prior to and after the Second World War (see, e.g., Festy, 1973). Ireland, with its traditional very low marriage prevalence (69 per cent in the 1951 census) is an exception to the general trend. Prevalence of marriage in this country has risen and is still rising, from 77.2 per cent during the period 1951-1961 to 87.3 during 1971-1981 (table 46). The upward-downward trend in overall marriage prevalence is also consistent with the decline and subsequent increase in SMAM during the same time period.

In general, the prevalence levels themselves were considerably higher during the period 1950-1960 than they were prior to the 1950s. With the subsequent decline, however, prevalence during 1970-1980, in general, fell below the 1950-1960 level. In the United States and in Eastern and Southern Europe, prevalence among men still exceeded 90 per cent in the period 1970-1980; and in Eastern Europe, it still fluctuated between 92 and 97 per cent. It fell below that level in all other countries, except Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg. During 1970-1980, prevalence was lowest in Northern Europe: it varied in the 80 per cent range and fell to 68 per cent in Sweden.

Among women, marriage prevalence follows the same trend as among men but levels off at a somewhat higher threshold. When there were declines, they were quite substantial and brought marriage prevalence during 1970-1980 in almost all countries below the level observed two decades earlier, as can be seen from the average decline shown in the last column of table 46. More countries experienced female prevalence levels exceeding 90 per cent in 1970-1980. In the Nordic countries of Northern Europe, however, female prevalence fell below 90 per cent; and in Sweden, for both men and women, it fell to 68 per cent.

In Eastern Europe, where marriage prevalence was traditionally higher than in the rest of Europe, the proportions of women ever married by age 50 still fell to 95-97 per cent. The overall trend is more difficult to ascertain because of the missing observations for several census years, but the data given in table 46 suggest a post-war increase; and in the two last decades, marriage prevalence declined, an assumption supported by the evidence of later marriages discussed above.

It should be borne in mind that the marriage prevalence indicators shown in figures 26 and 27 lead to different conclusions essentially because single census and intercensal percentages measure two different aspects of the marriage experience. In the first case, prevalence at age 50 is a summary cohort indicator which describes the nuptiality achievement of a population subject to the marriage probabilities as they existed some 35 years prior to the date of the census. The intercensal percentages are period indicators which summarize the marriage prevalence of a hypothetical population subjected to the probabilities of marriage that prevailed at each age during the period between the two censuses.

In Southern Europe, the inverted U-shaped trend is not observed and marriage prevalence is still rising among women. Prevalence levels exceed 90 per cent and are comparable to those observed in the Eastern European countries. Portugal, with 96.5 per cent of women ever married by age 50, experienced the highest prevalence levels during the period 1970-1980.

Lastly, in Western Europe, female prevalence levels have also declined although to a somewhat lesser extent than in Northern Europe. Proportions of women ever married by age 50 still exceeded 90 per cent, except in the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland, where 86-87 per cent was reached during the period 1970-1980. Over all, women experienced higher marriage prevalence than men in all countries.

B. Cohabitation

The term "cohabitation" as used here defines a type of marital union similar to the consensual unions found in Latin America and the common-law unions found elsewhere. This term is short for "unmarried cohabitation", a concept not always properly defined and not uniformly utilized. 6/ In this chapter, the term "cohabitation" is used because it has been widely adopted in the demographic literature to designate non-legalized conjugal unions in the developed countries and because it is convenient for defining both pre-marital and post-marital cohabitation. Indeed, as such, it defines short-term "living together", which has become common in recent years among the young, regardless of whether they subsequently marry each other. It also appropriately defines the longer term arrangement, which would formerly have been called "common-law" union and which is adopted by separated, never-married and previously married persons who cannot enter or do not want to enter into a legal union.

1. Levels and trends

The increase in age at first marriage and the decline in marriage prevalence discussed above evolved concomitantly with an increasing trend in unmarried cohabitation in a number of European countries as well as in Australia and the United States (Léridon, 1981; Davis, 1985; van de Kaa, 1987; Thornton, 1988). Although consensual unions were not an unknown phenomenon in Europe in the past, this practice reappeared more recently first in the Nordic countries 7/ and subsequently in a number of other European and non-European developed countries (Trost, 1975; Glick and Norton, 1977; Brown and Kiernan, 1981). An overview of available data on cohabitation among women is presented in table 47.

Despite the limitations on comparability and the heterogeneity of sources, 8/ the data provide a general appraisal of the cohabitation situation in selected countries. The highest levels are observed among women in age groups 15-24 and 25-29. The proportions cohabiting are highest in the Nordic countries. The estimates presented reveal the very high prevalence of cohabitation in Denmark and Sweden as early as 1975, confirming both its earlier emergence and higher prevalence. In age group 20-24, for instance, during the 1970s, 12 per cent in Norway and 29 per cent in Denmark and Sweden were cohabiting. During the 1980s, the corresponding figures for that age group were 28.0, 37.0 and 44.0 per cent for those three countries, respectively. Increments between the 1970s and the 1980s were also substantial in age group 25-29.

Table 47. Percentage in cohabitation among all women, by age group, selected countries of Europe and Northern America, 1975-1987

Country and year	Age group					
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
Canada						
1981	2.9	14.8	20.7	18.8	16.4	13.2
Denmark						
1975	23.0 a/	29.0	10.0	4.0	5.0	4.0
1981	..	37.0	23.0	11.0	..	..
Finland						
1978	8.0		6.0			
France						
1975 b/	0.5	3.0	1.6	0.9	0.4	0.8
1981 b/	1.0	8.2	5.1	2.1	1.0	0.8
1986	..	19.3 c/	11.3	8.5	5.2	4.6
Netherlands						
1975	1.0	10.0	..	..	..	..
1982	2.0	16.0	10.0	..	..	..
Norway						
1977	5.6 a/	12.2	4.5	2.4	2.3	1.3
1986	12.0 a/	28.0	16.0	9.0	..	..
Sweden						
1975	14.2 a/	28.8	17.0	7.8	4.6	3.6
1980	12.8 a/	31.7	26.0	14.3	8.2	5.8
1981	..	44.0	31.0	14.0	10.0	7.0
United Kingdom d/						
1976	0.5 e/	2.3	3.0	2.0		
1979	4.0	5.0	4.0	2.0	1.0	
1986-1987	8.0		11.0	6.0	4.0	
United States of America						
1982 f/	1.8	5.4	16.5	10.6	3.2	0.5
1986-1987 b/	9.0 f/		16.0	17.0	13.0	12.0

(Sources and notes follow)

Sources:

Canada: Yves Peron, Evelyne Lapierre-Adamcyk and Denis Morissette, "Les répercussions des nouveaux comportments démographiques sur la vie familale: la situation canadienne", Revue internationale d'action communautaire, vol. 18, No. 58 (Autumn 1987), p. 63, table 3.

Denmark: 1975: Poul Christian Matthiessen, "Typologies of family formation and dissolution and recent changes, drawing particular attention to minority types", in International Population Conference, Manila, 1981, vol. 1 (Liège, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1981), p. 491, table 3; 1981: Nico Keilman, "Recent trends in family and household composition in Europe", European Journal of Population (Amsterdam), vol. 3, No. 3/4 (July 1987), p. 310, table 11.

Finland: Jarl Lindgren, "A new phenomenon: cohabitation outside marriage", in Yearbook of Population Research in Finland. XVII 1979 (Helsinki, Vaestontutkimuslaitos, 1980), derived from table 3.

France: 1975, 1981: Institut national d'études démographiques, "Douzième rapport sur la situation démographique de la France", Population (Paris), vol. 38, No. 4-5 (July-October 1983), table 25; 1986: Henri Léridon and Catherine Villeneuve-Gokalp, "Les nouveau couples: nombre, caractèristiqués et attitudes", Population (Paris), vol. 43, No. 3 (March-April 1988), table 1.

Netherlands: Louis Roussel, "Le développement de la cohabitation sans mariage et ses effets sur la nuptialité dans les pays industrialisés", Paris, Institut d'études démographiques, 1986, table 2 (mimeographed).

Norway: 1977: Patrick Festy, "Evolution contemporaine du mode de formation des familles en Europe occidetale", European Journal of Population (Amsterdam), vol. 1, No. 2-3 (July 1985), table 4; 1986: Nico Keilman, "Recent trends in family and household composition in Europe", European Journal of Population (Amsterdam), vol. 3, No. 3/4 (July 1987), p. 310, table.11.

Sweden: 1975, 1980: Patrick Festy, "Evolution contemporaine du mode de formation des familles en Europe occidentale", European Journal of Population (Amsterdam), vol. 1, No. 2-3 (July 1985), table 4; 1981: Institut national d'études démographiques, "Douzième rapport sur la situation démographique de la France", Population (Paris), vol. 38, No. 4-5 (July-October 1983), p. 702, table 28.

United Kingdom: 1977: Henri Léridon, "Les facteurs de la fécondité dan les pays developpés", in World Fertility Survey Conference 1980: Record of Proceedings, vol. 1 (Voorburg, International Statistical Institute, 1981), p. 424, table 4; 1979: Institut national d'études démographiques, "Douziéme rapport sur la situation démographique de la France", Population (Paris), vol. 38, No. 4-5 (July-October 1983), p. 700, table 26; 1986-1987: estimates provided by Institut national d'études démographiques, Paris, 1990; derived from John Haskey and Kathleen Kiernan, "Cohabitation in Great Britain--characteristics and estimated numbers of cohabiting partners", Population Trends (London), No. 58 (Winter 1989), pp. 23-31.

United States of America: 1982: Department of Health and Human Services, Married and Unmarried Couples, United States, 1982, DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 87-1991, Series 23, No. 15 (Washington, D.C., 1987), table 15; 1986-1987: Larry L. Bumpass and James A. Sweet, "National estimates of cohabitation", Demography (Alexandria, Virginia), vol. 26, No. 4 (November 1989), table 1.

a/ Refers to age group 18-19.
b/ Refers to women never married.
c/ Refers to age group 21-24.
d/ Not including Northern Ireland.
e/ Refers to age group 16-19.
f/ Refers to age group 19-24.

The data for France, although not directly comparable, nevertheless suggest a similar age pattern, as do the data for the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Only Canada emerges as an exception, with peak prevalence levels of cohabitation at ages 25-34.

The general concentration of cohabitation mainly at ages under 30 years confirms the attraction of this new marital arrangement among the young, most of whom have never been married. A study of households in France conducted in 1985 reported that at ages 21-24 years, 96.9 per cent of the cohabiting women had never been married, and at 25-29 years, 81.0 per cent were in that category (Léridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1988).

A Canadian survey (1984) estimated that the probability of entering cohabitation as a first union was 29 per 100 among women in cohorts aged 18-29, as compared with only 1 per 100 among women aged 40-49 (Burch and Madan, 1986). Conversely, in Italy (not shown in table 47), where cohabitation is low, with only 1.3 per cent of all couples living in non-legal marital unions, only 30 per cent of the unmarried couples are under age 25 (Golini, 1986). In Australia, although cohabitation prevails at older ages, two thirds of those reported to be cohabitating by the 1982 Family Survey had never been married (Khoo, 1987) and about 50 per cent of women aged 15-19 who were in a conjugal union were simply living together (Australia, 1982).

Whether cohabitation will become an alternative to legal unions or only a stage in the process of marriage formation cannot be readily ascertained. In fact, both alternatives may be true for different population subgroups and will obviously vary with culture and personal circumstances. The data given in table 48, based on successive marriage cohorts, suggest that the more recent the marriage cohort, the higher the prevalence of pre-marital cohabitation. In marriage cohorts of the late 1970s, 20 per cent of the married couples interviewed in the United Kingdom had cohabited prior to marriage; corresponding figures for France and Norway, respectively, were 31 and 47 per cent. In Sweden, with about 90 per cent pre-marital cohabitation, this type of union prior to marriage has become part of the process of marriage formation.

The data given in table 49, which covers current cohabitation in different age groups, show that of all women currently in a conjugal union (married and cohabiting) the proportion of those cohabiting decreases steadily as ages increase. In Denmark and Sweden, pre-marital cohabitation, which is very high at ages 20-24, is considerably lower at ages 30-34. This finding may, of course, reflect either increasing prevalence of cohabitation over time or separation or legalization of unmarried cohabitation as the couples get older. Patterns of union dissolution and of union legalization differ in these countries and affect these rates. 9/

Evidence was presented in table 48 for several countries to support the hypothesis that greater proportions of women enter a cohabitational relationship as an intermediate step in marriage formation. The data given in table 50 show that when married and unmarried cohabitation are considered together, overall marriage prevalence has changed little over the years, at least in the countries shown in the table. In Sweden, and the United Kingdom, there even seems to have been a slight increase in prevalence (Trost, 1988).

Table 48. Percentage of women who had cohabited prior to marriage, by marriage cohort, selected European countries and United States of America, 1947-1984

Country	Marriage cohorts			
	..	..	1971-1975	..
Denmark a/	..	..	80.0	..
France a/		1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1977
	..	13.0	22.0	31.0
Norway b/	1947-1965	1965-1970	1970-1975	1975-1977
	11.0	15.0	26.0	47.0
Sweden b/	1950-1965	1965-1970	1970-1975	1975-1981
	39.0	53.0	81.0	89.0
	..	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1977
United Kingdom a/ c/	..	4.0	12.0	20.0
United States of America d/	..	1965-1974	1975-1979	1980-1984
		9.0	26.0	34.0

Source: For United States, Larry L. Bumpass and James A. Sweet, "National estimates of cohabitation", Demography (Alexandria, Virginia), vol. 26, No. 4 (1989), table 2. For other countries, Ann K. Blanc, "The effect of non-marital cohabitation on family formation and dissolution; a comparative analysis of Sweden and Norway", doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1985, table 1.2.

a/ Currently married women.
b/ Ever-married women.
c/ Not including Northern Ireland.
d/ Cohabitation with spouse only.

Table 49. Percentage of currently cohabiting women among those in any conjugal union, by age group, selected European countries, 1980-1986

Country	Year	Age group						
		15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Denmark	1981	..	65	29	13	..	..	..
France	1981	..	16	6	2	..	..	..
	1986	..	36 a/	14	10	6	5	..
Netherlands	1984	..	28	13	5	..	..	..
Sweden	1981	..	69	37	18	..	..	..
United Kingdom b/	1980	..	11	6	2	..	..	..

Source: For France 1986, derived from Henri Léridon and Catherine Villeneuve-Gokalp, "Les nouveaux couples: nombres, caractéristiques, attitudes", Population (Paris), vol. 43, No. 2 (March-April 1988), table 1. For other countries, Dirk van de Kaa, Europe's Second Demographic Transition, Population Bulletin, vol. 42, No. 1 (Washington, D.C., Population Reference Bureau, 1987), p. 18.

a/ Refers to age group 21-24.
b/ Not including Northern Ireland.

Table 50. Percentage of women aged 20-34 currently married or cohabiting, selected countries, 1960-1983

Country	Year	Age group 20-24	25-29	30-34
Canada	1971	46.8	79.6	86.9
	1981	46.9	77.7	86.8
Denmark	1965 a/	54.0	84.0	88.0
	1976	64.0	86.0	89.0
	1983	55.0	82.0	87.0
Sweden	1960 a/,b/	72.5	79.3	88.1
United Kingdom c/	1976	59.0	84.0	86.0
	1980	54.0	81.0	88.0
	1975 c/	52.5	80.3	89.6

Sources:

Canada: Louis Duchesne, Les ménages et les familles au Québec (Québec, Bureau de la Statistique du Québec, 1987), table 4.6.

Denmark: 1965, 1987: Poul Christian Matthiessen, "Typologies of family formation and dissolution and recent changes, drawing particular attention to minority types", in International Population Conference, Manila, 1981, vol. 1 (Liège, International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1981), table 6; 1983: Poul Christian Matthiessen, "Changing fertility and family formation in Denmark", World Health Statistics Quarterly (Geneva), vol. 40, No. 1 (1987), table 9.

Sweden: Institut national d'études démographiques, "Douzième rapport sur la situation démographique de la France", Population (Paris), vol. 38, No. 4-5 (July-October, 1983), table 27.

United Kingdom: François Höpflinger, "Changing marriage behaviour: some European comparisons", Genus (Rome), vol. XLI, No. 3-4 (July-December 1985), table 5.

a/ Legal unions only.
b/ Ever in a marital union.
c/ Not including Northern Ireland.

It is worth noting, however, that all marriage levels in the samples studied remained under 90 per cent. Given the limited number of age groups examined, one should bear in mind that probabilities of marriage vary and that the tempo of marriage may not be independent of the level of cohabitation. 10/

Cohabitation also prevails among formerly married persons, especially among the separated and divorced who may be unable or unwilling to remarry or at least to remarry immediately. The data given in table 51 shed some light on the current situation of cohabitation among formerly married women. Although levels remain relatively moderate in the United States, they are exceptionally high in France, where cohabitation among divorced women exceeds 40 per cent at ages 30-34 and 50 per cent at ages 35-39 (Léridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1988).

2. Determinants and significance

At this point, it is not easy to identify the specific factors that favoured the surge in unmarried cohabitation in a number of developed countries, particularly among the young. The major feature of this new type of marital arrangement is that it emerged on a large scale in a variety of countries of different historical backgrounds, religions, traditions and national conditions. Indeed, the increase in cohabitation took place not only in concomitance with changing attitudes towards marriage but in the wider context of changes in attitude towards divorce, birth control and child illegitimacy.

Although divorce does not bear directly on cohabitation trends, it does so indirectly if divorced persons are unwilling to remarry legally, or at least not before a trial period, or are unable to marry because the cohabiting partner is married. Increments in divorce may also deter increasing numbers of young people from immediately entering into a legal union without a trial period or may even lead some to oppose marriage completely.

Greater acceptability of contraception and abortion may also favour increased cohabitation. The greater acceptability and more widespread use of contraception among couples facilitate cohabitation while allowing the prevention of unwanted pregnancies. Cohabitation thus becomes a dependent variable of contraceptive use. On the other hand, if a pre-marital conception occurs and the unmarried couple is not ready for a legal union and does not want an illegitimate birth, the greater acceptability of abortion and the greater availability of legal interruption of pregnancy (with many countries now having abortion available on request or for social reasons; (United Nations, 1988c) 11/ will also permit unmarried couples to continue to cohabit.

The greater acceptability of illegitimate births also favours cohabitation, and illegitimacy did increase in recent years in many countries (Festy, 1984; Léridon, 1981; Tugault, 1984). Under such conditions, if a pre-marital conception occurs, unmarried cohabitation can continue with the child. The fact is that many illegitimate births are observed in countries where cohabitation prevalence is very high, notably in Denmark and Sweden, where in 1983 the ratio of illegitimate births to all births exceeded 40 per cent (Bourgeois-Pichat, 1986). 12/

Table 51. Percentage of women cohabiting among divorced women by age group, selected countries, 1975-1985

Country	Year	Age group					
		20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Australia	1982 a/ b/			20.0			
Denmark	1975 b/ c/	8.0	35.0	33.0	33.0	26.0	31.0
Sweden	1980 c/ d/		32.0		33.0	25.0	
United Kingdom e/	1979		25.0 f/			15.0	
United States of America	1982 b/	10.9	13.8	11.5	8.2	3.4	..

Sources:

Australia: Siew-Ean Khoo, "Living together as married: a profile of de facto couples in Australia", Journal of Marriage and the Family (Lincoln, Nebraska), vol. 49, No. 1 (February, 1987), p. 186.

Denmark: Ole Bertelsen, The Young Family in the 1970s (Copenhagen, Danish National Institute of Social Research, 1980), table 2.2.

Sweden: Thora Nilsson, "Les ménages en Suède, 1960-1980", Population (Paris), vol. 40, No. 2 (1985) (March-April), table 5.

United Kingdom: Audrey, Brown, and Kathleen Kiernan, "Cohabitation in Great Britain: evidence from the General Household Survey", Population Trends (London), No. 25 (1981) (Autumn), table 3.

United States of America: Department of Health and Human Services, Married and Unmarried Couples, United States, 1982, DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 87-1991, Series 23, No. 15 (Washington, D.C., 1987), p. 36, table 15.

a/ Refers to ages 15 or over.
b/ Including separated women.
c/ Including widows.
d/ Refers to both sexes.
e/ Not including Northern Ireland.
f/ Refers to women aged 18-34.

