

Chapter 1

Population and families

Key findings

- The world's population tripled in the period 1950–2010 to reach almost 7 billion.
- There are approximately 57 million more men than women in the world, yet in most countries there are more women than men.
- There is a “gender spiral”, with more boys and men in younger age groups and more women in the older age groups.
- Fertility is steadily declining in all regions of the world, though it still remains high in some regions of Africa.
- Life expectancy is steadily rising, with women living longer than men.
- International migration is increasing. There are more and more women migrants, and in certain areas they outnumber men.
- The age at marriage for women continues to rise – and it remains high for men.
- In family life women overwhelmingly carry the workload, although in some countries the gap has narrowed significantly.

Introduction

Changes and trends in population growth and distribution directly affect living conditions across the globe. The first part of this chapter elaborates on general population dynamics and patterns in the various world regions and the proportion of women and men in different age groups. It also looks at fertility and ageing as well as at international migration. The second part of the chapter shifts the focus to families, first considering marriages and unions and then the sharing of family responsibilities.

A. General population patterns

1. Growth and geographical distribution

The world's population in 2010 is nearly 7 billion, almost triple what it was in 1950

The world's population in 2010 is estimated at nearly 7 billion people – more precisely at 6,908,688,378 – which is almost three times the population estimated in 1950 (that is, it has taken

60 years for the population to almost triple in size).¹ This pattern is not found in all the regions of the world, much less in all countries. In general terms, population growth was steepest in Africa and Asia and almost non-existent in Europe (see figure 1.1).

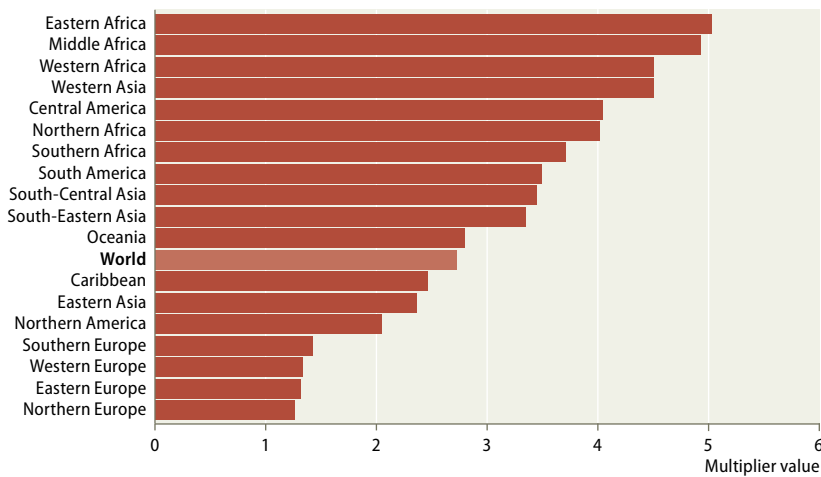
Within this period of 60 years (1950–2010), the population in Eastern Africa increased five times, while the number of people in Middle Africa increased almost as much, closely followed by the Western Africa region. The two other African regions, Northern and Southern Africa, also registered well above the world average increase in the number of people – around four times as many.

A similarly significant growth of population – around four times – is also evident in Western Asia and Central America. In European regions, however, the growth was modest, with an increase in the number of people of between 30–40 per cent. During the same period the population in Northern America doubled.

In absolute terms, the world in 1950 was home to around 2.5 billion people, reaching 3 billion in

¹ United Nations, 2009a.

Figure 1.1
Number of times by which the population increased from 1950 to 2010, by region