Studies also report substantial proportions of cohabiting couples with dependent children. 13/ In Australia, one study reported that 35.7 per cent of cohabiting couples in 1982 had children; this proportion was 27.8 per cent in the United States in 1981 (Australia, 1982; Spanier, 1983). In Denmark, a 1975 survey reported that 28.0 per cent of cohabiting women aged 20-29 had at least one child (Roussel, 1977). In France, an increase of 100 per cent between 1972 and 1982 of illegitimate births recognized by the father is assumed to reflect a corresponding increase in cohabitation (Festy, 1984). Likewise, the proportion of unmarried women who had a birth while living with the father of the child increased from 3.3 to 7.7 per cent between 1972 and 1981 (Zuber and Blondel, 1987). 14/

Individual motivation for cohabitation is difficult to ascertain, not only because there may be more than one reason but because there has to be convergence of decision of the two cohabiting persons. In addition, the social context influences such decisions (Spanier, 1985). A variety of hypotheses have been formulated to account for people's favourable attitude towards cohabitation. For the young, "trial" marriage, ascertaining whether the marriage is wanted or whether the prospective marriage partner is right, is one of the most common motives cited. Another reason is the desire by the young to hasten living together when marriage has been decided. Cohabitation is also entered because there is uncertainty and a lack of commitment towards marriage, or because marriage is opposed altogether by the couple or one of the partners (Spøhr, 1978; Roussel and Bourguignon, 1978). In certain cases, marriage is delayed until the partners are economically secure (Khoo, 1987), or until one of them becomes legally able to remarry, or until a certain tax has been avoided or certain benefits have been obtained. 15/

Some couples consider legalization of their unions unnecessary or want to be free to avoid the consequences of an unhappy marriage or merely to escape the legal obligations of matrimony. For a large proportion of couples, marriage is not, generally speaking, rejected as an institution; only the formation process is modified to achieve a better union and ultimately to marry and legalize that union.

It is important to bear in mind that the choice between cohabiting and marrying is a decision for which the responsibility is not always equally shared by the partners. In a survey in the United States, women in a cohabitational arrangement reported that they would rather be married should the partner agree (Tanfer, 1987). On the other hand, in a French opinion poll, 10 per cent of the cohabiting women but only 3 per cent of the cohabiting men were opposed to marriage; a subsequent analysis revealed that women indeed had a greater tendency than men to delay their marriage (Roussel and Bourguignon, 1978).

The choice in marital arrangements is possible only to the extent that social pressure to marry legally has lost its constraining power. It has been observed that more and more, in order to conform to changes in behaviour, Governments tend to repeal or change legislation that discriminates against non-legalized unions or out-of-wedlock births, thus making the new forms of marriage feasible. In Finland, for instance, legislation has improved the status of unmarried couples as concerns child maintenance, housing, social

security, unemployment and taxation. In the United States, the difference between legitimate and illegitimate children is being abolished in some states (Douthwaite, 1979, cited in Blanc, 1984; Lindgren, 1980).

Individual expectations and attitudes towards marriage of the cohabiting couples themselves are insufficient indicators of the future of marriage. Surveys and opinion polls have widely investigated the marriage intentions of cohabiting couples. Answers are not, however, satisfactory to serve as a basis of inferences or generalizations, not only because often too many responses are "uncertain", "did not think yet" and "don't know" (Gokalp, 1981; Jackson, 1985; Léridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1988), but also because people tend to change their views. Furthermore, those who state that they do not plan to marry do not necessarily mean that they will never marry. In general, such studies conclude that a large proportion of cohabiting couples will eventually marry (Lewin, 1982; Catlin, Croake and Keller, 1978; Thornton and Freedman, 1982), although opposite views have been stated on very strong rationales (Westoff, 1978).

The effect of cohabitation on timing and prevalence of marriage is thus difficult to assess, especially given the fact that age at first marriage has risen in a number of countries where cohabitation did not increase substantially. To have an impact on marriage timing, cohabitation, which is often initiated prior to the average age at first marriage, should continue beyond that average (Roussel, 1977). For instance, increments in unmarried cohabitation among the young may play only a limited role in delaying marriage if the period of cohabitation merely overlaps with the engagement period. On the other hand, not all countries with delayed marriages have reported increasing non-legalized marital unions. From this point of view, the time spent in cohabitation may be as important as the overall level of prevalence of cohabitation. 16/

If current marriage intentions were to be taken at face value, it appears that in most countries large proportions of cohabitants expect or plan to marry. In England and Wales (1982), a study found that over 90.0 per 100 of the respondents hoped to marry (Eldridge and Kiernan, 1985). In the United States (1980), a study reported that more than 90 per 100 expected to marry (Thornton and Freedman, 1982). In an Australian survey, in 1981, it was found that 86 per 100 of all cohabitors under age 25 expected to marry (Khoo, 1987). In Denmark, 23 per cent in 1977 and 25 per cent in 1981 of the single cohabitants expressed no intention to marry (Roussel, 1983). In France, a survey in 1985 reported that 26 per cent of the cohabiting couples planned to marry soon, 17 per cent more expected to legalize their union after a trial period and 50 per cent did not currently think about it; only 6 per cent were opposed to it (Léridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1988). Even if they do not marry, however, and instead constitute stable unions, the overall prevalence level of conjugal unions (of any type) is not expected to decline further.

C. Conditions of changes

The striking feature of the changes in both timing and prevalence of marriage during the post-war period is their great parallelism in different countries (with some exceptions in Eastern and Southern Europe), including the non-European industrialized countries, despite national cultural, social and

historical differences among them (Coleman, 1980). The magnitudes of the maximal and minimal levels achieved are also remarkable. The low SMAMs were lower than any recorded in the past. European nuptiality experience and the high levels of marriage prevalence achieved were also outstanding, compared with the European past. An understanding of the post-war marriage behaviour thus calls for an appraisal of the changes that affected society in general. Modification of marriage behaviour was not the only significant post-war demographic change. The surge in fertility that followed the war, usually referred to as the "baby boom", was indeed closely associated with the "marriage boom" (Hajnal, 1956; Eversley, 1965; Boserup, 1978). By implication, both phenomena are seen to arise from the same prevailing post-war conditions.

At least two sets of factors need to be distinguished: those accounting for the initial decline in SMAM; and those pertaining to the ensuing increase in SMAM (and the corresponding fluctuations in marriage prevalence).

In addition, some features of the marriage pattern call for special attention. For instance, why did the trends in age at first marriage and prevalence of marriage in Southern Europe deviate from those of the other European subregions? Why did marriage prevalence remain higher in the Eastern and Southern Europe? The great similarities in marriage behaviour across most of the countries observed suggests that although national characteristics are important in shaping marriage behaviour and in explaining cross-national differences, there were some common fundamental societal factors at work.

The post-war decline in age at first marriage was due, at least in part, to a number of factors that initiated the SMAM decline in the 1930s. A variety of hypotheses have been formulated to account for this pre-war decline. Such factors as changes in the ratio of women to men, resulting from the decline in the heavy emigration flows, the effect of the former decline in the birth rate, the end of the depression of the 1930s, the end of the First World War, changes in the sex ratio of the marriageable population and earlier marriages stimulated by the draft prior to the Second World War are all involved. 17/ Not all countries were equally affected by these factors, however, and ascertainment of the specific effect of each factor quantitatively has not yet been undertaken.

These factors favourable to marriage, whatever their weight, are assumed to have continued to exert their effects in varying degrees through the 1950s and even the 1960s; and their influence was compounded by the new economic, social and cultural conditions whose general impact was also favourable to increased nuptiality. The "catch-up" effect of marriages delayed by the Second World War contributed significantly to the increase in matrimony (Muñoz-Perez, 1979). The post-war economic recovery in many countries and "the mood of reconstruction" are also cited as general determinants of the post-war "marriage boom", as are the higher employment levels, the greater participation of women in the labour force and a softening of the norms requiring women to cease employment after marriage (Hajnal, 1956; Benjamin, 1963; Rowntree, 1966).

The positive effect of economic factors on marriage is that, provided couples want to marry, available income from good employment conditions would help to avoid a delay of marriage. Although, at the aggregate level, a positive relationship is found between good economic conditions and greater propensity to marry (United Nations, 1988a), 18/ few studies have investigated this hypothesis during the 1950s or later at the individual level. One such study, undertaken in the United Kingdowm in 1959-1960, concluded that there was no evidence that economic factors had substantially promoted earlier weddings (Grebenik and Rowntree, 1968).

The factors that favoured the upturn towards the subsequent delay in first marriages and the decline in marriage prevalence are even more difficult to untangle. Both unfavourable economic conditions and demographic factors have been cited (Festy, 1973; Van Poppel and Willekens, 1983). The increase in working women, including single women, is cited as a factor inducing delayed marriages, contrary to previous situations when additional income was a factor of early marriage (Davis, 1986; United Nations, 1988a).

More difficult to measure directly, but no less important, are the normative social changes. Changes in attitudes towards marriage emerged in the form of increased levels of unmarried cohabitation, especially among the young and the never married but also among other age groups (as discussed above in section B). These changing attitudes towards marriage are also reflected in the increase in divorces and in the more liberalized divorce legislation enacted in the 1960s and 1970s. Between 1960 and 1980, the proportions of divorces per 1,000 marriages more than doubled and sometimes even trebled in certain countries (Festy and Prioux, 1975; Festy, 1985; Sardon, 1986). 19/

Concomitantly, the attitude towards reproductive behaviour also changed. This change is notably reflected in the decline in fertility which took place about the same period (Davis and others, 1986; United Nations, 1989), the increase in illegitimate births (United Nations, 1988b; Bourgeois-Pichat, 1986) and the increasing incidence of abortion (United Nations, 1975; Tietze and Henshaw, 1986).

The emergence and widespread use of efficient contraceptive methods (pill and intrauterine devices) not only permitted the decline in fertility but, it is believed, had an undetermined impact on marriage timing. Indeed, the liberalization of contraceptive legislation and the increased practice of birth control by the young was favourable to prolonged cohabitation without marriage and without pre-marital conception, thus making the "simultaneity of nuptiality decline in so many countries of Europe" more understandable (Bourgeois-Pichat, 1986, p. 20). In other words, fewer first marriages resulted from unwanted pregnancies. The termination of such pregnancies by abortion also prevented unplanned marriages. Furthermore, increases in illegitimate births during the 1970s and early 1980s (Festy, 1978; Léridon, 1981) suggest that out-of-wedlock births also became more acceptable; those increases also allowed more and longer unmarried cohabitation, hence, fewer later marriages.

Lastly, changes were also taking place in the context of the family. Commercial services partially replaced women's contribution to domestic functions and declining fertility reduced their reproduction and child-bearing functions, thus providing women with more time and motivation for education and gainful occupation. Simultaneously, the drive for improvements in women's status, equality in civil rights and greater participation of women in the labour force and in higher education also played a role in delaying marriages (at least until a diploma was obtained or a job secured) (Glick, 1975; Boserup, 1978).

The economic theory of marriage held that the married state was generally perceived by singles as more advantageous because of the couple's traditional division of labour. Currently, the woman's greater participation in the labour force, as well as the reduced number of family functions to be performed by the wife, are believed to make the married state less attractive than in the past (Becker, 1973; Espenshade, 1985). Both education and occupation have thus emerged as factors favourable to delayed marriage and non-marriage.

It should be noted that in Japan, many of these conditions of change, although they also existed there to a large extent, resulted in significant differences concerning marriage patterns. During the post-war period, SMAMs of both sexes did not follow the sharp downward trend experienced in Europe. On the contrary, around the mid-1970s, female SMAMs began to climb, using from 24.5 years in 1975 to 25.8 in 1985. With respect to marriage prevalence, the percentages ever married declined slightly, from about 98 to 96 per cent for both sexes between 1955 and 1985 (see annex table A.3). On the other hand, cohabitation is still a negligible phenomenon in Japan; estimates of unmarried women living with a non-related man in 1987 amounted to 0.3 and 0.6 per cent for ages 18-19 and 20-24, respectively (Atoh, 1988). Lastly, the process of marriage formation, which had been much more supervised by parents in Japan than in Europe, has undergone substantial changes during the period examined. In the marriage cohort of around 1950, about 70 per cent of all marriages were arranged (miai marriages), as compared with about 20 per cent in the most recent marriage cohorts. Miai marriages themselves have changed in nature and have become merely an introduction to a possible marriage partner (Atoh, 1988).

Still other general factors were at work. Declining proportions of the rural population in the industrial societies and the emergence of large urban metropolitan regions may have increased the mean age at marriage at the aggregate level (Spanier, 1985; Watkins, 1981), because people in rural areas often marry earlier than those in urban areas. Taxation and allowance systems that do not penalize unmarried people and the repealing of legislation discriminating on the basis of marital status also decreased the social pressure to marry, or at least to marry early (Groenman, 1973; Douthwaite, 1979, cited in Blanc, 1984). 20/

It should be borne in mind that aside from these socio-economic factors, demographic variables also play a part. Indeed, marriage patterns are "affected by the varying numbers of births occurring each year, by immigration as well as emigration, and also by changes in the customary differences between the ages of brides and grooms, these changes themselves being at least

in part influenced by the relative supply of unmarried men and women at various ages" (Glass, 1968, p. 107). Adding the economic, cultural and social factors to this network of influences, it is clear that a great variety of factors can determine marriage patterns in the developed regions, with each factor possibly having an impact of a different magnitude in different countries. Detailed data pertaining specifically to a given country would certainly shed much more light in understanding marriage behaviour at the country level. 21/

D. Concluding remarks

The changes in marriage behaviour that took place in the developed countries from the 1950s to the 1980s appear to constitute more than a simple upward and downward trend in marriage prevalence. As far as the trend itself is concerned, the immediate post-war acceleration towards earlier marriages, especially among women, can be considered a continuation of a previous decline in SMAM observed during the 1930s and 1940s in a certain number of countries. The concomitant increase in overall prevalence arises from the same trend (see chapter I).

What then is the significance of the upturn in marriage behaviour during the 1960s or 1970s, with increased delayed marriages and permanent celibacy? It appears that these changes occurred along with a change in the nature of the marriage institution. Indeed, although the return to the late-marriage and low-prevalence patterns of recent years appears, at least statistically, to be a return to the same marriage patterns observed at the beginning of this century, they emerged under quite different socio-economic and cultural conditions. In particular, the late-marriage pattern and high celibacy levels of the past reflected a genuine abstinence from marriage, whereas the current late-marriage and low marriage-prevalence pattern emerged concomitantly with a new form of non-legalized marital union defined as cohabitation.

The data presented here show that currently different patterns of unmarried cohabitation patterns emerged at different times in different countries, and conclusions about their impact on marriage are difficult to draw at this time. In certain countries, for certain years, cohabitation appears to delay marriage timing but does not affect prevalence. In other countries, overall marriage prevalence decreases or even increases when cohabitation is taken into consideration. Moreover, the adoption of cohabitation by previously married couples, as well as the increasing proportions of out-of-wedlock births among unmarried couples in certain countries, calls for a larger analytical framework. In other words, changes in marriage patterns must be viewed as a consequence not only of changes in cohabitational patterns but of changes in the outlook towards reproduction, marriage and the accompanying changes in the formation and structure of the family (Festy, 1985; and Roussel, 1985).

Regardless of whether these changes should be attributed primarily to period events, such as high prevalence of contraception or high female labour force, or mainly to a slow social process of changing attitudes towards marriage and the family the outcome of which emerged only now, or to both, it appears that a major result is that since the mid-1960s, for increasing proportions of the population, "collective norms have ceased to be the

regulators of fertility, nuptiality, divorce or domestic arrangements; today, the private wishes of the individuals are supreme in this sphere and this situation has been accepted by society" (Roussel, 1988, p. 8). To understand what factors facilitated the social and legal acceptance of the new marriage behaviour, more studies are needed.

The future of marriage in the regions under consideration will depend upon the attitudes of people towards both legal marriages and unmarried cohabitation. Marriage can remain the preferred institution for couple companionship and reproduction, and unmarried cohabitation will then constitute mainly an additional phase in the process of marriage formation, thus merely delaying the legalization of the marital unions. Or unmarried cohabitation can become a substitute form of marriage and the origin of a new family type. Unmarried cohabitation may also reflect a disaggregation of the institution of the family, with fewer couples associating conjugal life with reproduction. Thus, there will be a multiplicity of cohabitation arrangements which will result in an overall decline of long-term conjugal life.

Although opinion polls and surveys, as well as marriage models, have tried to answer these questions, no valid uniform answer can be derived from the various results. It is generally held that couples will marry not only later but to a lesser extent. Both modelling exercise and surveys confirm that increasing proportions of people, especially among the young, do not consider marriage an immediate imperative for the present. For instance, in France, 40 per cent of the women interviewed in a survey in 1974 believed that a woman should be married by the end of her twentieth year, but this proportion was only 28 per cent in 1978 (Girard and Roussel, 1979). In Denmark, 48 per cent of single cohabiting couples stated in 1977 that they planned to marry, compared with 36 per cent in 1981 (Roussel, 1983); and recently, age at entry into cohabitation may have been rising along with a decline in the prevalence of both marriage and unmarried cohabitation (Léridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1988).

A variety of country studies consider, however, that marriage delays, as well as declining marriage prevalence, do not signify the disappearance of marriage as an institution (although with some uncertainty in Denmark and Sweden), at least for the time being (Roussel and Bourguignon, 1978; Gokalp, 1981; Le Bras and Roussel, 1982; Davis, 1985; Caldwell, McDonald and Ruzicka, 1982). With changing marriage norms and declining social pressure to marry, one cannot exclude an increasing diversification of family life modes, a levelling-off of cohabitation prevalence and increments in celibacy and in single-parent households (Roussel, 1985; Levy, 1988). Whether the new marriage behaviour results from deviation from traditional norms or marriage norms have changed is not a question that can be readily answered (Höpflinger, 1985). Furthermore, to the extent that these changes are likely to further affect fertility, future marriage trends in the countries examined need to be very carefully assessed. 22/

Notes

1/ Changes in the state of the marriage market, as a result notably of the First World War; the decline of overseas migration and changes in natality are assumed to have played a role during that period (Glass, 1968; van Houte-Minet, 1968).

2/ The post-war marriage situation is examined on the basis of the first available censuses taken after the end of the hostilities, although for some countries, only the censuses of the 1960s are available and constitute the starting-point. More recent data also consist of census estimates which have been updated with vital statistics data. Correction for underreporting was not done; age and marital status errors are considered negligible in the developed countries, at least for the post-war period. The 1950 data for Poland were omitted because an estimated 400,000 persons were not tabulated by age, sex and marital status (United Nations, 1979).

3/ In other words, the single census data for SMAM expresses the experience of a cohort of women whose marriage experience may extend as far as 35 years in the past, which would cover the experience of women aged 50 and does not yield the mean age at marriage in the year of the census or the survey, unless nuptiality has remained constant. The intercensal SMAM reflects the marriage experience during the period between the two censuses, assuming that the various marriage probabilities during that period for each age group prevail. For details on the methodology and conditions of use of these two procedures, see annex II.

4/ The percentage ever married at age 50 is obtained as the arithmetical average of the proportions ever married at ages 45-49 and 50-54.

5/ These prevalence indices are derived by a modified application of the formula given by Hajnal (1953), whereby the percentage ever married at age 50 (also computed as described in note 4/) describes the average marriage prevalence between two successive censuses of a hypothetical cohort experiencing the probability of marrying that prevailed in the period between two successive censuses (see annex II).

6/ "Cohabitation", "unmarried cohabitation" and "non-marital cohabitation" are all expressions used to define the current concept of "consensual union"; they are used primarily in developed countries to designate the marital status of couples who are unmarried sexual partners and share a household (United Nations, 1988a). In certain cases, "common-law union" or "common-law partnership" is used to designate the same concept (Burch and Madan, 1986). In French, union libre and cohabitation (and cohabitation juvénile when age is emphasized) are used to define the same marital status and replace the term concubinage. These expressions have not exactly the same meaning, even though they are now often used synonymously. Cohabitation stands, of course, for cohabitation hors mariage (unmarried cohabitation); otherwise, cohabitation can pertain to both married and unmarried couples. Union libre does not necessarily imply cohabitation and concubinage refers more specifically to sexual partnership, although it has come to mean living as a unmarried couple (Léridon and Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1988). More detailed distinctions take into account the marital status of each cohabitation partner and the presence or not of dependent children (Roussel, 1986; United Nations, 1988a). The marital status of the cohabiting persons is not generally reflected in the classifications. Sometimes classifications are ambiguous. An expression such as "unmarried" cohabitation often refers to the combined never-married, divorced and widowed population, unless otherwise noted. The fact is that cohabiting couples may also be couples wherein one or both partners are married but not to each other. The concept of a household of unrelated persons of the opposite sex used in the Federal Republic of Germany or in the United States is even more ambiguous, because such households are not necessarily formed of conjugal couples.

7/ In Sweden, unmarried cohabitation was widely practised in the late 1800s and early 1900s. There was a tradition whereby a marriage could be constituted without any religious or civil ceremony (Lewin, 1982; Nilsson, 1985). In Denmark, studies of parish registers from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries showed that common-law marriage was quite common and that about 40 per cent of all first-borns came from pre-marital conceptions (Matthiessen, 1987).

8/ The statistical reporting of cohabitation does not always match adequately the theoretical definitions and makes comparisons across countries and even within countries difficult. Sometimes only non-married cohabitants are surveyed, and their marital status is not always reported. Other shortcomings pertain to cohabiting persons who are reported as married and to the improvement in reporting which brings up to date past underestimations and may exaggerate the increase in cohabitation. In other cases, surveys deal only with households or couples and cover different age groups. In the United States, for instance, the concept of unmarried-couple households is defined as two "unrelated adults of opposite sex sharing living quarters, with or without children under age 15 present" (Bachrach, 1987, p. 624); a somewhat similar definition is used in the Federal Republic of Germany (Spanier, 1983). With such definitions, it is not easy to ascertain whether all these relationships are of a marital nature. In Canada, the 1981 census included questions designed to permit one to distinguish between legal marital unions, cohabitation marital unions and room-mates without marital relationship (representing 8 per 100 of the cohabiting couples) (Duchesne, 1987). In another survey, only 5 per cent of those who had been in an unmarried cohabitation were found to be cohabiting at the time of the survey (Glick and Spanier, 1980), showing the difficulty of catching this marital status. Comparisons between surveys and censuses also show that enumeration of cohabitants is always higher in the former than in the latter (Festy, 1987).

9/ This would be the case if in one culture cohabitation were to become legal when a conception occurred, whereas in another culture the union would be legalized only after the first birth or even the second. For instance, in Denmark, a 1975 survey reported that the majority of women do not marry as a result of a conception, but women with an illegitimate first child marry before the birth of their second child and practically all women with two or three children are married (Bertelsen, 1980).

10/ A study of this very point reported that in England and Wales, for instance, people who delay marriage until they reach a certain age marry more rapidly afterwards than in France or Sweden where a certain proportion of people did not marry after delaying (Eldridge and Kiernan, 1985). One study in France found that cohabitation among the young does not compensate for declining marriages (Audirac, 1986).

11/ Abortion laws were liberalized in England as early as 1969 and in France in 1975 (Desplanque and de Saboulin, 1986). The impact of illegal abortions is difficult to assess. In the past, data on illegal abortions were not available. Currently, the unavailability of abortion data by type of (married or unmarried) cohabitation makes analysis impossible.

12/ In fact, in Sweden, despite the easy access to abortion, abortion rates declined among teenagers between 1975 and 1981 (Westoff, 1986). Whether this decline resulted from efficient contraceptive use or from greater acceptance of illegitimate births needs to be established, along with the type of couples (married or unmarried) among whom abortions have declined.

13/ Children may exist as a result of a birth to the cohabiting partners or because one or both cohabiting partners have brought in their child or children from the previous marital union, or even from a previous consensual union. Of course, there may also be children both from the current union and from a prior union. It is thus obvious that a classification of cohabiting couples only according to current marital status covers a wide heterogeneity of situations. Data are needed on the marital history of the cohabiting partners--on the motive and age at initiation of cohabitation, on the number of cohabiting unions, on their duration and outcome with each partner, on the marital status of the partner, on the presence of children and stepchildren, if any, on their time of birth etc.--in order to study with precision the dynamics of cohabitation and its impact on nuptiality. Similar information is needed for currently married or ever-married couples who cohabited prior to their legal union.

14/ It is difficult to draw inferences about cohabitation from illegitimacy data given the many unknowns related to the social and marital status of the mothers of these children and the difficulty of establishing whether illegitimacy occurred among cohabiting couples or from occasional encounters (Hollingsworth, 1981; Laslett, 1981). Attempts to infer cohabitation from illegitimacy have been undertaken, notably in Sweden, when detailed and reliable data are available (Hofsten, 1978).

15/ In Australia, there is a direct incentive for two unemployed persons to cohabit rather than marry because in the latter case their combined unemployment benefit would be lower (Caldwell, McDonald and Ruzicka, 1982).

16/ Data for Denmark, for instance, suggest that the delay in marriage results not only from the increase in proportions cohabiting, but from the increase in duration of time spent in such an arrangement. In 1978, 25 per 100 of the cohabitors surveyed had been living together for five years or longer; in 1981, this proportion was 34 per 100 (Roussel, 1983).

17/ Draft deferment for married men or a desire not to have the draft delay the marriage accounts for much of the earlier marriages.

18/ Of two studies undertaken in Australia, one study did not find in the post-war period from 1946-1947 to 1966-1967 the expected positive relationship between marriage rates and gross domestic product per capita and total employment observed in the pre-war period (Basavarajappa, 1971), whereas the other concluded that relative wages and unemployment account in part for the decline in marriages after 1972 (Withers, 1979).

19/ Divorce laws were relaxed as early as 1969 in Denmark and Finland, 1969-1970 in Great Britain, 1971 in the Netherlands, 1973 in Sweden, 1974 in Belgium and 1975 in Australia (Festy and Prioux, 1975; Krishnamoorthy, 1987). In the United States, 16 states had adopted no-fault divorce laws by 1971; and by 1974, this number had reached 23. Under no-fault legislation, marital unions can be dissolved without punitive consequences (Glick, 1975).

20/ There is no available study assessing the role of scarcity of resources, such as the impact of availability or cost of housing on marriage timing, cited as a factor in the delay in marriage in Japan (Kono, 1986).

21/ A study of this type undertaken in the Netherlands underscores the complexity of such analyses. This study found that at the level of subgroup analysis the decline in age at first marriage of women in that country is linked notably to changes in the religious structure of the two main denominations (Catholic and Dutch Reformed), the urban/rural structure and the educational structure, combined with larger declines in mean age at first marriage within the Catholic subgroup, the rural subgroup and the more highly educated subgroup. At the total group level, education of women accounts for 39 per cent of the variation in age at first marriage and the largest influence on the marriage decline is attributed to a time factor, which accounts for 49 per cent of the variation (Van Poppel and Willekens, 1983).

22/ More attention should be paid to constructing an easily quantifiable framework of marriage behaviour which would make allowance for the dynamics of changes (Boserup, 1978; Espenshade, 1985; Westoff, 1986).

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CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary of findings

1. Framework

This study is an attempt to review, at the world level, the patterns of first marriages in as many countries as possible for which the pertinent data are available. More specifically, it examines the timing and the prevalence of marriage among men and women since the middle of this century and sets the analysis against the background of the marriage patterns that prevailed during the first half of the twentieth century.

More attention is, as a rule, given to female patterns, on which more information is available in many countries. Particular attention is given to marriage patterns at young ages because of the important social and demographic implications of adolescent marriage. The pattern classification is based on the framework proposed by Hajnal, who, on the basis of patterns observed in a selected number of Asian and European countries during the early twentieth century, distinguished three major marriage patterns: the "Western European"; the "Eastern European"; and the "non-European". Because his terminology did not readily include non-European countries that had the "European" pattern, the concepts were reformulated in the present study, using early timing and high prevalence for the non-European pattern, late timing and low prevalence for the Western European pattern and an intermediate pattern for Eastern Europe.

This undertaking is hampered by the difficulties of comparing regions and countries of great cultural variety and where family systems and the institution of marriage differ, sometimes considerably, in terms of both formation process and social significance. Although the institution of marriage is, in almost all human societies, the principal step in the formation of the family, considered the fundamental building block of society, this institution takes various forms and shapes in the many cultures and societies of the world, which makes its demographic study a difficult exercise. Indeed, as a social institution, various marriage forms can be defined, depending upon the criteria chosen; and even more terms or expressions can be used to designate them. In the present study, three main concepts of marriage were considered. Legal marriage defines a marital union performed in conformity with a country's legal requirements (whether civil, religious or customary). Common-law marriages, consensual unions and cohabitation (three expressions identifying the same co-living arrangement in different contexts) designate unions that do not conform to all judicial prescriptions but are nevertheless considered conjugal unions and counted as marriages whenever data permit. Visiting unions define consensual unions wherein the union partners do not cohabit but have a marital relationship which may involve reproduction.

In this study, a social rather than a judicial approach has been adopted; and any type of marital union, if reported as such in a census or survey, is considered a bona fide marriage, whether or not it is legal.

2. Data

This study of the timing and prevalence of marriage focuses on the period from 1950 to the 1980s, but it has been completed by a brief review of the marriage patterns in the early twentieth century, according to the data availability. The timing of marriage is examined with two indicators: the proportion of persons aged 15-19 years ever married, in order to underscore precocity of marriage; and the singulate mean age at marriage, which summarizes the marriage timing over all ages from ages 15 to 50 years. Marriage prevalence is analysed in terms of percentage of men and women ever married by age 50, an age after which first marriages are usually very limited. These marriage indicators are derived from censuses and demographic surveys. The study of marriage patterns was hampered by data shortcomings. For a number of countries, lack of data for certain years, changes in coverage from one point in time to another and misreporting of age and of marital status were problems, particularly during the early decades of the twentieth century. A brief appraisal of the data used is presented below.

In Africa, coverage and quality of available data constitute the main limitation of this study, particularly before mid-century. Even in the 1950s, few censuses were available and the available surveys often covered only part of the country. It is not always known how accurately marriages were recorded, especially during the colonial period, when non-African standards were sometimes used to report African marriages. Although marriage timing may not always be properly ascertained in African censuses, the high level of marriage prevalence reported suggests that few marital unions went unreported.

Latin America and the Caribbean are not well represented for the period 1900-1950, and data quality is questionable during this period, notably because large percentages of persons in a non-legal marital union were classified as never married. In the more recent censuses, most, but not all, countries reported consensual unions separately; and this measure has greatly improved the estimates of timing and prevalence. It seems, however, that reporting of marital status at older ages is still much less satisfactory because of misreporting of marital status by the respondents themselves. In certain Caribbean countries, this problem is of even greater concern because large percentages of women enter into a visiting union, which has an even greater probability of being misclassified or misreported. Consequently, relatively low levels of marriage prevalence are often reported in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Asia has comparatively good data for both the early and more recent decades of this century. With some exceptions, indicators of marriage timing are considered satisfactory, and prevalence is assumed to be well covered, given the fact that all formal religious, customary and civil marriages are usually reported as marriages in censuses. Some exceptions may concern countries where boundaries have changed. In countries where data had to be reconstituted (Bangladesh, Pakistan) comparisons are undertaken with some degree of uncertainty.

Northern America (Canada and the United States), Europe and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) have marriage data of generally very good quality. In some countries, vital statistics estimates or census estimates updated from vital statistics were used, especially when no census data were available. In these regions, consensual unions are usually classified with the single, thus underestimating marriage levels in certain cases. These shortcomings are partially counterbalanced by a brief description of cohabitation where such data are available from surveys. Another aspect to be borne in mind is the border changes that occurred in a number of European countries after the First and the Second World War, which make straightforward comparisons uncertain.

3. General overview

(a) Africa

Great disparities are found when marriage patterns in the different less developed regions are compared. Each region has some major inherent characteristics. Africa, which encompasses numerous of societies and cultures, was and still is characterized by a great variety of marriage forms, by many marriage formation processes; and, more than anywhere else in the world, by a very high prevalence of polygynous marriages. Customs prevail in marriage formation processes, where the wedding consists in a series of events rather than in a single ceremony, making identification of the marriage or its timing more difficult.

The data for countries of Africa prior to the 1950s are too few and too different to allow a generalized conclusion. If it is assumed, however, that marriage patterns in Africa changed little in the first decades of the 1900s and that the patterns identified in the 1940 and 1950 censuses and surveys are valid to describe marriage behaviour during the preceding decades, it can be concluded that in most of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa, women conformed to the pattern of early marriage and universal marriage.

In general, Africa remains, to a large extent, a region of very early and universal marriage. Adolescent marriage among African women still is a main feature of nuptiality in sub-Saharan Africa, as are the large differences between men and women in mean age at first marriage. Contained primarily within the domain of family values, African marriage norms, although varying in different parts of the region, remain largely the product of the prevailing family system. Despite the impact of social change on marriage behaviour, the various types of African marriage continue for the most part to conform to family constraints and to remain a family rather than an individual arrangement. Some of the main differences in marriage behaviour are clearly realized, in particular, those related to early marriage and polygyny, when sub-Saharan and Northern Africa are compared.

Considering the timing of marriage, data prior to the 1970s show that female adolescent marriages were especially common in sub-Saharan Africa. Of 27 countries examined, 14 had 50 per cent or more girls married at ages 15-19, and in 25 countries more than 20 per cent in that age group had married. After 1970, a decline in adolescent nuptiality of women occurred, especially

in countries of very early marriage norms. With data available for 37 African countries, only seven countries had 50 per cent or more girls married in age group 15-19. In 1987, 75 per cent of the adolescent girls in Mali were in a union.

After 1970, SMAMs rose little among men, while there was a more significant increase among women. In general, however, women still marry at rather early ages in a large number of countries, and delays in age at first marriage have been relatively small. During the 1950s and 1960s, more than half of the 27 countries had female SMAMs of 17 years or under. Since the 1970s, only 5 of 37 countries have had female SMAMs in that category; and in 26 countries, levels fell to between 18 and 21 years.

When each subregion is examined, despite some increments, Western Africa is still characterized by the lowest female SMAM of the entire region. Countries in this subregion currently have SMAMs of under 20 years (even under 18 years in certain countries). Middle and Eastern Africa have an intermediate position, with most countries above the 20-year level, although generally not by more than one or two years. Only Northern Africa is observed to have experienced a substantial upward trend among females by the 1980s, with mean ages of 21 years or more, and as high as 24 years in Tunisia in 1984.

Sex differences in mean age at first marriage in Africa are very large but have somewhat declined. In the 1950s, almost all countries had sex differences in SMAM exceeding five years, and in 10 countries this difference reached 10 years. By the 1970s, 25 out of 36 countries had a sex difference in SMAM exceeding five years; and in nine of these countries, the difference was about seven years. Only Senegal had a difference equal to 10 years.

As concerns marriage prevalence, both men and women are still conforming to universal marriage and changes in the percentage of women ever married by age 50 have been negligible. During the 1950s, four fifths of the 28 countries had female prevalence of 97 per cent or more; in the 1970s, three quarters of the countries still had such a high percentage. Thus, Africa--in particular, sub-Saharan Africa--has remained a region of very high marriage prevalence, although in Northern Africa prevalence has evolved towards lower levels.

Polygyny remains exceptionally high in a number of sub-Saharan countries. Data from the late 1950s to the late 1970s for several countries show the proportions of married men who are polygamous to range from 20 to 37 per cent. During the same period, the proportions of married women who were in a polygynous union ranged from about 15 to over 40 per cent. Levels exceeding 50 per cent were reported for certain years in the Congo and in Senegal.

In Northern Africa, polygamous unions among married men range from 1 to about 6 per cent, except perhaps in the Sudan, where 16 per cent was reported in 1956 and where recent data are not available. Time-series allowing a good assessment of trends are not available.

The socio-cultural and economic conditions that account for both the early marriage and high prevalence patterns in Africa and the slow pace of change in these variables are difficult to untangle. Obviously, too many factors can be involved in a region with such varying socio-economic conditions and so many different cultures, religions and marriage traditions. Slowly developing economies, traditional family systems, limited agricultural technology, illiteracy and strong traditional norms all may account for the lack of change in marriage behaviour.

Given the generally low educational status of the female population (from 60 to 90 per cent of the ever-married women in many countries were reported to have never completed one year of schooling), education has had no chance to effect a substantial increase in age at first marriage. Likewise, given the fact that for most women, work activities are in agricultural or in local trade, the impact of women's work on SMAM has not yet been very significant at the aggregate level.

Other factors, of a more cultural nature, also contribute to the maintenance of early and universal marriage in Africa. Large family size norms, parental decision-making power to decide entry into a marital union and ability to establish very early a household through the assistance of the extended family are cited as variables in favour of early-marriage norms among girls.

(b) Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean presents one of the greatest challenges to nuptiality studies. The major feature of nuptiality of this region is the high incidence of consensual unions in Latin America and of visiting unions in a number of Caribbean countries. This situation, which can be attributed to a variety of historical and cultural conditions, signifies that to a large extent, at least in certain countries, families are initiated in the absence of legal matrimony. This practice requires a rigorous demographic accounting of marital-union formation and dissolution by type of union, which is not always available. Hence, except in the case of specially designed surveys, it is difficult to obtain data on marriage histories of persons who are currently or who have previously been in a non-legalized union.

Many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are to a some extent rural societies with agricultural economies, as are those of many Asian and African countries. Statistically, however, the Latin American marriage patterns differ significantly from those of the other two less developed regions. As far as timing of women's marriage is concerned, adolescent marriage is less common and age at first union is somewhat later. With marital unions often initiated through a non-legalized conjugal arrangement, marriage, when decided upon, takes place at a later age. Marriage prevalence, because it is most affected by unreported or misreported conjugal unions, is also much lower than in the two other regions.

The marriage pattern of Latin America prior to mid-century is difficult to assess. The singulate mean age at marriage is available for only a few countries, and it varies from 22 to 25 years in South America and from 20 to about 22 years in Central America (including the Caribbean). Prevalence indicators, which are greatly underestimated in most countries, indicate levels generally below 90 per cent at ages 45-49 and even below 70 per cent in several countries. In Venezuela, fewer than 50 per cent of women aged 45-49 years are reported as having ever been married. Given the reservations stated above regarding the quality of the data in Latin America and the Caribbean, levels and trends cannot be rigorously ascertained for the period 1900-1950.

For the same reason, determination and interpretation of Latin American marriage-timing and prevalence patterns during the period 1950-1980 have to be handled with caution. If the data are taken at face value, entry into a marital union takes place later than in Africa or Asia, but earlier than in Europe (except for a number of Caribbean countries for which only legal unions were used).

As far as marriage timing is concerned, adolescent marriages evolved little during the period 1950-1980. The number of countries with more than 20 per cent of female aged 15-19 already married barely changed between the censuses preceding 1970 and those taken more recently. These percentages even slightly increased in a number of countries, suggesting more adolescent marriages or merely an improvement in marital status reporting.

The singulate mean ages at marriage of men and women provide more details about the different evolution of marriage-timing patterns. Excluding the Caribbean countries, where only legal unions were taken into account, male SMAMs varied, in general, between 24 and 27 years during the 1950s and 1960s. By 1980, SMAMs still fluctuated within that same range, although a slight downward change--of fractions of years--suggest slightly earlier entry into matrimony.

Among women, SMAM derived from the earlier censuses reflects a pattern of relatively early marriage, somewhat between the Asian and the intermediate patterns. The more recent censuses of the 1970s and 1980s suggest that the mean age at first marriage has increased in many countries but has decreased in some others. Here again, however, uncertainty of data reliability make it difficult to distinguish genuine changes in age at first marriage from spurious differences due to changes in accuracy of marriage reporting.

Differences between sexes in SMAM are currently much smaller than in the 1950s, when they fluctuated around or exceeded four years. In the 1980s, these differences in SMAM are usually below four years.

The prevalence pattern of Latin America and the Caribbean appears as one of comparatively high permanent celibacy among both men and women in many countries throughout the period, at least according to available data. The data are, however, suspect as concerns underreporting of marital unions, especially when respondents who had formerly been in a consensual and/or visiting union reported themselves as never married. Data from the 1950 and 1960 censuses appear to be most affected by this reporting error. In the Caribbean, in countries where only legal unions are recorded, prevalence among women at age 50 is as low as 60 or 70 per cent. Much higher estimates are

obtained when all unions are taken into consideration. In other subregions, the proportions ever married by age 50 also often fall below 90 per cent. In Central America, for instance, where entry into union takes place quite early, the proportions ever married by age 50 vary, in general, from 77 to 87 per cent among men and fluctuate at about 80 per cent among women. Prevalence levels in the low seventies are observed in a few countries.

Censuses taken since 1970 suggest a rise in overall prevalence among both sexes, and levels exceeding 85 per cent and even 90 per cent are more common. To what extent these higher levels result from better data reporting, increase in the proportions of legal unions or increase in overall percentages of marital unions cannot be ascertained. In addition, these age cohorts reflect the marriage experience of more than three decades earlier. Thus, Latin America, despite its early-marriage pattern, has a low prevalence as shown by the proportions married at age 50. The possibility that period prevalence rates might yield a different prevalence level should be borne in mind.

The impact of non-legalized unions on nuptiality in Latin America should be emphasized. Estimated SMAMs are often two, three or even four years higher when consensual unions are excluded from the computation, and the greater the proportion of consensual unions the larger the difference. The most recent censuses of the 1980s reported that between 20 and 50 per cent of all women aged 15-49 who were currently in a union were consensually married, with even higher percentages observed in some Caribbean countries.

In most countries, the percentages in consensual union tend to decrease with age. This decline, in the absence of cohort data, cannot be accounted for in terms of legalization or dissolution of unions. Indeed, censuses confirm that the highest levels of consensual unions are found in age group 15-19 in all countries of this region. In the Caribbean, in particular, the percentages of women in that age group who live in non-legalized unions are exceptionally high, often exceeding 50 or 60, and as much as 90 in Jamaica in 1980.

Information on visiting unions, as distinct from consensual unions, is available only from surveys conducted in Guyana and in the English-speaking and French-speaking Caribbean countries. Detailed analysis shows that in these countries visiting unions rather than consensual unions are the most common mode of entry in a marital union. In some of these countries, up to 70 and even 80 per cent of ever-married women aged 15-49 entered a visiting union as their first marital union. Entry into a legal union was generally low, not exceeding 15 per cent, except in countries with a large East Indian community which conformed to traditional marriage norms regarding co-living. In the countries surveyed, it was found that legalization of consensual and visiting unions occurs to a certain extent: from 30 to 40 per cent of those who had first entered one of these unions were legally married at the time of the survey. The remaining large proportions were either still in a non-legalized union or not in a union at all.

(c) Asia

Within the frame of legal marriage, which is the predominant norm in Asia, timing of first marriage shows a wide range of regional variation. With modernization and urbanization spreading more rapidly in some countries than in others, more diversification of marriage patterns is taking place. Adolescent marriages among girls remain a feature in cultures where child marriage was customary and where pre-puberty unions were socially desirable. Polygamy, much less prevalent than in Africa, is also practised, but is found mainly in the Muslim countries of Western Asia. Although social change has primarily affected the timing of marriage, at least among women, in many Asian countries prevalence has evolved only to a limited extent and universal marriage is still the norm. Only in the more industrialized countries of Asia have marriage patterns converged towards a later timing pattern.

During the period 1900-1950, Asian countries displayed, especially among women, the traditional early and universal marriage pattern observed in various studies. With some exceptions, women are characterized by SMAMs of 21 years or less and often even below 18 years. But early marriage and high prevalence are not always associated. This is noticed particularly in the case of Japan, where late marriage among women was associated with universal marriage. As far as changes in marriage patterns are concerned, this overview shows that during the first half of the twentieth century, age at first marriage of women rose in many, though not all, Asian countries. These changes, however, were usually of small magnitude; and the Asian countries examined maintained, with few exceptions, early and universal marriage among women.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Asia still conformed to the early and universal marriage pattern. Adolescent marriages among women were very frequent indeed, according to the censuses taken prior to 1970. Southern Asia had the highest levels of adolescent female marriages: the percentage ever married among those aged 15-19 exceeded 70 in several countries. In South-eastern and Western Asia, the Muslim countries also conformed to early marriage with proportions close to or exceeding 30 or 40 per cent. Only Eastern Asia had later marriage. In Japan, only 1.7 per cent of girls in that age group were ever married in 1955, thus conforming to the late timing pattern prevalent among women in the developed countries.

The singulate mean ages at marriage prior to 1970 reflect these high levels of adolescent marriages. In Southern Asia, SMAMs were below 20 years except in Sri Lanka. In India, SMAM was as low as 15.3 years in 1951. In the Muslim countries of South-eastern and Western Asia, female SMAMs varied between 18.4 and 20.6 years. In the other countries they were higher, varying mostly between 20 and 22 years, but in Japan, it was as high as 24.7 years in 1955. Since 1970, Asia has experienced a trend towards later marriage, but the pace and magnitude of change have varied considerably.

In the countries where modernization and industrialization have progressed the most, namely, Hong Kong, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore, SMAMs rose to about 28-29 years among men and 25-26 years among women in the 1980s. These countries now conform to the late-marriage pattern of other industrialized countries.

Another pattern of change has taken place in most countries of South-eastern Asia and in several of Western Asia, where the convergence of marriage timing has brought these countries from an early to an intermediate timing pattern, especially for women, among whom SMAMs that originally equalled 21 years or less now range from about 21 to slightly over 23 years.

In the third pattern of change, characteristic of Southern Asia, although there have been considerable increments in age at first marriage, mainly among women, the countries still maintain the early-marriage pattern. In most of this subregion (except Sri Lanka), censuses taken in the early 1980s indicate that female SMAMs are still below 20 years despite some substantial increases. Bangladesh and Nepal, with SMAMs in 1981 of 16.7 and 17.9 years, respectively, experience the youngest average age at first marriage in Asia today. These two countries also have the highest levels of adolescent female marriages, 68.8 and 50.8 per cent, respectively, in the same year.

On the other hand, marriage prevalence in general changed only slightly in most Asian countries. To a large extent and with few exceptions, during the 1970s and in the 1980s, universal marriage has remained the norm among both sexes, even in countries of Eastern Asia where first marriage takes place at relatively late ages. For instance, 98 per cent of the women in Hong Kong and 99 per cent of those of the Republic of Korea have been married by age 50. In Western Asia (except Cyprus) and in Southern Asia, the prevalence level at age 50 exceeded 97 per cent and was as high as 99 per cent in Bangladesh, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

(d) Northern America, Europe, Occeania and the USSR

Pattern of marriage timing and prevalence in Northern America, Europe and Oceania during the period 1900-1950 are in sharp contrast to those of the developing countries. Among the 30 countries examined, 21 had female SMAMs of 24 years or over (even as high as 27 years) during that period, whereas in Asia, female SMAMs generally did not exceed 21 years. The marriage patterns of these regions were of late marriage and low prevalence. A number of Eastern European countries, with somewhat earlier marriages and higher prevalence especially among women, can be distinguished from the rest of Europe and characterized as having an intermediate pattern. In this subregion, female SMAMs varied between 20 and 23 years. The intermediate pattern is not applicable to certain countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, where timing is later and prevalence is lower, more in harmony with the pattern in the rest of Europe. Marriage prevalence in Eastern Europe was also comparatively high, with percentages ever married by ages 45-49 exceeding 90 among both women and men, whereas in the rest of Europe, marriage prevalence generally fluctuated in the 80-89 per cent range and was even under 80 per cent in certain countries in some years.

Of the countries of Northern America, Europe and Oceania, the United States has the lowest female SMAMs. During the 1930s and 1940s, SMAMs fluctuated around 22 years, and prevalence levels at ages 45-49 usually exceeded 90 per cent, giving this country a somewhat intermediate pattern. In Canada, Australia and New Zealand, female marriages, on average, were also earlier than those of the European countries (except Eastern Europe), with SMAMs in general varying between 23 and 25.

During the 1930s and 1940s, marriage patterns evolved towards earlier marriage and higher marriage prevalence. The societal conditions that produced these various marriage patterns are, however, difficult to untangle. Although industrial development is usually linked to delayed marriage and lower levels of marriage prevalence, the opposite relationship was observed in the developed countries in the early 1900s. As industrialization increased, both age at first marriage and permanent celibacy began to decline; this is the opposite of what tends to happen currently in third world countries.

Some of the studies reviewed suggest that conditions arising from the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the nineteenth century, such as greater work opportunities and higher wages, created the possibility for couples to achieve faster economic independence, and less constraining obligations towards the extended family allowed young couples to choose earlier marriage.

Other circumstances, such as dissemination of birth regulation, made earlier marriages compatible with limitation of family size; and urbanization and large industrial centres produced larger marriage markets favourable to earlier and more frequent marriages. However, although various studies of the European past have confirmed a positive association between nuptiality levels and various indices of economic prosperity, more evidence is needed to support these hypotheses.

After 1950, the trend of marriage timing and prevalence evolved roughly according to two different phases. During the 1950s and 1960s, marriage timing was generally characterized by a fall in SMAM to levels lower than previously attained earlier in these countries. The United States, in particular, emerged as a country of very young nuptiality among both men and women.

By the 1970s, marriage timing was levelling off or increasing; and by the 1980s, the trend had reversed in most countries. In many countries, however, recent SMAMs are still below the level recorded at mid-century. In Northern and Western Europe, female SMAMs currently range from 22 to 25 years, with the largest increments observed in the Nordic countries, where male SMAMs exceed 28 and 30 years and female SMAMs exceed 25 and 27 years in Denmark and Sweden, respectively. The lowest female SMAMs (about 21 years) are found in Eastern Europe and in the USSR. An obvious exception to the general picture is Ireland, where SMAMs continued to decline for both males (from 31.3 to 24.4 years) and females (from 26.7 to 23.4 years) between 1950 and 1980.

As concerns marriage prevalence, period intercensal indices show that it rose along with declining SMAMs and fell almost concurrently with rising SMAMs. As in case of SMAMs, there are differences between subregions and between countries with regard to the magnitude and timing of this evolution. The peak levels of marriage prevalence at age 50 between 1950 and 1970 were higher in most countries than ever in the past. During that period, many countries did not qualify as traditional low-prevalence pattern countries. In Western and Northern Europe, the marriage recovery brought about percentages ever married by age 50 above 90 per cent in all countries, levels often exceeded 93 per cent among both sexes. In Australia, New Zealand and the United States, prevalence among women exceeded 96 per cent in the 1950-1970 period, as compared with 94 per cent among men. The prevalence levels of Eastern Europe were closer to those of high-prevalence countries.

The prevalence trend in Ireland in the post-war period is again unique. This country, historically characterized by extremely low prevalence, experienced a continuous upward trend, contrary to what happened in most of the other countries of Northern Europe. Indeed, male prevalence was estimated at 77 per cent during the 1950s and 1960s and at 87 per cent in 1970s and 1980s; likewise, female prevalence evolved from 85 to 92 per cent.

Since 1970, a return to low marriage prevalence has emerged in all subregions except Southern Europe. Prevalence at age 50 fell to 90 per cent or lower in many countries, including the United States. The decline in Northern and Western Europe was sharpest among males, especially in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, which experienced the greatest decline, prevalence at age 50 among women fell from 94 per cent in the 1950s and 1960s to 68.7 per cent in the 1970s and 1980s, and among men from 89 to 68 per cent during the same period.

Around the mid- or late 1970s, a new nuptiality feature emerged in a number of developed countries. A fairly new type of marital arrangement, labelled "unmarried cohabitation", appeared notably in the Nordic countries and then in several other countries of Europe, as well as in the rest of the developed countries. This phenomenon, which first emerged among young never-married adults (often under 20 years but especially in their early 20s), expanded to older age groups over the years and spread among previously married persons. In Denmark and Sweden, for instance, as early as 1975, almost 30 per cent of women in age group 20-24 were reported to be in a cohabitational arrangement. By 1981, these levels reached 37 and 44 per cent, respectively, in these two countries.

This new form of living arrangement is conceived differently by different population subgroups. One subgroup, usually the younger, appears to consider cohabitation a preliminary phase in the formation of the family; and as such, it constitutes pre-marital cohabitation. In this group, couples ultimately marry either to conform to marriage norms or to ensure legitimacy for their offspring. Another subgroup appears to disclaim the importance of marriage formalities and establishes a family without legal sanction. A third group consists of persons who have been previously married and who, for a variety of reasons, have opted to re-enter a conjugal relationship without the legal constraints and obligations of remarriage.

Whether cohabiting couples ultimately marry or not varies from country to country. In certain countries, the fall in marriage prevalence was compensated by unmarried cohabitation, and cohabitation is increasingly becoming either an additional phase in the process of marriage formation or a substitute form to legal union.

4. Determinants of marriage patterns

(a) Developing countries

Currently, most marriage theories associate marriage behaviour with economic conditions, including level of industrial development. More specifically, rural societies and agricultural economies are associated with early high-prevalence marriage patterns; on the other hand, delayed marriage

and lower prevalence are linked to modernization. Subsequently, the rise in age at first marriage in the developing countries can be related to the initial mechanization, subsequent industrialization and economic development. Although this relationship may well account for the changes observed in a number of developing countries, this model does not seem to apply satisfactorily to the pre-industrial experience of the developed countries and to their later passage through the Industrial Revolution.

In the developing countries, three specific modernization factors emerge as determinants of delayed age at first marriage, primarily as concerns women. Available data confirm that women marry much later under conditions of urbanization, that age at first marriage is positively associated with the duration of schooling and that age at first marriage is substantially delayed when pre-marital work pertains to a modern occupation. However, traditional factors, such as family systems, ethnic group and religion, also affect marriage timing and prevalence and usually interact with the above-mentioned modernization factors.

The data and, in particular, the cultural indices needed to study such interrelationships are not detailed enough to allow a rigorous comparative study of the determinants of marriage timing and prevalence patterns in the developing countries, with their great variety of cultures, traditions and customs. In addition to socio-economic conditions, such factors as the family system, parental authority in marriage matters and transfers of goods and money between families and couples are influential. The impact of education, labour force participation and place of residence must therefore be considered in the context of the traditions and customs of these societies.

Educational attainment, for instance, is a case in point. This factor emerges as the most important variable delaying first marriage of women in all the countries examined. However, there are often great differences in age at first marriage for the same level of education in different countries. In certain countries, those who spent more than seven years in school marry, on average, at age 18, and in other countries, at age 22. Likewise, entry into matrimony among the uneducated may take place at age 16 in one country and at 20 in another. Hence, education per se, although likely to delay marriage, has only a relative impact. Consequently, its effect on the length of the reproductive span will vary in different societies. The same holds for the urban/rural differences in marriage timing and for the effect of the pre-marital work status of women. Indeed, there are often only negligible differences between women who do not work prior to marriage and those who work in the agricultural or traditional sectors of the economy. It is also obvious that place of residence, education and type of work are closely associated in determining later marriages among women, because urban areas are those with better status for women, greater possibilities for women's schooling and better opportunities for work in the modern sector.

In addition, the magnitude of the impact from these three factors will in turn depend upon the overall socio-economic conditions of a country. This implies that modernization has to have progressed sufficiently to require additional labour skills, that a good schooling system is available for that

purpose, that enough women have access to these schools and can achieve a certain level of schooling, that sufficient work opportunities in the modern sector are available and that women will be hired for such occupations. This situation also implies the perception of the emergence of new motivations among parents to allow or encourage their daughters to pursue studies and engage in modern occupations.

(b) Developed countries

The late-marriage/low-prevalence patterns originated in pre-industrial Europe when most production systems were still primarily rural and agricultural and were based on the family systems of production prevalent at the time. As industrialization increased in Europe and spread to the oversea countries of European emigration, both mean age at first marriage and permanent celibacy tended to decline. This trend was especially noticeable in a number of countries during the 1930s and 1940s.

Specific factors, including urbanization and large industrial workplaces which created larger marriage markets, emerge as favourable to earlier and more marriages. Likewise, greater employment opportunities, notably for women, and higher wages are also cited as conditions favouring earlier marriage because they allow couples to achieve faster economic independence, leading to marriage and establishment of a household. For couples who wanted to limit the size of the family, dissemination of birth regulation methods made earlier marriage compatible with smaller parity; even for couples who wanted children to increase family income, earlier marriage was also advantageous.

The heritage of marriage norms and values and the political, social and economic conditions that shaped marriage behaviour during the first half of the twentieth century have continued to exert an impact on the post-war marriage. The decline in mean age at first marriage and the increase in proportions ever married which took place after the Second World War is assumed to be in part a carry-over of the effect of factors from the pre-war period and to arise in part from new conditions that prevailed in the immediate post-war period. The economic recovery that followed the war, the upcoming prosperity and the climate of "optimism" that engulfed populations with the return of peace are believed to have influenced the outlook of populations towards marriage and the family in general.

In the second phase of post-war trends, which began in the late 1960s or early 1970s and was a reversal of the previous trend, with increasing delayed marriages and a fall in marriage prevalence, factors assumed to account for this reversal occurred in a climate of general changes in attitudes towards not only marriage but reproduction. Increases in illegitimacy, divorce and abortion and widespread dissemination of contraceptive use, which brought about the decline in fertility during that same period, also reflect substantial changes in norms and values.

Among the new attitudes that are assumed to have more specifically influenced the later timing and lower prevalence of marriage are the women's movement and the trend towards greater judicial and economic equality of men and women. In particular, greater work opportunities in more diverse fields of work at higher levels of responsibility have been cited as favouring

delayed marriage, because work emerged as a temporary or permanent alternative to marriage. More years of schooling among both men and women are also considered to delay marriage.

Unmarried cohabitation is obviously associated with lower prevalence of legalized marriages at young ages and with delayed marriages resulting from later legalization of such unions. It is true that the Nordic pattern of early and prevalent cohabitation cannot be generalized to other countries, not only because of particular historical conditions of nuptiality in Nordic countries, but also because the upward trend in age at first marriage and in permanent celibacy has also taken place in a number of other European countries where cohabitation has remained negligible. Thus, the question of the impact of unmarried cohabitation on the delay and the decline in marriage remains open to scrutiny.

The greater acceptability of illegitimate offspring, as well as the effective prevention of unwanted illegitimate children through contraception and abortion, enables couples to delay marital unions which would otherwise have taken place earlier either to prevent a pre-nuptial conception and birth or to legitimize a live birth. In a number of countries, unmarried cohabitation with children has increased and is increasingly becoming a socially acceptable alternative form of marriage. In certain countries, this trend has been facilitated by the enactment of legislation preventing discrimination between legal and non-legal marital unions. Although opinion polls taken in different countries suggest that most cohabiting couples intend to marry eventually, data from some countries indicate a considerable potential for less marriage and more cohabitation.

B. Implications

1. Implications for policy towards legal age at marriage

Marriage policies can be directed to a variety of objectives, such as the social condition of unmarried mothers, the welfare of the unmarried elderly population, the effects of migration on the marriage market and the social and legal aspects of illegitimate children. The policy implications examined below deal primarily with demographic aspects and, more specifically, with the fertility implications of marriage in countries where the current level of fertility is not deemed satisfactory. With proper incentives and legislation, marriage policies could be geared either to increasing or to decreasing fertility. It is, however, the latter aspect which is of most interest to Governments and which is briefly examined below.

In countries where fertility is high and fertility regulation is low, the possibility of action to raise the minimum legal age at marriage is a policy measure that a number of developing countries have found to be well worth trying. Obviously, with no or limited pre-marital conception, delayed marriage of women can have a significant impact on the reproduction of adolescents. It is true that fecundity is low at the ages under 20 years, which are usually the ages within which legal measures take place, and the impact of raising the minimum legal age at marriage by a year or two is bound

to be small on a per capita basis. However, taking into consideration the large size of the female population aged 15-19, the potential total number of births that can be avoided by delaying marriage among teenagers can be considerable.

Furthermore, postponement of age at marriage from, say, 16 to 18 years is a first step, to be followed by one or two more steps when the time is ripe, in the process of raising the legal age to 20 or over. It should be realized in this regard that the social benefits of raising the age at first marriage among adolescents go beyond fertility control; they are part of the process of social reform intended to enhance the status of women in the family and in society as a whole.

The difficulty of confronting the cultural values in the implementation of measures to delay first marriage among adolescents should not be underestimated. Although legislation to this effect has been effected in many countries, these measures were not adequately evaluated and their impact on marriage delay and on fertility has not been ascertained. It can be said, however, that lack of motivation and difficulty of enforcing the law in an unfavourable socio-cultural context are behind the apparent limited success of this approach in some of these countries.

Furthermore, if current legal age constraints are not respected and large proportions of girls still marry below the current legal minimum age, there would be little purpose in raising this age by further legal action; it would be preferable, as an initial step, to act on better enforcement of the current legislation. To the extent that a new legal minimum is established to accelerate a trend rather than to initiate one, better prospects for success of legislation could be expected in a favourable socio-demographic context, particularly one with an increasing trend in age at first marriage.

It should also be realized that the interrelationships involved are mutual and that active policies and measures taken to improve the status of women, including access to advanced education and employment opportunities in the modern section of the economy can also be expected to induce later marriage among young girls.

2. Implications for research

This study of first marriage has raised a number of questions and made it clear that a better understanding of marriage behaviour calls for a more thorough examination of certain hypotheses concerning timing and prevalence determinants. The study showed that in the currently developed countries, marriage patterns evolved from the late-marriage/low-prevalence pattern of pre-industrial Europe to earlier marriage and higher prevalence as industrialization and economic development progressed. On the other hand, in the developing countries, the traditional rural/agricultural economy was associated with very early marriage, especially among girls, and with high marriage prevalence. In these countries, industrialization and economic development are associated with later female marriages but with almost unchanged prevalence. This twofold evolution of marriage behaviour under what seems to be similar trends in socio-economic conditions deserves additional scrutiny.

Differences in mean age at first marriage exist among rural women as well as among women with the same level of education in different countries. Because standard socio-economic indicators are not sufficient to account for the observed behaviour, more attention needs to be devoted to the socio-cultural factors involved, in particular to the marriage norms prevailing among these population subgroups.

The practice of polygyny calls for greater attention. In particular, the socio-cultural and economic conditions that sustain this marriage institution and the marriage market constraints involved should be further analysed.

The role of the family in marriage formation also requires more attention, with regard not only to consent or blessing but to such other determinants as homogamy customs, payment of dowry or bride-wealth and living arrangements after marriage. Attention needs to be directed to the changing nature of marriage and the family.

The role played by the marriage market in determining the timing and prevalence of first marriage is still a difficult issue to study. Despite considerable insights achieved by available marriage market studies, there are still difficulties in assessing quantitatively the effect of the marriage market and especially in distinguishing its interaction with social factors. In addition, societal adaptability to market imbalances needs to be further studied.

Particularly important are some issues related to unmarried cohabitation in the developed countries. The magnitude of the impact, if any, of unmarried cohabitation on timing and prevalence of marriage needs to be ascertained with more data. The principal socio-cultural correlates of cohabitation need to be identified on a cross-country basis. Lastly, the time spent in cohabitation, the reproductive behaviour of cohabitating couples and the role of cohabitation as a new marriage form and in family formation also need to be assessed.

Research on the impact of the women's movement and of the changing legal, educational and occupational status of women on the perception of marriage needs additional analysis. Likewise, the effect of women's greater economic and decision-making independence on the increase in mean age at first marriage and in unmarried cohabitation requires closer scrutiny. The hypothesis that marriage is usually delayed until a sound economic basis for the household is achieved also calls for further examination in the developed countries.

Despite the considerable increase in nuptiality research in recent years, too many analyses remain of the descriptive type. Aside from a small number of pioneering studies pertaining to marriage behaviour in which marriage norms, family systems, the status of women, the economic basis and other elements of the marriage process are taken into consideration, an insufficient number of studies scrutinize the reasons behind these issues. Of course, such analyses call for detailed data often not available and fine-tuned hypotheses not always easy to test, especially when it concerns attitude measurements. But marriage being traditionally the initial phase in the formation of the family and the family being considered as a major building block of society, a more sociological approach rather than a purely demographic one should be adopted in nuptiality research.

ANNEXES

Annex table A.1. Singulate mean age at marriage and percentage ever married at ages 15-19 and 50 years, by sex, Africa, 1950-1985

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men			Women			Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	50	Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	50	
Eastern Africa								
Burundi	1965 a/	23.8	..	99.0	20.8	..	99.0	3.0
	1970/71	23.7	..	..	21.5	..	..	2.2
	1979	24.4	5.0	98.8	20.8	19.2	97.2	3.6
	1987	..	..	..	21.9	6.5	98.8	..
Comoros	1980	25.8	10.1	96.1	19.5	35.7	99.2	6.3
Ethiopia	1981	25.5	8.2	99.4	17.7	54.1	99.4	7.8
	1984 b/	23.3	6.1	99.5	17.1	60.9	99.0	6.2
Kenya	1962 c/	24.1	10.8	95.9	18.4	44.7	97.9	5.7
	1979	25.5	2.6	95.0	20.3	28.8	97.9	5.2
Madagascar	1975 b/	23.5	9.2	96.9	20.3	34.4	95.4	3.2
Malawi	1977	22.9	6.2	98.2	17.8	51.1	99.1	5.1
Mauritius d/	1952	25.7	2.0	94.2	19.3	41.5	94.4	6.4
	1972	27.2	0.7	95.0	22.5	13.2	96.0	4.7
	1983	27.5	0.6	94.8	23.8	10.7	96.0	3.7
Mozambique	1950	23.8	10.0	95.8	19.4	34.8	97.0	4.4
	1980	22.7	8.4	97.7	17.6	52.4	97.4	5.1
Réunion e/	1954	27.2	0.5	86.6	23.8	7.5	80.7	3.4
	1961	26.8	0.4	88.6	23.8	8.8	83.2	3.0
	1967	26.3	0.5	88.3	23.4	7.1	83.7	2.9
	1974	25.2	1.3	91.8	22.5	8.7	87.1	2.7
	1982 f/	28.1	0.2	86.4	25.8	3.0	85.4	2.3
Rwanda	1970 g/	22.6	3.7	99.2	20.1	18.0	99.9	2.5
	1978 b/	24.5	3.1	98.7	21.0	15.4	99.6	3.5
	1983	..	..	..	21.2	12.7	99.7	..
Somalia h/	1980/81	26.5	2.0	98.5	20.1	27.0	99.0	6.4
Uganda i/	1969	23.9	8.0	87.5	17.7	49.9	93.9	6.2
United Rep. of Tanzania (mainland)	1967	24.1	7.1	95.7	17.9	51.9	98.7	6.2
	1978	24.9	3.6	95.9	19.1	37.6	98.5	5.8
Zambia	1969	24.4	3.8	97.3	18.2	42.0	97.5	6.2
	1980	25.1	2.0	96.8	19.4	31.7	96.5	5.7
Zimbabwe	1982	25.4	2.0	95.7	20.4	26.1	97.4	5.0

Annex table A.1 (continued)

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Middle Africa								
Angola f/	1960	23.8	7.7	93.1	17.9	42.3	93.8	5.9
Cameroon	1976	26.3	3.8	89.9	18.8	45.9	95.6	7.5
	1978	26.2	4.0	93.0	18.8	49.0	97.5	7.4
Central African Rep.	1959 j/	22.6	10.2	99.1	17.3	57.9	99.9	5.3
	1975	23.3	13.4	92.6	18.4	46.8	94.5	4.9
Chad k/	1963	23.0	10.1	98.4	16.5	72.6	99.6	6.5
Congo	1960 l/	24.0	5.0	96.8	17.6	58.4	99.4	6.4
	1974	26.5	1.2	95.2	19.6	33.3	98.7	6.9
	1984	27.0	11.8	93.4	21.9	25.7	93.2	5.1
Gabon	1960	25.5	7.2	93.0	17.7	62.7	98.4	7.8
Zaire m/	1975/76	25.4	0.7	98.6	20.1	21.9	99.8	5.3
Northern Africa								
Algeria	1948	26.0	4.8	95.8	20.0	33.2	97.8	6.0
	1954 n/	25.2	5.8	96.4	19.4	37.9	97.4	5.8
	1966	23.8	..	..	18.3	..	..	5.5
	1970	24.4	..	..	19.3	..	..	5.1
	1977	25.3	2.5	98.3	21.0	23.6	99.1	4.3
Egypt	1960 o/	25.9	6.9	98.0	19.8	34.0	98.8	6.1
	1976 p/	24.7	3.8	96.0	21.4	21.8	95.8	3.3
	1980	26.9	3.3	99.1	21.4	22.4	98.7	5.5
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya f/	1973	24.6	2.1	98.6	18.7	39.6	99.5	5.9
Morocco	1952 f/	24.5	7.4	97.9	17.3	60.7	98.3	7.2
	1960 f/	23.8	8.3	97.5	17.5	56.5	98.4	6.3
	1971 f/	25.0	4.0	97.1	19.4	33.8	98.5	5.6
	1982 q/	27.2	2.1	97.9	22.3	18.5	99.1	4.9
Sudan	1973 r/	25.8	4.6	96.7	18.7	43.1	98.3	7.1
	1979 s/	27.7	1.4	96.6	21.5	21.8	99.2	6.2
Tunisia	1956 t/	25.9	4.8	95.0	19.3	41.5	97.7	6.6
	1966 u/	27.0	0.7	96.6	20.9	19.0	98.5	6.1
	1975	27.1	0.0	97.1	22.6	10.6	98.5	4.5
	1984	28.1	0.0	97.5	24.3	6.9	98.5	3.8

Annex table A.1 (continued)

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Southern Africa								
Botswana	1971 v/	29.3	5.7	89.5	24.8	13.5	88.3	4.5
	1981 w/	30.8	0.9	87.2	26.4	7.3	84.0	4.4
Lesotho	1966 x/	26.0	1.2	96.0	20.3	22.0	97.7	5.7
	1977	26.3	1.6	96.0	20.5	25.9	97.5	5.8
South Africa	1951	27.1	1.6	92.6	22.8	9.2	94.7	4.3
	1960	26.8	1.3	93.3	22.8	9.5	95.1	4.0
	1980	27.8	0.9	90.9	25.7	5.6	91.3	2.1
Western Africa								
Benin	1961 y/	24.8	5.3	96.0	16.9	66.7	99.5	7.9
	1982	24.9	3.5	97.9	18.3	45.5	99.5	6.6
Burkina Faso f/	1975	27.0	4.2	93.7	17.4	53.9	97.5	9.6
Côte d'Ivoire	1975	26.7	3.4	92.4	18.4	49.5	94.5	8.3
	1978	27.1	3.3	94.3	18.9	52.1	98.7	8.2
Ghana	1960	26.2	3.6	96.3	17.8	54.1	99.5	8.4
	1971	26.9	1.4	96.2	19.4	31.8	99.5	7.5
Guinea z/	1955	26.8	1.0	97.2	16.0	82.3	100.0	10.8
Guinea-Bissau	1950	27.7	2.1	95.8	18.3	45.3	99.4	9.4
Liberia	1962	26.3	4.8	93.6	18.0	56.5	98.0	8.3
	1970	26.6	2.3	94.3	18.7	50.5	98.4	7.9
	1974 aa/	26.6	3.2	93.2	19.4	42.3	97.6	7.2
Mali	1960 bb/	26.5	1.5	98.5	16.2	79.1	99.5	10.3
	1976 cc/	27.3	4.9	96.9	18.0	52.4	98.3	9.3
	1987 dd/	..	..	..	16.4	75.4	100.0	..
Mauritania	1977	27.5	1.8	96.9	19.5	43.0	96.9	8.0
Niger ee/	1959	21.5	13.6	99.5	15.8	86.4	99.9	5.7
Nigeria	1981/82	..	..	..	18.7	44.3	98.5	..
Senegal	1960 ff/	28.0	1.1	97.8	17.4	62.8	99.6	10.6
	1976 f/	28.9	1.4	97.0	19.0	45.3	98.4	9.9
	1978 gg/	28.3	1.6	97.5	18.3	55.0	99.5	10.0
Togo	1958	25.6	3.1	97.4	17.6	53.1	99.5	8.0
	1971	26.5	2.4	96.9	18.5	40.6	99.9	8.0

(Sources and notes follow)

Sources: Mentions of United Nations Demographic Yearbooks refer to the following sales publications: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8); Demographic Yearbook 1982 (Sales No. E/F.83.XIII.1); Demographic Yearbook 1987 (Sales No. E.88.XIII.1).

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Mozambique: 1950: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement table 12; 1980: Economic Commission for Africa, Second African Population Conference (ST/ECA/POP/1) (Addis Ababa, 1984), p. 296.

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Togo: 1958: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1971: Economic Commission for Africa, Second African Population Conference (ST/ECA/POP/1) (Addis Ababa, 1984), p. 136, table IIc.

Tunisia: 1956, 1966: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1975: Demographic Yearbook 1982, table 40; 1984: United Nations Statistical Office questionnaire.

United Republic of Tanzania (mainland): 1967: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1978: Demographic Yearbook 1987, table 29.

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Zimbabwe: Central Statistical Office, 1982 Population Census: Main Demographic Features of the Population of Zimbabwe: An Advance Report Based on a Ten Percent Sample (Harare, 1985), table II.

Note: All data from the United Nations Statistical Office questionnaire are provisional.

a/ Based on a sample of 10 per cent urban and 2 per cent rural population.

b/ Provisional data.

c/ Based on complete enumeration of non-African population and urban African population and a 10 per cent sample of rural African population.

d/ Not including Rodrigues.

e/ Legal unions only.

f/ De jure population.

g/ Based on data from sample survey.

h/ Excluding 3 per cent of women of unknown marital status.

i/ Based on sample taken at the time of the census.

j/ De jure population based on results of a sample survey, excluding population estimates of 80,000 for Bangui, 66,000 for East Oubangui and 40,000 for nomads, not covered by survey. Married population includes 51,120 polygamous males (40,890 with two wives, 7,520 with three, 1,660 with four and 1,050 with five or more).

k/ De jure population based on results of sample survey, excluding estimates of 100,000 for Fort-Lamy enumerated in 1962 and 630,000 for area not covered by survey.

l/ De jure population based on results of sample survey, excluding population of Brazzaville (136,200 at 1961-1962 census) and Pointe-Noire (79,100 at 1962 census) not covered by survey. Married population includes 34,100 polygamous males (25,100 with two wives, 6,400 with three, 1,700 with four and 900 with five).

m/ Including only Bas-Zaire, Bandudu and Kaisai Occidental.

n/ Age classification based on year of birth rather than on completed years of age. Algerian population only. De jure population but excluding persons in institutions, military personnel in barracks, merchant seamen, armed forces and diplomatic personnel stationed outside the country.

o/ For males aged 18 or over, ages 18-19 are used rather than age group 15-19; for females aged 16 or over, ages 16-19 are used instead of ages 15-19.

p/ Egyptian nationals only.

q/ Based on 5 per cent sample of census returns.

r/ Data refer to urban and rural settled populations only.

s/ Data refer to North Sudan only.

t/ Based on a 10 per cent sample of census returns; in the Department of Oasis and Saoura, enumeration took place between 22 December 1965 and 20 January 1966. Excluding Algerian refugees temporarily in the country; female population including an adjustment for underenumeration.

u/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration, estimated at 4 per cent.

v/ De jure population but excluding 24,012 residents absent less than one year and nomad population estimated at 10,550 at 1971 census.

w/ Provisional data; de jure population; including nomad population.

x/ Excluding absentee workers amounting to 12 per cent of the total population at the 1966 census.

y/ Based on results of sample survey; excluding population of towns of Abomey-Bohicon and Canton of Tchi, representing approximately 1 per cent of total population, not covered by survey. Singulate mean age at marriage computed on ages 15-59.

z/ Based on results of a sample survey; ages 14-19 used instead of age group 15-19.

aa/ Proportions at ages 45-49 and 50-54 were adjusted.

bb/ Based on unadjusted results of sample survey; excluding nomad population and population in the zone controlled by the Niger office, not covered by the survey.

cc/ Maximum age group 45-49.

dd/ Data available only for females.

ee/ Data are estimates of de jure population, based on sample survey; excluding population of Niamey city (30,030 at census of April 1959) and also an estimated 234,000 persons for the circle of Agades, the nomad subdivision of Tahoua and the northern part of the circles of Maradi, Gou Zinder and n'Guigmi, not covered by the survey.

ff/ Based on results of a sample survey; de jure population.

gg/ Ages not corrected for digit preferences.

Annex A.2. Singulate mean age at marriage and percentage ever married at ages 15-19 and 50, by sex, Latin America and the Caribbean, 1950-1985

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Caribbean								
Cuba	1953 a/	26.0	2.2	81.4	22.0	20.5	87.8	4.0
	1970	23.3	5.0	85.1	19.5	29.9	89.7	3.8
	1981 b/	23.5	6.8	90.7	19.9	28.8	95.6	3.6
Dominican Republic	1960	25.9	2.2	84.3	19.2	24.9	81.7	6.7
	1970 a/	26.1	6.3	76.7	19.7	22.2	81.5	6.4
Guadeloupe c/	1961 a/ d/	29.6	1.6	70.9	25.8	5.1	65.4	3.8
	1967 a/	28.6	0.8	72.8	25.0	5.2	67.9	3.6
	1974	27.4	0.3	74.7	24.5	2.8	69.9	2.9
	1982 a/	29.6	0.2	73.9	26.6	1.4	69.4	3.0
Haiti e/	1950 f/	28.5	0.8	87.5	21.9	5.7	76.6	6.6
	1971 a/	28.1	0.5	85.8	22.4	5.5	78.6	5.7
	1982 g/	27.3	3.2	89.4	23.8	8.6	91.6	3.5
Jamaica c/	1960	33.1	0.2	60.0	29.3	1.4	59.0	3.8
	1970	32.9	0.3	62.0	30.0	1.4	63.6	2.9
	1982 h/	30.8	9.1	62.4	29.7	9.1	66.1	1.1
Martinique c/	1954 a/	29.7	0.2	65.3	27.8	1.6	63.1	1.9
	1961 a/	29.0	7.6	69.5	26.3	8.5	64.3	2.7
	1967 a/	29.1	0.3	73.1	26.1	2.0	67.0	3.0
	1974	28.6	0.2	74.0	26.3	1.4	69.5	2.3
	1982 a/	31.2	0.1	71.6	28.8	0.7	69.1	2.4
Puerto Rico	1950 j/	25.3	2.4	89.1	21.1	19.2	91.5	4.2
	1960 k/	24.6	3.4	91.3	21.6	17.7	94.5	3.0
	1970 a/	24.0	4.6	90.5	22.1	15.6	93.3	1.9
	1980 j/ l/	24.1	4.5	92.2	22.3	16.8	94.4	1.8
Trinidad and Tobago c/ m/	1960 n/	27.0	1.6	77.3	20.0 o/	21.8 o/	87.2 o/	..
	1970 p/	27.4	1.0	78.7	22.1 o/	17.7 o/	92.3 o/	..
	1980	27.9	2.6	80.7	22.3 o/	24.8 o/	93.8 o/	..
Central America								
Costa Rica	1950 a/	26.2	1.6	87.6	21.9	14.9	81.2	4.3
	1963 g/	25.5	1.6	88.2	20.8	16.3	82.3	4.7
	1973	25.4	1.9	89.4	21.7	15.1	84.7	3.7
	1984	25.1	2.7	90.4	22.2	15.5	86.4	2.9
El Salvador	1950	25.3	14.5	81.5	19.7	20.3	71.9	5.6
	1961	25.0	4.4	84.0	18.8	21.7	72.6	6.2
	1971 r/	24.7	3.5	85.2	19.4	20.5	76.9	5.3
Guatemala	1950 s/	24.0	7.5	88.8	18.6	31.7	81.2	5.4
	1964	23.8	7.0	89.1	18.8	30.2	84.7	5.0
	1973 a/	23.7	6.9	92.0	19.7	28.4	88.4	4.0
	1981	23.5	8.3	94.3	20.5	28.3	93.8	3.0
Honduras	1961 t/	25.1	3.5	85.8	17.9	23.7	73.8	7.2
	1974 a/	24.4	4.9	94.3	20.0	29.2	94.7	4.4
Mexico	1960 a/ t/	24.4	6.8	93.6	21.1	22.2	91.3	3.3
	1970 u/	24.4	5.2	93.6	21.2	21.2	92.5	3.2
	1980	24.1	7.1	94.4	20.6	27.6	92.9	3.5

Annex table A.2 (continued)

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Nicaragua	1950 a/ v/	26.3	4.2	84.0	20.0	19.1	71.5	6.3
	1971 a/	24.6	4.7	89.7	20.2	22.7	86.4	4.4
Panama	1950 w/	24.6	5.2	77.5	18.3	25.3	74.3	6.3
	1960 x/	24.8	2.8	78.7	18.9	21.6	75.9	5.9
	1970 y/	24.8	5.5	88.4	20.4	26.6	92.8	4.4
	1980	25.0	5.1	88.1	21.3	21.5	92.3	3.7
Temperate South America								
Argentina	1960	26.7	2.2	85.9	23.1	10.6	86.7	3.6
	1970 z/	26.1	5.9	87.9	22.9	13.2	88.6	3.2
	1980 aa/	25.3	2.1	88.4	22.9	10.3	89.9	2.4
Chile	1952 bb/	27.0	1.3	86.5	23.7	9.0	84.0	3.3
	1960 cc/	26.4	1.3	86.9	23.5	9.5	85.3	2.9
	1970 bb/	25.5	3.7	89.3	23.3	10.8	87.2	2.2
	1982	25.7	2.2	89.5	23.6	9.2	87.6	2.1
Uruguay	1963 t/	26.9	1.1	85.0	22.8	10.1	86.2	4.1
	1975 dd/	25.4	2.2	85.3	22.4	12.8	89.2	3.0
Tropical South America								
Bolivia	1950 ee/	24.6	4.2	92.4	22.5	14.2	88.9	2.1
	1976	24.5	4.7	94.4	22.1	16.6	92.3	2.4
Brazil	1970 a/ r/ v/	26.2	1.5	93.3	23.0	12.6	91.2	3.2
	1980 a/ ff/	25.3	3.7	93.9	22.6	16.2	91.9	2.7
Colombia	1951 gg/	27.2	2.2	84.7	21.5	16.3	77.0	5.7
	1964	26.5	1.7	86.2	21.3	15.3	80.8	5.2
	1973 v/	26.0	5.5	88.6	22.4	15.0	84.8	3.6
	1985 hh/	25.9	5.5	90.4	22.6	16.5	88.1	3.3
Ecuador	1950 a/ ii/	25.6	3.1	90.0	21.1	17.8	82.1	4.5
	1962 ii/ jj/	25.1	3.4	90.1	20.7	19.6	85.1	4.4
	1974	24.8	5.7	90.5	21.1	21.0	88.6	3.7
	1982 ii/ kk/	24.3	9.7	91.8	21.1	23.0	89.3	3.2
Guyana c/ m/	1960	25.1	2.4	83.0	20.1 e/	23.4 e/	78.8 e/	5.0
	1970 a/	24.7	1.6	83.6	21.5	14.7	83.4	3.2
	1980	26.0	2.5	85.6	23.7	12.2	85.8	2.3
Paraguay	1950 ll/	26.7	0.7	84.5	20.9	12.8	67.2	5.8
	1962 mm/	26.3	0.9	87.8	20.8	12.2	73.1	5.5
	1972	26.5	0.8	88.7	21.7	11.7	78.9	4.8
	1982	26.0	2.2	90.9	21.8	15.0	83.6	4.2
Peru	1961 nn/	25.6	2.9	89.7	21.7	16.2	85.6	3.9
	1972 r/	25.4	0.4	91.7	21.6	19.4	89.5	3.8
	1981	25.7	5.8	92.7	22.7	15.2	91.5	3.0
Venezuela	1950 r/	26.5	3.0	77.8	18.1	21.9	66.0	8.4
	1961 oo/	25.7	4.5	80.8	17.8	24.0	72.0	7.9
	1971	25.5	3.3	84.2	20.4	16.5	77.8	5.1
	1981 r/	24.8	7.5	88.8	21.2	20.7	85.3	3.6

(Sources and notes follow)

Sources: Mentions of United Nations Demographic Yearbooks refer to the following sales publications: Demographic Yearbook 1968 (Sales No. E/F.69.XIII.1); Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8); Demographic Yearbook 1987 (Sales No. E.88.XIII.1).

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a/ De jure population.

b/ Based on 5 per cent sample of census returns; provisional data.

c/ Legal unions only.

d/ Age group 50-54 estimated by graphic interpolation.

e/ Excluding visiting unions.

f/ De jure population, but excluding 84 diplomatic personnel stationed outside the country. Also excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 8.3 per cent. The unknown category may or may not include widowed or divorced persons.

g/ Based on a 2.5 per 100 sample of census returns; provisional data; not corrected for underreporting of age and misreporting of marital status.

h/ Data for women computed only for those not in primary or secondary school on a full-time basis.

i/ Proportions in age groups 45-49 and 50-54 assumed constant.

j/ De jure population but including armed forces stationed in the area.

k/ Based on 25 per cent sample of census returns.

l/ Data based on sample of census returns.

m/ Including unregistered religious marriages.

n/ For men, including legal, consensual and visiting unions; for women, including legal, consensual and visiting unions and unregistered religious marriages.

o/ Including legal, consensual and visiting unions.

p/ Refers to population not attending school. Percentages for union status at ages 45-49 and 50-54 assumed constant.

q/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 3.2 per cent.

r/ Excluding Indian jungle population.

s/ Excluding 3.7 per cent adjustment for underenumeration and 74.653 persons not living in households. Age distribution based on 5 per cent sample of census returns; data based on 5 per cent sample of census returns.

t/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration.

u/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 3.0 per cent.

v/ Based on sample taken at time of the census.

w/ Excluding the Canal Zone; prior to 1966, excluding Indian tribal population, numbering 48,654 in 1950.

x/ Excluding Canal Zone; also excluding Indian tribal population, numbering 62,187 (29,889 males and 32,298 females) in 1960.

y/ Excluding Canal Zone.

z/ Results for sample of census returns.

aa/ Estimated at 1 per cent underenumeration.

bb/ Data excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 5.8 per cent in 1952; based on a sample of census returns.

cc/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 5.4 per cent.

dd/ Provisional data.

ee/ Data excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 8.4 per cent; also excluding an estimated 87,000 Indian jungle population.

ff/ Based on a sample of census returns.

gg/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 191,683; also excluding indigenous population numbering 127,980.

hh/ Excluding persons of unknown age as well as unreported marital status.

ii/ Excluding nomadic Indian tribes.

jj/ Excluding certain areas; not corrected for underenumeration.

kk/ Not adjusted for an estimated 5.6 per cent underenumeration.

ll/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 50,067; also excluding Indian jungle population estimated at 17,000 and 12,881 persons not tabulated by marital status, age or sex.

mm/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration and an estimated 3,500 Indian jungle population.

nn/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration and an estimated 100,830 Indian jungle population.

oo/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 5.8 per cent.

Annex table A.3. Singulate mean age at marriage and percentage ever married at ages 15–19 and 50 by sex, Asia, 1945–1987

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men			Women			Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15–19	50	Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15–19	50	
Eastern Asia								
China	1945	..	..	..	18.6	..	..	..
	1953	..	..	..	18.9	..	..	..
	1982	25.1	0.9	96.3	22.4	4.4	99.8	2.7
Japan	1955 a/ b/	27.0	0.1	98.8	24.7	1.7	98.5	2.3
	1960 a/ b/	27.4	0.2	98.7	25.0	1.4	98.1	2.4
	1965 a/ b/	27.4	0.4	98.5	24.8	1.5	97.5	2.6
	1970 a/ b/	27.5	0.8	98.3	24.7	2.2	96.7	2.8
	1975 b/	27.6	0.6	97.9	24.5	1.4	95.7	3.1
	1980 b/	28.6	0.4	97.4	25.1	1.0	95.6	3.5
	1985 b/	29.5	0.6	96.1	25.8	1.1	95.6	3.7
Hong Kong	1961	28.7	1.4	95.4	21.9	6.4	92.2	6.8
	1966 c/	29.3	0.6	96.7	22.5	4.8	93.4	6.8
	1971 d/	30.2	0.5	94.0	23.8	2.9	95.4	6.4
	1976 e/	29.2	0.7	93.1	24.5	3.9	97.0	4.7
	1981	28.7	1.3	91.7	25.3	3.4	97.6	3.4
	1986 f/	29.2	0.6	92.8	26.6	2.1	98.0	2.6
Republic of Korea	1955 g/ h/	24.6	5.6	99.7	20.5	14.8	99.8	4.1
	1960 g/ h/	25.2	2.3	99.8	21.3	8.4	99.9	3.9
	1966 g/ h/	26.7	0.6	99.9	22.8	3.9	99.9	3.9
	1970 g/ h/	27.2	0.3	99.8	23.3	2.9	99.9	3.9
	1975	27.4	0.3	99.8	23.7	2.6	99.8	3.7
	1980 i/	27.3	0.2	99.6	24.1	1.8	99.8	3.2
	1985 j/	27.8	0.1	99.5	24.7	0.9	99.7	3.1
South-eastern Asia								
Brunei Darussalam	1960	25.8	2.6	95.3	19.5	34.7	94.4	6.3
	1971	26.3	2.2	94.7	22.4	14.7	95.4	3.9
	1981 d/ k/	26.5	1.8	94.9	23.6	12.9	94.8	2.9
	1986 e/ i/	26.1	4.6	95.2	25.0	8.2	94.5	1.1
Cambodia	1962	24.3	2.7	98.2	21.3	15.2	97.9	3.0
Indonesia	1971 l/	23.8	5.1	98.2	19.3	37.4	99.0	4.5
	1980	24.1	3.7	99.0	20.0	30.0	98.8	4.1
	1985 e/	24.8	1.8	98.2	21.1	18.8	98.8	3.7
Malaysia	1947 m/	24.2	..	..	18.4	..	..	5.8
	1957 d/	23.8	4.8	93.0	19.4	37.0	98.5	4.4
	1970 d/	25.8	2.8	97.0	22.3	16.1	98.7	3.5
	1980	26.6	1.3	96.3	23.5	10.3	97.4	3.1

Annex table A.3 (continued)

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Myanmar n/	1973	24.1	6.9	96.6	21.3	22.3	94.4	2.8
	1983 o/	24.6	6.7	96.5	22.4	16.8	94.1	2.2
Philippines	1948	25.0	..	..	22.1	..	..	2.9
	1960	25.0	3.0	96.9	22.2	12.7	92.6	2.8
	1970	25.4	2.5	96.5	22.8	10.9	93.0	2.6
	1975 q/	25.5	3.1	95.0	23.2	12.4	94.0	2.3
	1980 q/	25.3	3.4	95.7	22.4	14.3	93.1	2.9
Singapore	1957	26.0	1.6	92.5	20.3	20.0	94.2	5.7
	1970	27.8	0.5	94.3	24.3	4.8	96.4	3.5
	1980	28.4	0.4	94.1	26.2	2.3	96.5	2.2
Thailand	1947	24.3	..	..	21.1	..	..	3.2
	1960	24.5	7.1	97.8	22.1	13.9	97.6	2.4
	1970 p/	24.7	3.9	96.8	22.0	19.2	97.2	2.7
	1980	24.7	7.1	97.6	22.7	17.5	96.2	2.0
Southern Asia								
Afghanistan	1979 q/	25.3	9.2	96.3	17.8	53.6	99.1	7.5
Bangladesh	1974 r/	24.0	7.7	99.0	16.4	75.5	99.7	7.6
	1981 s/	23.9	6.7	98.6	16.7	68.8	99.1	7.2
India	1951	20.6	..	..	15.3	..	..	5.3
	1961	22.0	23.8	96.8	16.8	70.8	99.5	5.2
	1971 t/	22.7	17.8	97.2	17.7	57.1	99.6	5.0
	1981 u/	23.4	12.5	97.7	18.7	44.2	99.6	4.7
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1966	24.9	5.7	98.5	18.5	46.8	99.2	6.4
	1976 q/ v/	24.2	6.5	98.8	19.7	34.3	99.2	4.5
Nepal	1961	20.1	36.7	98.5	16.6	74.3	99.4	3.5
	1971 q/	21.1	27.0	98.5	17.5	60.7	99.3	3.6
	1981	21.5	25.9	92.9	17.9	50.8	96.8	3.6
Pakistan	1951 w/	22.3	23.8	97.6	16.9	72.7	99.0	5.4
	1961 w/ x/	23.3	14.3	97.5	16.7	74.5	99.2	6.6
	1981 w/	24.9	7.5	95.0	19.8	31.1	97.9	5.1
Sri Lanka	1946	27.0	..	..	20.7	..	..	6.3
	1953	27.2	1.2	92.6	20.9	24.3	95.5	6.3
	1963	27.9	1.0	92.6	22.1	15.0	95.9	5.8
	1971	28.1	0.6	92.3	23.5	10.6	95.7	4.6
	1981	27.9	0.9	93.1	24.4	10.4	95.6	3.5

Annex table A.3 (continued)

Subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Western Asia								
Cyprus	1960 y/	24.6	1.9	96.0	22.7	9.4	95.3	1.9
	1973 g/	25.9	0.7	97.2	24.2	3.8	95.0	1.7
	1976 g/	26.3	0.5	97.7	24.2	4.6	95.2	2.1
Iraq	1957 z/	26.4	10.4	93.8	20.6	34.5	97.1	5.8
	1965	25.5	11.6	93.9	20.6	33.6	96.9	4.9
	1977 aa/	25.2	6.0	95.3	20.8	33.0	97.1	4.4
Israel	1961 g/	25.7	2.2	96.7	21.4	12.0	97.3	4.3
	1972 bb/	25.4	1.4	96.4	22.8	8.7	97.7	2.6
	1980	25.8	0.7	97.1	23.4	7.5	97.6	2.4
	1983	26.1	1.1	96.9	23.5	6.8	97.1	2.6
Jordan	1961 cc/	24.8	2.6	96.5	20.4	28.0	97.2	4.4
	1979 dd/	25.9	1.4	98.5	21.5	20.5	97.7	4.4
	1981	26.8	0.8	99.2	22.8	12.9	98.2	4.0
Kuwait	1965 ee/	25.1	3.1	96.0	18.9	41.8	98.2	6.2
	1970 ff/	26.5	3.4	96.2	19.6	37.7	97.3	6.9
	1975	26.4	2.6	96.7	20.5	29.2	96.8	5.9
	1980	26.8	2.4	97.0	21.7	18.9	96.5	5.1
	1985	25.2	2.6	97.7	22.4	18.1	98.5	2.8
Syrian Arab Republic	1960 g/ gg/	25.2	16.4	95.6	19.6	42.2	97.2	5.6
	1970 g/	25.9	4.2	97.3	20.7	27.7	97.5	5.2
	1981 hh/	25.7	3.8	97.9	21.5	24.9	97.1	4.2
Turkey	1955 ii/	22.5	18.0	96.7	18.9	40.3	97.7	3.6
	1960 ii/	22.9	14.5	97.7	19.2	32.9	98.2	3.7
	1965 ii/	23.3	10.2	97.9	19.6	27.7	98.5	3.7
	1970 ii/	23.9	8.1	98.0	20.3	20.2	98.6	3.6
	1975 ii/	23.6	8.8	98.2	20.4	21.9	98.4	3.2
	1980	23.9	7.9	98.0	20.7	21.8	98.6	3.2
United Arab Emirates	1975 g/	25.9	8.7	95.9	18.0	56.5	98.6	7.9
Yemen jj/	1981	22.2	12.7	97.9	17.8	54.7	98.5	4.4

(Sources and notes follow)

Sources: Mentions of United Nations Demographic Yearbooks refer to the following sales publications: Demographic Yearbook 1958 (Sales No. E/F.59.XIII.1); Demographic Yearbook 1968 (Sales No. E/F.69.XIII.1); Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8); Demographic Yearbook 1982 (Sales No. E/F.83.XIII.1); Demographic Yearbook 1987 (Sales No. E.88.XIII.1).

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Singapore: 1957, 1970: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1980: Demographic Yearbook 1982, table 40.

Sri Lanka: 1946: Dallas F. S. Fernando, "Changing nuptiality patterns in Sri Lanka, 1901-1971", Population Studies (London), vol. 29, No. 2 (July 1975), tables 6, 7 and 8, for percentage ever married; Sri Lanka, Department of Census and Statistics, The Population of Sri Lanka (Paris, Committee for International Co-operation in National Research in Demography, 1974), table 3.11 for singulate mean age at marriage; 1953: Demographic Yearbook 1988, table 6; 1963, 1971: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1981: Demographic Yearbook 1982, table 40.

Syrian Arab Republic: 1960, 1970: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1981: Demographic Yearbook 1987, table 29.

Thailand: 1947: J. Hajnal, "European marriage patterns in perspective", in Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography, D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley, eds. (London, Edward Arnold, 1965), table 4, p. 104; 1960, 1970: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1980: United Nations Statistical Office questionnaire.

Turkey: 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970: Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement, table 12; 1975, 1980: Demographic Yearbook 1982, table 40.

United Arab Emirates: 1975: Demographic Yearbook 1982, table 40.

Yemen: Report of the Pilot Demographic Survey 1981, pp. 2-3, table 5.

Note: All data from the United Nations Statistical Office questionnaire are provisional.

a/ Excluding Okinawa.

b/ Excluding diplomatic personnel outside the country and foreign military and civilian personnel and their dependants stationed in the area.

c/ Estimated based on results of a sample survey; excluding transients, armed forces, police and inmates of hospital and penal, mental and charitable institutions.

d/ Excluding transients afloat.

e/ Based on results of a sample survey.

f/ Including 26,106 transients and 9,131 Vietnamese refugees.

g/ De jure population.

h/ Excluding alien armed forces, civilian aliens employed by armed forces and foreign diplomatic personnel and their dependants.

i/ Provisional data.

j/ Based on 2 per cent sample of census returns.

k/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 5.8 per cent.

l/ Excluding West Irian.

m/ Refers to the Federation of Malaya only.

n/ Formerly called Burma.

o/ Excluding 1,183,005 persons from areas restricted for security reasons.

p/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 2.01 per cent.

q/ Excluding nomad population.

r/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 6.88 per cent.

s/ Not adjusted for an estimated underenumeration of 3.1 per cent; not adjusted for age-misreporting.

t/ Including data for the Indian-held part of Jammu and Kashmir, the final status of which has not yet been determined; based on 1 per cent sample of census returns.

u/ Based on 5 per 100 sample of census returns. Excluding population of Assam State, where census could not be conducted. Not including diplomatic and military personnel abroad, foreign military personnel and their families and nationals working abroad temporarily.

v/ Excluding adjustment for underenumeration estimated at 2.3 per 100.

w/ Excluding data for Jammu and Kashmir, the final status of which has not yet been determined; and Junagardh, Manavadar, Gildit and Baltistan.

x/ Excluding data for Frontier Regions of West Pakistan (1,791,755 males and 1,646,184 females), foreigners (64,824 males and 46,545 females) and a considerable number of nomads.

y/ Excluding tourists (344 males and 103 females) and persons in sovereign bases and other areas retained by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland after independence (2,961 males and 641 females).

z/ Including 40,984 nationals abroad (30,068 males and 10,916 females).

aa/ Unreported marital status was about 0.6 per 100 among men and 0.5 per 100 among women aged 15 or over.

bb/ Including data from East Jerusalem and Israeli residents in certain other territories under occupation by Israeli military forces since June 1967.

cc/ Including military and diplomatic personnel and their families abroad (933 at 1961 census), but excluding foreign military and diplomatic personnel and their families in the country (389 at 1961 census).

dd/ Excluding data for Jordanian territory under occupation since June 1967 by Israeli military forces; including registered Palestinian refugees (633,687 on 31 May 1967); excluding persons living in hotels or on ships.

ee/ Kuwaiti population only.

ff/ Including 754 Kuwaiti nationals residing outside the country.

gg/ For 18 years or over.

hh/ Including Palestinian refugees.

ii/ Based on 1 per cent sample of census returns.

jj/ Data for former Yemen Arab Republic.

Annex table A.4. Singulate mean age at marriage and percentage ever married at ages 15-19 and 50, by sex, single census estimates, Northern America, Europe, Oceania and the USSR, 1950-1986

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men			Women			Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Percentage ever married at ages 50	Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Percentage ever married at ages 50	
Northern America								
Canada	1951 a/	25.3	1.0	87.1	22.5	7.9	88.7	2.8
	1956	25.0	1.1	87.8	21.8	8.4	89.1	3.2
	1961	24.8	1.3	89.5	21.4	8.7	90.1	3.4
	1966	24.7	1.2	89.9	21.8	7.6	91.3	2.9
	1971	24.4	1.6	91.1	22.0	7.5	92.6	2.4
	1976	24.4	2.0	91.7	22.3	8.2	93.7	2.1
	1981	25.2	1.6	92.4	23.1	6.7	94.1	2.1
	1986	26.5	1.3	92.9	24.3	4.7	94.3	2.2
United States	1950 b/	23.8	3.3	91.5	20.8	17.1	92.2	3.0
	1960	23.3	3.9	92.6	20.3	16.1	92.9	3.0
	1970	23.5	4.1	93.6	21.5	11.9	94.5	2.1
	1980	25.2	2.8	94.0	23.3	8.8	95.3	1.9
Europe								
Eastern Europe								
Albania	1955	25.1	6.3	95.2	20.4	24.6	98.4	4.7
Bulgaria	1956	24.0	5.1	98.1	20.9	19.2	97.9	3.1
	1965	24.2	4.0	98.4	20.7	18.5	97.9	3.5
	1975	24.5	4.3	98.1	20.8	17.8	97.9	3.7
Czechoslovakia	1947	27.4	0.5	94.7	23.0	5.8	90.3	4.4
	1961	25.2	0.8	94.7	21.1	8.7	93.5	4.1
	1970	24.6	1.0	94.8	21.4	7.8	94.9	3.2
	1980	24.7	1.3	94.3	21.7	8.0	96.3	3.1
German Democratic Republic c/	1950	25.7	0.6	96.1	23.9	3.1	90.6	1.8
	1964	..	..	97.8	..	..	92.9	..
	1971	24.7	1.3	98.0	20.8	6.8	90.7	3.9
	1981	25.4	0.7	96.8	21.7	4.2	93.5	3.7
Hungary	1949	26.7	1.1	94.1	22.7	11.5	91.8	4.0
	1960	24.7	1.2	94.6	20.8	14.7	92.7	3.8
	1963	24.7	1.1	95.1	20.9	12.9	93.1	3.8
	1970	24.8	1.4	95.9	20.9	12.5	94.3	3.9
	1980	24.8	2.2	95.3	21.0	16.1	95.9	3.8
Poland	1960	25.3	0.9	96.1	21.9	8.3	90.9	3.4
	1978	25.7	0.6	95.7	22.6	4.5	94.7	3.1
	1984	25.9	0.6	94.7	22.8	4.8	95.5	3.1
Romania	1966	24.5	2.5	97.4	20.2	21.6	96.0	4.3
	1977	24.9	2.9	97.8	21.1	16.0	96.4	3.9

Annex table A.4 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Northern Europe								
Denmark d/	1950	26.5	0.2	90.4	21.8	4.6	85.5	4.7
	1960	25.6	0.4	90.5	21.6	4.9	89.7	4.0
	1965	25.1	0.6	90.7	21.8	5.9	91.7	3.3
	1970	25.1	0.3	90.6	22.0	4.1	92.9	3.1
	1981	28.4	0.2	90.9	25.6	1.1	94.6	2.8
Finland	1950	26.0	1.0	88.3	22.7	4.4	81.0	3.3
	1960	26.1	1.1	89.9	22.5	5.1	85.0	3.6
	1970	25.6	1.0	89.2	22.5	5.4	87.7	3.1
	1975	26.0	0.5	87.6	23.3	3.9	88.6	2.7
	1980 e/	27.1	0.3	86.7	24.6	2.2	89.5	2.5
Ireland	1951	31.3	0.1	69.0	26.7	1.1	74.3	4.6
	1961	29.5	0.2	70.4	25.2	1.1	76.9	4.3
	1966	27.8	0.3	70.9	24.5	1.6	79.2	3.3
	1971	25.8	0.5	71.9	23.5	2.1	81.2	2.3
	1979	24.2	0.7	74.7	23.1	2.7	84.3	1.2
	1981	24.4	0.6	76.1	23.4	2.3	85.4	1.1
Norway	1950	27.9	0.3	84.9	23.0	3.1	79.3	4.9
	1960	26.2	0.6	86.7	21.4	4.8	85.7	4.9
	1970	24.9	0.6	87.6	21.9	4.9	91.1	3.0
	1980 e/	26.3	0.2	88.9	24.0	2.4	94.3	2.3
Sweden	1945	27.0	0.2	84.1	22.9	3.0	79.0	4.9
	1950	27.1	0.3	84.3	22.0	3.7	80.9	5.1
	1960	26.4	0.2	85.6	22.5	2.7	87.7	3.9
	1965	26.0	0.3	86.4	23.0	3.7	90.5	3.0
	1970	26.2	0.2	86.7	23.7	2.3	92.0	2.6
	1975	28.0	0.1	86.6	25.7	1.1	92.7	2.3
	1980 e/	30.0	0.1	87.2	27.6	0.7	93.1	2.4
United Kingdom								
England and Wales	1951	26.0	0.5	90.8	22.1	4.4	84.9	3.9
	1961	25.1	1.1	90.8	21.3	6.6	88.6	3.8
	1966	24.7	1.7	91.2	21.4	7.9	90.7	3.3
	1971	23.9	2.8	90.8	21.1	10.8	91.9	2.8
	1981	25.4	1.1	90.8	23.1	4.5	93.9	2.4
Scotland	1951	26.5	0.4	87.0	22.4	3.5	79.7	4.0
	1961	24.9	1.2	87.8	21.4	5.8	84.5	3.5
	1966	24.4	1.9	88.6	21.4	6.8	86.9	3.0
	1971	23.4	3.2	88.7	20.7	9.9	88.4	2.7
	1981	24.8	1.6	90.1	22.5	5.0	91.7	2.3
Northern Ireland	1951	28.0	0.3	80.0	24.2	2.3	76.4	3.8
	1961	26.4	0.7	81.6	22.9	3.3	80.3	3.5
	1966	25.0	1.0	82.4	22.4	4.4	83.1	2.7
	1981	24.8	1.1	86.2	22.6	4.0	88.5	2.2

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Southern Europe								
Greece	1951 f/	29.7	1.4	93.5	25.9	5.0	95.0	3.8
	1961 f/	28.9	1.1	93.0	25.4	5.8	93.8	3.5
	1981	27.6	1.0	95.1	22.5	13.9	93.3	5.1
Italy	1951	28.7	0.4	91.3	24.6	3.8	85.2	4.1
	1961	28.5	0.5	91.2	24.2	4.4	86.2	4.3
	1971	27.2	0.6	89.3	22.6	6.3	86.2	4.6
	1981	27.1	0.7	91.2	23.2	4.6	90.4	3.9
Portugal	1950	27.1	0.6	88.7	24.5	4.1	83.0	2.6
	1960	26.4	0.7	88.9	24.0	4.7	84.0	2.4
	1970	25.6	1.3	91.9	23.3	5.3	87.3	2.3
	1981	24.7	1.6	94.2	22.1	8.9	91.3	2.6
Spain	1950	29.0	0.2	91.0	26.5	1.4	85.2	2.6
	1960	28.3	0.4	91.6	25.0	2.2	85.7	3.3
	1970	27.5	0.6	91.8	23.7	3.1	87.3	3.8
	1981	26.0	1.8	90.4	23.1	5.6	89.9	2.9
Yugoslavia	1948 g/	25.0	7.9	95.2	22.2	13.6	94.1	2.7
	1953	24.3	5.1	95.6	22.3	11.2	94.3	2.0
	1961	..	..	..	22.1	13.8	93.9	..
	1971	24.9	3.2	96.4	21.3	16.1	94.1	3.5
	1981	26.1	2.0	96.2	22.2	11.5	95.0	3.9
Western Europe								
Austria	1951	27.7	0.3	90.8	24.5	3.5	85.7	3.2
	1961	26.4	0.7	92.1	23.3	6.0	87.8	3.1
	1971	26.0	0.6	93.4	21.9	7.0	88.8	4.1
	1981	27.0	0.5	92.7	23.5	4.2	91.3	3.4
Belgium	1947	26.5	0.7	90.9	23.4	4.6	89.6	3.1
	1961	24.7	0.6	90.9	21.9	5.8	90.9	2.8
	1970	24.2	1.0	92.0	21.5	6.9	92.2	2.8
	1981	24.8	0.7	91.9	22.4	5.3	94.0	2.4
France f/	1946	27.5	0.8	91.3	23.3	5.6	87.8	3.9
	1954	26.3	0.7	89.7	23.2	3.8	89.7	3.1
	1962	26.4	0.3	89.5	23.3	2.9	90.9	3.2
	1968	26.0	0.3	90.0	23.1	3.2	91.4	2.9
	1975	25.3	0.4	89.3	23.0	3.5	91.7	2.3
	1982	26.4	0.2	89.5	24.5	1.9	92.9	1.9
Germany, Federal Republic of c /	1950	27.7	0.2	93.9	24.5	2.5	87.4	3.2
	1961	26.2	0.4	95.1	22.8	5.1	88.0	3.4
	1970	26.0	0.8	95.6	21.4	8.1	90.2	4.6
	1980 e/	27.9	0.4	93.7	23.6	3.6	92.9	4.3

Annex table A.4 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey	Men			Women			Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages		
			15-19	50		15-19	50	
Luxembourg	1947	28.7	0.3	87.0	24.6	2.4	85.4	4.1
	1960	25.9	0.3	88.5	22.4	5.0	87.8	3.5
	1966	25.7	0.5	90.1	21.6	6.6	88.8	4.1
	1970	25.6	0.6	91.4	21.4	6.1	89.4	4.2
	1981	26.2	0.4	91.5	23.1	4.4	92.5	3.0
Netherlands	1947	27.5	0.6	91.5	24.7	3.2	86.7	2.8
	1960	25.9	0.6	92.4	22.9	3.7	88.6	3.0
	1970 e/	25.2	0.7	93.4	23.1	4.9	95.5	2.0
	1980 e/	26.2	0.3	92.3	23.2	2.7	93.2	3.0
Switzerland	1950	28.1	0.1	87.0	24.7	1.2	80.8	3.5
	1960	27.0	0.1	88.2	23.6	1.9	84.1	3.5
	1970	26.0	0.3	90.2	22.6	3.7	87.4	3.4
	1980	27.9	0.2	91.4	25.0	1.6	90.3	3.0
Oceania								
Australia	1947 h/	25.8	0.7	86.7	22.5	5.7	87.5	3.3
	1954 h/	25.5	0.8	88.4	21.2	7.0	89.2	4.3
	1961 h/	25.5	0.9	90.3	21.3	7.0	91.9	4.2
	1966 h/	25.0	1.3	90.7	21.6	8.2	93.6	3.4
	1971	24.4	1.4	91.3	21.5	8.8	94.8	2.9
	1976	24.4	1.1	91.4	22.0	7.5	95.4	2.4
	1981	25.7	0.6	91.8	23.5	4.3	95.8	2.2
New Zealand	1951	25.9	0.7	89.5	22.1	6.3	88.2	3.8
	1956	25.8	0.8	90.5	21.4	7.1	89.3	4.4
	1961	25.3	1.3	91.1	21.2	8.4	91.0	4.1
	1966	24.7	1.8	91.4	21.3	9.7	92.8	3.4
	1971	23.9	2.1	92.0	21.3	8.9	94.2	2.7
	1976	23.9	2.1	92.3	21.5	10.4	95.0	2.4
	1981	24.9	2.0	92.7	22.8	6.7	95.6	2.1
	1986	26.8	4.3	93.2	24.7	4.8	95.7	2.1
USSR	1979	24.2	2.2	98.5	21.4	9.8	95.4	2.8
	1985 i/	24.2	2.2	97.9	21.8	9.5	96.1	2.4

(Sources and notes follow)

Sources: Mentions of United Nations Demographic Yearbooks refer to the following sales publications: Demographic Yearbook 1949-50 (Sales No. E/F.1951.XIII.1), table 5; Demographic Yearbook 1955 (Sales No. E/F.1955.XIII.6), table 12; Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8), table 12; Demographic Yearbook 1982 (Sales No. E/F. 83.XIII.1), table 40; Demographic Yearbook 1987 (Sales No. E/F.88.XIII.1), table 29.

Belgium: Data for 1947 derived from C. Wattelar and G. Wunsch, Etude démographique de la nuptialité en Belgique (Louvain, Université Catholique de Louvain, 1967), annex VII.

Netherlands: Data for 1970 provided by Central Bureau of Statistics, Netherlands.

New Zealand: Data for 1981 provided by Department of Statistics, New Zealand.

USSR: 1985: Vestnik Statistiki, No. 7 (1986), p. 68, table 3.

United States of America: 1980: Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, vol. I, Characteristics of the Population, Chapter D: Detailed Population Characteristics; Part 1, United States Summary, PC80-1-D1-A; Section A: United States, Tables 253-310 (Washington, D.C., Department of Commerce, 1984).

Yugoslavia: 1961: Miroslav Maçura, "Fertility decline and emergence of low fertility in Yugoslavia", in Population Renewal and Population Policy, Milos Maçura, ed. (Belgrade, Economic Institute, 1982), table 6C.

a/ Excluding Yukon and Northwest territories.

b/ Excluding Alaska and Hawaii.

c/ The data which relate to the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany include the relevant data relating to Berlin for which separate data have not been supplied. This is without prejudice to any question of status which may be involved.

d/ Excluding Faeroe Islands and Greenland.

e/ Estimates based on vital statistics.

f/ Age classification based on year of birth rather than on completed years of age.

g/ Excluding Koper and Buje, which the former Free Territory of Trieste incorporated in 1953.

h/ Excluding full-blooded aborigines.

i/ Sample size is 5 per cent of the population.

Annex table A.5. Singulate mean age at marriage and percentage ever married at ages 15–19 and 50, by sex, intercensal estimates, Northern America, Europe and Oceania, 1950–1985

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey a/	Men			Women			Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
		Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15–19 b/	50	Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Percentage ever married at ages 15–19 b/	50	
Northern America								
Canada	1951–1956	25.5	1.1	91.1	22.6	8.4	95.0	2.9
	1956–1961	25.2	1.3	93.6	22.2	8.7	95.1	3.0
	1961–1966	25.5	1.2	92.5	22.7	7.6	94.6	2.8
	1966–1971	24.9	1.7	95.0	22.4	7.5	94.3	2.5
	1971–1976	24.9	2.0	93.7	22.7	8.2	94.6	2.2
	1976–1981	25.5	1.6	89.8	23.1	6.6	90.1	2.4
United States of America	1950–1960	23.7	3.8	94.8	21.0	16.3	96.2	2.7
	1960–1970	23.6	4.1	94.1	21.4	12.9	93.3	2.2
	1970–1980	25.1	3.1	90.0	23.0	9.6	90.4	2.1
Europe								
Eastern Europe								
Bulgaria	1955–1965	24.2	4.3	98.2	20.8	18.7	98.5	3.4
	1965–1975	24.3	4.2	96.8	20.9	18.0	98.1	3.4
Czechoslovakia	1961–1971	24.6	1.0	95.6	21.8	7.9	96.9	2.8
	1970–1980	24.6	1.3	93.4	21.7	8.0	96.1	2.9
German Democratic Republic	1966–1971	24.6	1.3	94.9	22.0	6.8	95.7	2.6
	1971–1981	24.5	1.0	92.3	22.2	5.4	95.2	2.3
Hungary	1950–1960	25.4	1.2	98.2	21.7	14.0	97.3	3.7
	1960–1970	25.0	1.4	96.1	21.7	13.0	97.0	3.3
	1970–1980	24.3	2.0	93.3	21.1	15.2	96.2	3.2
Poland	1960–1970	25.8	0.6	95.3	23.1	5.5	95.7	2.7
	1973–1978	25.6	0.6	94.4	23.1	4.9	95.4	2.5
	1979–1984	26.1	0.6	91.4	23.0	4.8	95.2	3.1
Romania	1967–1977	24.8	2.8	96.8	21.2	17.3	96.5	3.6
Northern Europe								
Denmark	1950–1955	26.2	0.3	93.1	22.7	5.2	94.2	3.5
	1955–1960	26.6	0.4	92.5	22.8	5.0	96.1	3.8
	1960–1965	25.1	0.6	93.3	22.5	5.9	95.6	2.6
	1965–1970	25.0	0.3	90.2	22.6	4.1	95.6	2.4
	1970–1980	28.1	0.2	80.1	25.5	1.9	86.0	2.6
Finland	1950–1960	26.2	1.1	90.4	23.6	4.9	90.6	2.6
	1960–1970	25.2	1.1	88.8	23.2	5.3	90.8	2.0
	1970–1975	26.2	0.5	83.0	24.1	3.9	87.8	2.1
	1975–1980	28.3	0.3	77.7	25.7	2.3	84.0	2.6

Annex table A.5 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey a/	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19 b/	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19 b/	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
Ireland	1951-1961	31.6	0.2	77.2	27.6	1.1	85.0	4.0
	1961-1971	28.5	0.4	85.1	25.7	1.9	90.8	2.8
	1971-1981	27.5	0.6	87.3	25.3	2.3	92.1	2.2
Norway	1950-1955	27.4	0.5	90.8	23.8	3.8	94.4	3.6
	1955-1960	26.4	0.6	92.5	23.1	4.8	96.8	3.3
	1960-1970	25.5	0.8	92.2	23.0	5.4	95.5	2.5
	1970-1975	25.8	0.6	91.1	23.2	4.8	95.0	2.6
	1975-1980	27.0	0.2	83.7	24.4	2.4	88.6	2.6
Sweden	1950-1960	26.8	0.2	89.0	23.9	3.0	94.1	2.9
	1960-1965	26.2	0.3	90.5	23.7	3.7	94.3	2.5
	1965-1970	26.6	0.2	86.8	24.1	2.3	91.5	2.5
	1970-1975	28.3	0.1	72.7	26.1	1.3	79.8	2.2
	1975-1980	29.8	0.1	68.1	27.5	0.6	68.7	2.3
United Kingdom								
England and Wales	1951-1961	25.2	0.9	92.4	22.6	6.0	94.8	2.6
	1961-1966	24.8	1.7	94.1	22.2	8.0	95.7	2.6
	1966-1971	24.2	2.8	93.9	21.8	10.8	95.1	2.4
	1971-1981	25.4	1.5	87.3	23.2	6.1	92.0	2.2
Northern Ireland	1951-1961	27.0	0.6	87.6	24.6	3.1	89.1	2.4
	1961-1971	25.8	0.9	91.5	23.7	4.3	92.8	2.1
Scotland	1951-1961	25.5	1.0	92.2	23.1	5.2	92.9	2.4
	1961-1966	24.8	1.9	94.0	22.5	6.8	94.0	2.3
	1966-1971	24.0	2.3	92.7	22.2	7.9	95.3	1.8
	1971-1981	24.9	1.8	89.0	23.1	5.8	92.7	1.8
Southern Europe								
Italy	1951-1961	28.6	0.5	91.9	24.6	4.3	88.6	4.0
	1961-1971	27.2	0.6	90.8	23.6	5.9	91.9	3.6
	1971-1981	27.9	0.7	93.6	24.4	5.1	93.8	3.5
Portugal	1950-1960	26.7	0.7	91.3	24.5	4.6	87.5	2.2
	1960-1970	26.2	1.1	95.9	24.4	5.2	93.5	1.8
	1971-1981	25.3	1.5	97.3	23.1	8.0	96.5	2.2
Spain	1950-1960	28.7	0.4	94.9	25.8	1.9	91.0	2.9
	1960-1970	27.5	0.5	92.8	24.8	3.1	93.4	2.7
	1970-1980	26.2	1.8	92.6	23.8	5.3	93.8	2.4
Yugoslavia	1948-1953	24.7	5.1	98.5	22.7	11.2	94.4	2.0
	1971-1981	26.1	2.1	93.3	22.6	12.4	94.6	3.5
Western Europe								
Austria	1951-1961	27.0	0.6	95.7	24.0	5.4	92.8	3.0
	1961-1971	26.0	0.6	93.9	22.8	6.8	93.9	3.2
	1971-1981	26.7	0.5	90.0	24.0	4.9	90.9	2.7
Belgium	1960-1970	24.4	0.9	93.9	22.2	6.6	95.9	2.2
	1970-1980	24.8	0.8	90.9	22.6	5.7	93.8	2.2

Annex table A.5 (continued)

Region, subregion and country	Date of census or survey a/	Men: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19 b/	Men: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Women: Singulate mean age at marriage (years)	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 15-19 b/	Women: Percentage ever married at ages 50	Difference between sexes in singulate mean age at marriage (years)
France	1963-1968	25.8	0.3	92.0	23.4	3.2	94.1	2.4
	1970-1975	25.5	0.4	91.8	23.4	3.6	93.1	2.1
	1977-1982	27.0	0.2	87.4	24.4	5.2	89.2	2.6
Germany, Federal Republic of	1950-1960	26.7	0.3	97.8	23.2	11.3	94.2	3.5
	1960-1970	25.9	0.7	95.5	22.5	10.1	95.7	3.4
	1970-1975	26.1	0.5	88.8	22.9	6.1	94.1	3.2
	1975-1980	27.2	0.4	80.0	24.3	3.6	85.9	2.9
Luxembourg	1960-1970	26.0	0.5	93.6	22.5	6.5	95.1	3.5
	1971-1981	27.1	0.5	96.0	23.7	4.8	91.0	3.4
Netherlands	1960-1970	25.3	0.6	94.8	22.9	4.4	96.0	2.4
	1970-1975	25.1	0.4	90.5	24.1	5.1	95.0	1.0
	1975-1980	26.2	0.3	85.5	23.5	2.7	89.4	2.7
Switzerland	1950-1960	27.6	0.1	92.1	24.8	1.7	90.9	2.8
	1960-1970	26.6	0.2	94.1	23.7	3.3	93.6	2.9
	1970-1980	28.4	0.2	86.0	25.1	2.1	86.9	3.3
Oceania								
Australia	1956-1961	26.1	0.9	92.3	22.4	7.0	96.8	3.7
	1961-1966	25.1	1.3	94.0	22.2	8.2	96.4	2.9
	1966-1971	24.6	1.4	95.3	21.8	8.8	97.1	2.8
	1971-1976	24.9	1.1	93.7	22.1	7.3	93.9	2.8
	1976-1981	25.9	0.6	82.3	23.9	4.3	89.8	2.0
New Zealand	1951-1956	26.0	0.8	92.5	23.4	7.1	96.1	2.6
	1956-1961	25.4	1.2	94.2	22.2	8.4	96.8	3.2
	1961-1966	24.8	1.7	94.4	22.0	9.7	96.7	2.8
	1966-1971	24.3	2.9	96.3	21.6	11.2	97.3	2.7
	1971-1976	24.5	1.6	94.7	22.6	8.2	95.3	1.9
	1976-1981	25.0	1.9	88.1	22.8	6.6	89.2	2.2

Source: Data and indicators derived from the following United Nations sales publications: Demographic Yearbook 1968 (Sales No. E/F.68.XIII.1), table 40; Demographic Yearbook--Special Issue: Historical Supplement (Sales No. E/F.79.XIII.8), table 12; Demographic Yearbook 1982 (Sales No. E/F.83. XIII.1), table 40; Demographic Yearbook 1987 (Sales No. E/F.88.XIII.1), table 29.

a/ In order to allow the estimation of 5- or 10-year intercensal indicators, census data that were not exactly 5 or 10 years apart were linearly interpolated to allow the appropriate calculations.

b/ Assuming 100 per cent single at age 14 in a hypothetical cohort.

Annex II *

THE SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE

A. BACKGROUND OF METHOD

The singulate mean age at marriage, *SMAM*, is the mean age at first marriage among those who ever marry (or, in practice, among those who marry by some predefined age-limit). It is computed from the proportions who are single, that is, never married, in each age group.[a] Since the most frequently considered age groups are five years in length, the process of calculating the singulate mean age at marriage is described for data classified by such age groups. It is assumed here that no first marriages occur after age 50 or before age 15, though the generalization of the procedure described below to the use of other age limits is straightforward.

B. BASIC CALCULATIONS TO OBTAIN THE SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE

1. *Data required*

The following data are required for this procedure:

(*a*) The population aged 15-54 classified by age (five-year age group) and by sex;

(*b*) The never-married population aged 15-54 classified by age (five-year age group) and sex.

2. *Computational procedure*

The steps of the computational procedure are given below.

Step 1: calculation of proportions single for a given sex. Divide the number of single in each age group by the total population in the same age group. The resulting proportion for the age group from $5i+10$ to $5i+14$ is denoted by $U(i)$, with i usually ranging from 1 to 8.

Step 2: calculation of person-years lived in the single state. Add the proportions single in each age group up to and including that for the age group 45-49 ($i=7$) and multiply the sum by five. The resulting quantity is denoted by RS_1. Let $RS_2 = RS_1 + 15.0$. The quantity 15.0 is the number of person-years lived in the single state from birth to age 15 by the hypothetical cohort of size one being considered. If the lower limit at which marriage takes place is changed to some other age x, the x should be substituted for 15 and the calculation of RS_1 should include all age groups from x to $x+4$ (when x is a multiple of five) to 45-49.

Step 3: estimation of proportion who ever marry. The proportion remaining single at age 50 is estimated as

$$RN = (U(7)+U(8))/2.0 \qquad \text{(B.1)}$$

where $U(7)$ is the proportion single (never married) among those aged 45-49; and $U(8)$ is the equivalent proportion among those aged 50-54. Once the proportion remaining single at age 50 is estimated, the proportion ever marrying by that age, RM, is clearly just its complement, that is,

$$RM = 1.0 - RN. \qquad \text{(B.2)}$$

Step 4: calculation of number of person-years lived by the proportion not marrying. Since RN is estimated to be the proportion who have not married by age 50, the total time spent in the single state by this proportion is

$$RS_3 = 50.0RN. \qquad \text{(B.3)}$$

Step 5: calculation of singulate mean age at marriage. Lastly, the value of *SMAM* is calculated as follows:

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/RM. \qquad \text{(B.4)}$$

That is, the value of *SMAM* as calculated here is the average number of years spent in the single state by those who marry before age 50. It should be noted that although, strictly, this value refers only to the persons who marry by age 50, in most applications it is handled as if it referred to the totality of the ever-married population. Two facts justify this practice: first, in most populations the incidence of first marriages after age 50 is very small; and secondly, in populations with deficient data it is not uncommon to find that after age 50 (and sometimes even after age 45) the proportions single increase as age increases, implying that older cohorts were subject to lower first-marriage rates than were younger groups. Because such a trend is fairly unlikely, the observed increases are usually attributed to reporting errors. Under such conditions, it would be unwise to incorporate the data for older cohorts in the calculation of *SMAM*.

3. *Detailed example*

The data given in table 187 were collected during the National

[a] John Hajnal, "Age at marriage and proportions marrying", *Population Studies*, vol. VII, No. 2 (November 1953), pp. 111-136.

TABLE 187. POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, SEX AND MARITAL STATUS, PANAMA, 1976

Age Group (1)	Males				Females			
	Single (2)	Ever-married (3)	Unknown (4)	Total (5)	Single (6)	Ever-married (7)	Unknown (8)	Total (9)
15-19	2 678	69	5	2 752	2 171	509	15	2 695
20-24	1 331	585	24	1 940	806	1 251	38	2 095
25-29	556	1 151	62	1 769	288	1 503	37	1 828
30-34	256	1 231	89	1 576	146	1 414	44	1 604
35-39	158	1 108	90	1 356	82	1 223	57	1 362
40-44	96	919	110	1 125	35	1 043	50	1 128
45-49	76	775	120	971	41	832	67	930
50-54	43	644	107	794	22	660	52	734

*Reprinted from Manual X. Indirect Techniques for Demographic Estimation (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.XIII.2), annex I.

Demographic Survey in Panama in 1976. They illustrate some of the problems encountered when dealing with real data.

A quick examination of table 187 reveals that, especially at older ages, the marital status of a substantial proportion of the persons interviewed is unknown. It is difficult to imagine a reason for this omission since *a priori* it would seem easy for a person to remember whether he or she had been married.

A possible source of misunderstanding may be that the term "ever married" was used in a broad sense to mean "having belonged to a stable union". Because in many countries, unions not legalized by marriage are socially unacceptable, a respondent in such a situation might tend to avoid acknowledging his or her "marital status". It then seems plausible to assume that most of the "unknowns" were, in fact, "ever married". The validity of this assumption is, however, impossible to establish without recourse to further information. But if the data available are to be used in computing singulate mean ages at marriage for each sex, it is necessary to make some assumption about their true meaning. As suggested, one extreme assumption is to suppose that all the "unknowns" are ever married. Another, less extreme possibility is to assume that both the single and the ever-married persons within each age group have an equal probability of being classified as "unknown" (this assumption would be plausible if most of the unknowns were the result of random errors produced while processing the data). Under this assumption, the proportion single in each age group would remain the same if the unknowns were ignored as if they had declared their marital status properly.

Each of these assumptions leads to a different way of computing the proportion single in each age group and to somewhat different estimates of the desired singulate mean ages at marriage. The computational procedures and results are shown below.

(a) *Calculation of singulate mean age at marriage ignoring those of unknown marital status*

In the first instance, the proportions single are calculated by ignoring the unknowns. The resulting proportions are shown in table 188 Then, using these proportions single, the singulate mean ages at marriage are computed as usual.

TABLE 188. PROPORTIONS SINGLE IGNORING THOSE OF UNKNOWN MARITAL STATUS, PANAMA, 1976

Age Group (1)	Proportions single		
	Males (2)	Females (3)	
15-19	0.9749	0.8101	
20-24	0.6947	0.3918	
25-29	0.3257	0.1608	
30-34	0.1722	0.0936	
35-39	0.1248	0.0628	
40-44	0.0946	0.0325	
45-49	0.0893	0.0470	(0.0324)
50-54	0.0626	0.0323	

(i) *Case 1: males (unknowns ignored)*

The results of the main steps for case 1 are given below:

$$RS_1 = 5.0(2.4762) = 12.381$$

$$RS_2 = RS_1 + 15.0 = 27.381$$

$$RN = (0.0893 + 0.0626)/2.0 = 0.076$$

$$RM = 0.924$$

$$RS_3 = 50.0RN = 3.798$$

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/RM = 25.52.$$

(ii) *Case 2: females (unknowns ignored)*

Note that the proportions single among females do not, as expected, decrease consistently as age increases. The proportion single at ages 45-49, for example, is greater than that at ages 40-44. Inconsistencies of this type are often due to changing marriage patterns, but the fact that the proportion single declines at ages 50-54 suggests that the relatively high value observed at ages 45-49 may be due, at least in part, to misreporting of status rather than to true changes in the marriage patterns of the past.

Therefore, to calculate the singulate mean age of marriage in this case, the reported proportions single were adjusted by replacing the value of 0.0470 for age group 45-49 by the average of the two values adjacent to it, which happen to be also the two smallest proportions single observed. Thus, it was assumed that the proportion single at ages 45-49 was 0.0324. Under this assumption, the singulate mean age at marriage is computed in the usual way. The results of the main steps are shown below:

$$RS_1 = 5.0(1.584) = 7.92$$

$$RS_2 = 7.92 + 15.0 = 22.92$$

$$RN = (0.0324 + 0.0323)/2.0 = 0.0324$$

$$RM = 0.9677$$

$$RS_3 = 50.0(0.0324) = 1.62$$

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/RM = 22.01.$$

It is interesting to note that the value of *SMAM* would have been 21.88 if the observed data, without adjustment, had been used, a value that is very similar to that obtained above.

(b) *Calculation of singulate mean age at marriage assuming that those of unknown marital status are ever married*

The values of *SMAM* are computed next by assuming that the "unknowns" belong, in fact, to the ever-married category. The proportions single obtained under this assumption are shown in table 189. The computations needed to arrive at the final value of *SMAM* are summarized in cases 3 and 4.

(i) *Case 3: males (unknowns considered to be ever married)*

The results for case 3 are shown below:

$$RS_2 = 5.0(2.416) + 15.0 = 27.08$$

$$RS_3 = 50.0[(0.0783 + 0.0542)/2.0] = 50.0(0.0663) = 3.3125$$

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/0.9337 = 25.45.$$

(ii) *Case 4: females (unknowns considered to be ever married)*

Once more, the inconsistency apparent in age group 45-49 was corrected by replacing the reported proportion single, $U(7)$ (0.0441), by the average of those adjacent to it (0.0305). An outline of the calculations follows:

$$RS_2 = 5.0(1.5605) + 15.0 = 22.80$$

$$RS_3 = 50.0(0.0302) = 1.51$$

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/0.9698 = 21.95.$$

TABLE 189. PROPORTIONS SINGLE ASSUMING THAT THOSE OF UNKNOWN MARITAL STATUS ARE EVER MARRIED, PANAMA, 1976

Age group (1)	Proportions single		
	Males (2)	Females (3)	
15-19	0.9731	0.8056	
20-24	0.6861	0.3847	
25-29	0.3143	0.1575	
30-34	0.1624	0.0910	
35-39	0.1165	0.0602	
40-44	0.0853	0.0310	
45-49	0.0783	0.0441	(0.0305)
50-54	0.0542	0.0300	

(c) *Comments on the detailed example*

The *SMAM* estimates obtained by assuming that all those of unknown marital status were, in fact, ever married, are very similar to those obtained earlier by ignoring the respondents with unknown status. This similarity is due to the fact that the numbers of respondents of unknown marital status are a relatively small proportion both of the total population interviewed and of the total population whose marital status was reported. Yet, even though the estimates yielded are similar, the question arises as to which set should be used if further analysis were to be undertaken. If no more information were available about the survey in question, it would be advisable not to make extreme assumptions, so that the *SMAM* estimates computed by ignoring the unknowns would be accepted as representative.

In this case, however, the extreme assumption turns out to be that nearer to the truth. Indeed, since the question in the survey was "On what date did you marry or form a union for the first time?", and it was used to establish both marital status and the time elapsed since first union, all those who were unable to state the date of which their first marriage or union began were classified as "unknown", a term that in this context means "of unknown marital duration" rather than "of unknown marital status".

This example illustrates very clearly the following point: tabulations very often do not provide enough information about the data they display. In order to assess the true meaning of those data, it is important to know how they were obtained and how they were processed before they become part of a given tabulation. Without this additional information, errors in the interpretation of the data are very likely.

C. Need to consider hypothetical cohorts

The singulate mean age at marriage is a measure that logically should refer to the nuptiality experience of a birth cohort. Yet, in practice, data on nuptiality for birth cohorts are very rarely available. Usually, the data at hand refer to the proportions single observed in a population at one or two points in time. Because such proportions refer to a cross-section of the population, it is conceivable that if nuptiality patterns have been changing, the proportion single at age 30, say, may be smaller than observed at age 40, a situation that would never arise among members of the same birth cohort. Therefore, when there exist rapidly changing marriage patterns, the singulate mean age at marriage should not be calculated directly from the distribution by marital status and by age that is observed at a single census or survey. The proportions single in a hypothetical cohort exposed to marriage rates between two surveys or censuses need to be calculated before the value of *SMAM* is computed.

1. *Computational procedure*

The basic steps in the calculations are the same as those described before, except that the distribution of a hypothetical cohort by marital status has to be constructed before calculations of person-years lived are undertaken. Only those steps which are different from the steps described in subsection B.2 are described below.

Step 1: calculation of proportions single for two points in time separated by five or 10 years. Proportions single are calculated for each age group i and time-point j by dividing the single population by the total population in the age group, adjusted, if necessary, for non-response. The resulting proportions are denoted by $U(i, j)$.

Step 2: calculation of proportions single in a hypothetical cohort exposed to intersurvey first-marriage rates. Let the proportion single for age group i of the hypothetical cohort be denoted by $U(i, s)$. Equations (C.1) and (C.2) are used to calculate the values of $U(i, s)$ when the intersurvey interval is five years in length, whereas equations (C.3), (C.4) and (C.5) are used when the intersurvey interval is 10 years in length. For age groups 20-24 and above, $i = 2, \ldots, 8$,

$$U(i, s) = U(i-1, s)U(i, 2)/U(i-1, 1). \qquad \text{(C.1)}$$

For the age group 15-19, for which $i = 1$,

$$U(1, s) = U(1, 2). \qquad \text{(C.2)}$$

Note that in equation (C.1) the values $U(i, 2)$ and $U(i-1, 1)$ refer to the same birth cohort, so that their quotient is a form of "survival rate" in the single state for that cohort. When this survival rate is applied to the previous hypothetical value, $U(i-1, s)$, it transforms it in accordance with the observed change in the proportion single during the intersurvey period.

If the intersurvey period is 10 years in length instead of five, it is still possible to calculate the proportions single in a hypothetical cohort Now

$$U(i, s) = U(i-2, s)U(i, 2)/U(i-2, 1). \qquad \text{(C.3)}$$

for values of i ranging from 3 (age group 25-29) to 8 (age group 50-54). For i equal to 1 and 2, that is, for age groups 15-19 and 20-24, $U(i, s)$ is calculated as the average proportion single at the time of the two censuses or surveys:

$$U(1, s) = 0.5(U(1, 1) + U(1, 2)) \qquad \text{(C.4)}$$

and

$$U(2, s) = 0.5(U(2, 1) + U(2, 2)). \qquad \text{(C.5)}$$

Steps 3-6: calculation of singulate mean age at marriage from the proportions single in a hypothetical cohort. Once the proportions single, $U(i, s)$, have been calculated, the procedure to be followed in calculating the value of *SMAM* is exactly the same as that described in steps 2-5 of subsection B.2.

2. *First detailed example*

Table 190 shows data for the female population of Japan enumerated in 1955 ($j = 1$) and 1960 ($j = 2$). It illustrates how the data are used to estimate proportions single for a hypothetical cohort. Column (6) shows the resulting set of $U(i, s)$ values. In the steps out-

TABLE 190. FEMALE PROPORTIONS SINGLE, 1955 AND 1960, AND ESTIMATED PROPORTIONS SINGLE IN A HYPOTHETICAL INTERSURVEY COHORT, JAPAN

Age group (1)	Index i (2)	Proportions single 1955 (3)	Proportions single 1960 (4)	Ratio of proportions single at two surveys $U(i, 2)/U(i-1, 1)$ (5)	Proportion single in hypothetical cohort $U(i, s)$ (6)
10-14	0	(1.000)[a]	(1.000)[a]	-	-
15-19	1	0.983	0.987	0.987	0.987
20-24	2	0.665	0.648	0.659	0.650
25-29	3	0.206	0.212	0.319	0.208
30-34	4	0.079	0.096	0.466	0.097
35-39	5	0.039	0.056	0.709	0.069
40-44	6	0.023	0.031	0.795	0.055
45-49	7	0.017	0.019	0.826	0.045
50-54	8	0.012	0.017	1.000	0.045

[a] Assumed value.

lined below, these values are used to estimate an average value of *SMAM* for the period 1955-1960.

Step 1: calculation of proportions single for each census. Since in this case the values of $U(i, j)$ are already in the appropriate form in columns (3) and (4) of table 190, this step is unnecessary.

Step 2: calculation of proportions single in a hypothetical cohort exposed to intersurvey first-marriage rates. In this example, the intersurvey period is five years, so equations (C.1) and (C.2) are used in calculating $U(i, s)$. For age group 15-19, for which $i = 1$,

$$U(1, s) = U(1, 2) = 0.987.$$

For subsequent age groups, each value of $U(i-1, s)$ is multiplied by the ratios $U(i, 2)/U(i-1, 1)$. Column (5) of table 190 shows the values of these ratios for each value of i. For example, for $i = 2$,

$$U(2, s) = U(1, s)U(2, 2)/U(1, 1)$$

$$= U(1, s)(0.648/0.983)$$

$$= (0.987)(0.659) = 0.650.$$

Full results are shown in column (6) of table 190.

Step 3: calculation of person-years lived in the single state. The sum of the first seven values of $U(i, s)$ is 2.111, so that

$$RS_2 = 5.0(2.111) = 10.555.$$

Note that the value of $U(8, s)$ for ages 50-54 was not included in the sum. Then, the number of person-years desired is

$$RS_3 = 15.0 + RS_2 = 25.555.$$

Step 4: calculation of proportion ever marrying. The proportion remaining single is

$$RN = (0.045 + 0.045)/2.0 = 0.045.$$

Hence, the proportion ever marrying equals

$$RM = 1.0 - 0.045 = 0.955.$$

Step 5: calculation of person-years lived by those remaining single. These person-years are calculated as

$$RS_3 = 50.0RN = 50.0(0.045) = 2.25.$$

Step 6: calculation of singulate mean age at marriage. The value of *SMAM* is calculated as

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/RM = (25.555 - 2.25)/0.955 = 24.40.$$

It is of interest to compare the value of *SMAM* estimated for the intercensal period (24.40 years) with the estimates that would have been obtained by considering each census separately. According to the proportions single presented in columns (3) and (4) of table 190, the value of *SMAM* in 1955 was 24.74 years, while that in 1960 was 24.79 years. Therefore, although the difference is relatively small, the intercensal estimate of *SMAM* is lower than those obtained at the end-points of the period. This outcome implies, in general, that according to the first-marriage rates prevalent during the intercensal period, women would marry at slightly younger ages than they would according to the mixed cohort-period experience observed at a given point in time. However, the difference observed is so small that, at least in this case, what ought to be stressed is the similarity of the different estimates and the fact that, according to them, the singulate mean age at marriage in Japan during the period 1955-1960 remained almost constant.

3. *Second detailed example*

Table 191 shows data for the female population of Tunisia as enumerated in 1966 ($j = 1$) and as estimated for 1976 on the basis of the 1975 census ($j = 2$). It indicates how the data are used to estimate proportions single for a hypothetical cohort. Column (6) shows the resulting set of $U(i, s)$ values. The steps outlined below illustrate how these data are used to estimate an average value of *SMAM* for the period 1966-1976:

Step 1: calculation of proportions single. In this case, the values of $U(i, j)$ are already in the appropriate form in columns (3) and (4) of table 191. Therefore, this step is not necessary.

Step 2: calculation of proportions single in a hypothetical cohort exposed to intersurvey first-marriage rates. Although the true intercensal period in Tunisia was nine years in length, the basic data have been adjusted to represent a 10-year period. Hence, equations (C.3), (C.4) and (C.5) can be used to calculate $U(i, s)$. Thus, for age group 15-19, for which $i = 1$, for example,

$$U(1, s) = 0.5(U(1, 1) + U(1, 2)) = 0.5(0.810 + 0.887) = 0.848;$$

and for age group 20-24, for which $i = 2$,

$$U(2, s) = 0.5(U(2, 1) + U(2, 2)) = 0.5(0.270 + 0.473) = 0.372.$$

For subsequent age groups, each value of $U(i-2, s)$ is multiplied by the ratio $U(i, 2)/U(i-2, 1)$. Column (5) of table 191 shows the value of these ratios for each value of i. For example, for $i = 3$,

$$U(3, s) = U(1, s)U(3, 2)/U(1, 1)$$

$$= U(1, s)(0.158/0.810)$$

$$= (0.848)(0.195) = 0.165.$$

Full results are shown in column (6) of table 191.

TABLE 191. FEMALE PROPORTIONS SINGLE, 1966 AND 1976, AND ESTIMATED PROPORTIONS SINGLE IN A HYPOTHETICAL INTERSURVEY COHORT, TUNISIA

Age group (1)	Index i (2)	Proportions single 1966 (3)	Proportions single 1976 (4)	Ratio of proportions single at two surveys $U(i, 2)/U(i-2, 1)$ (5)	Proportion single in hypothetical cohort $U(i, s)$ (6)
15-19	1	0.810	0.887	0.887	0.848
20-24	2	0.270	0.473	0.473	0.372
25-29	3	0.087	0.158	0.195	0.165
30-34	4	0.039	0.054	0.200	0.074
35-39	5	0.024	0.024	0.276	0.046
40-44	6	0.018	0.017	0.436	0.032
45-49	7	0.015	0.016	0.667	0.031
50-54	8	0.015[a]	0.016[a]	0.889	0.028

Sources: For proportions single in 1966, population census of 1966; for proportions single in 1976, estimates from the 1975 population census by M. Baraket, *Evolution récente de la nuptialité et de la fécondité en Tunisie* (Tunis, Office national du planning familial et de la population, May 1977).

[a] Assumed equal to value for ages 45-49.

Step 3: calculation of person-years lived in the single state. The sum of the first seven values of $U(i, s)$ is 1.568, so that

$$RS_2 = 5.0(1.568) = 7.840.$$

Note that the value of $U(8, s)$ for ages 50-54 was not included in the sum. Then the number of person-years desired is

$$RS_3 = 15.0 + RS_2 = 22.840.$$

Step 4: calculation of proportion ever marrying. An estimate of the proportion remaining single at age 50 is

$$RN = (0.031 + 0.028)/2.0 = 0.0295.$$

Hence, the proportion ever marrying by age 50 equals

$$RM = 1.0 - 0.0295 = 0.9705.$$

Step 5: calculation of person-years lived by those remaining single at age 50. This value is calculated as

$$RS_3 = 50.0RN = 50.0(0.0295) = 1.475.$$

Step 6: calculation of singulate mean age at marriage. The value of *SMAM* is

$$SMAM = (RS_2 - RS_3)/RM = (22.840 - 1.475)/0.9705 = 22.01.$$

If this value of *SMAM* is compared with the estimates that would be obtained by using the data as recorded at the end-points of the period being considered (20.88 years in 1966 and 22.71 years in 1976), it appears that the intercensal value of *SMAM* is higher than the mean of the estimates at the end-points. This outcome suggests that first-marriage rates declined substantially and fairly rapidly in Tunisia during the period 1966-1976.