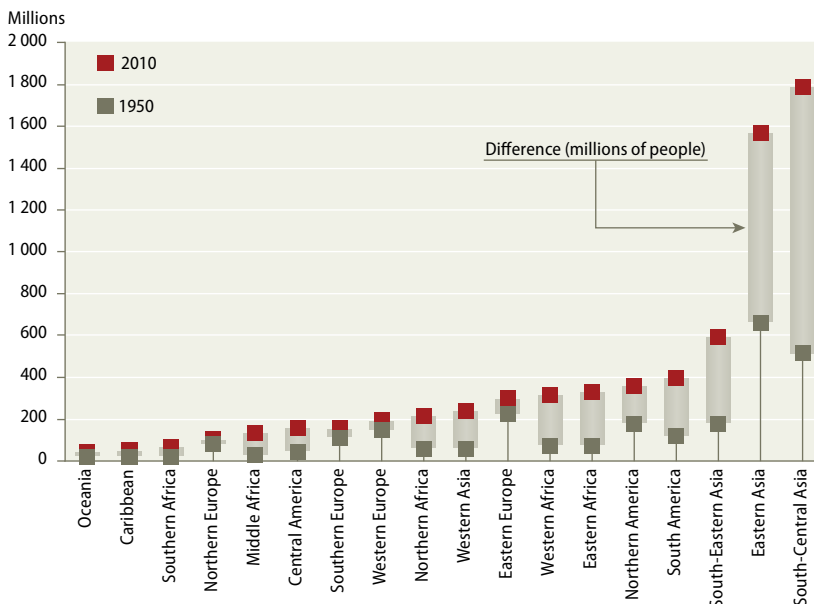


Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

1960, 3.7 billion in 1970, over 4.4 billion in 1980, 5.3 billion in 1990 and over 6.1 billion in 2000. The difference between the number of people in 1950 and in 2010 is presented in figure 1.2.

As for the geographical distribution of the world's population in 2010 (figure 1.3), over one quarter is located in South-Central Asia (26 per cent) and a little less in Eastern Asia (23 per cent). Europe has around 11 per cent of the world's population, while South-Eastern Asia is home to 8 per cent.

Figure 1.2
The difference in the number of people in 1950 and 2010 by region



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

South and Northern America are next with 6 and 5 per cent, respectively, while two African regions, Eastern and Western, have 5 and 4 per cent, respectively, followed by Western Asia, Northern Africa, and Southern and Middle Africa combined (each with around 3 per cent). The share of Central America is 2 per cent, and Oceania and the Caribbean combined make up 1 per cent. Thus Asia – more specifically the South-Central, Eastern and South-Eastern regions – is inhabited by 57 per cent of all the people in the world.

2. Population distribution by sex

There is a “gender spiral”, with more boys and men in the younger age groups and more women in the older age groups

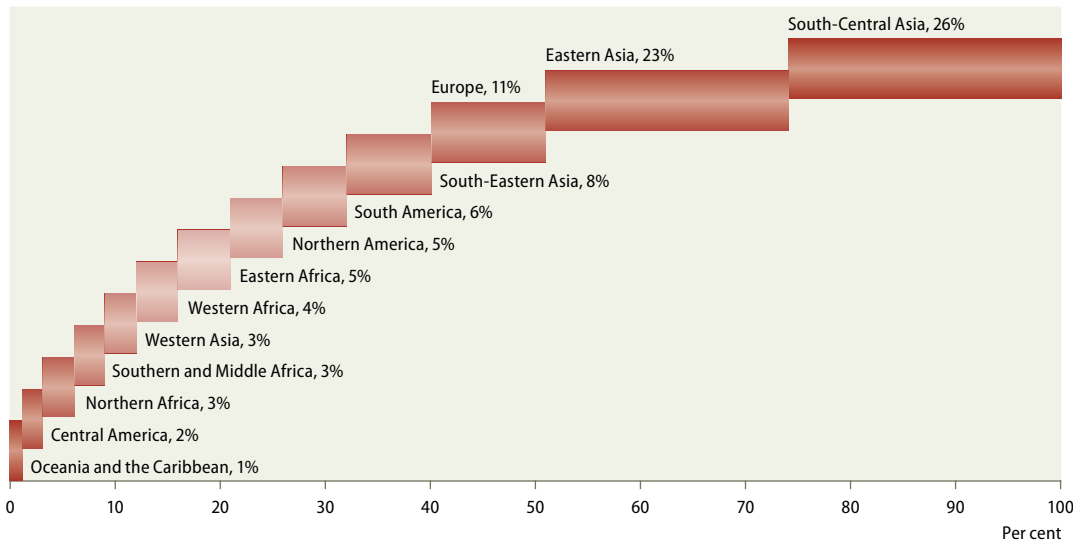
There are approximately 57 million more men than women in the world in 2010. At the global level, the percentages are almost equal: 50.4 per cent men and 49.6 per cent women or, using the male/female ratio, 102 males for every 100 females. It has to be emphasized that this ratio does not apply to all age groups. In fact, there is a “gender spiral” – more boys and men are in the younger age groups and more women are in the older age groups (figure 1.4).

Moreover, this general ratio varies a great deal among the different regions of the world. Some regions have an obvious “shortage” of men while others have a “shortage” of women (figure 1.5).

Europe in general is home to many more women than men. In Eastern Europe there are 88 men per 100 women, and that ratio in other parts of Europe (Western, Southern and Northern) has a value of 96. At the other end of the spectrum, in South-Central, Western and Eastern Asia, there are approximately 106 men per 100 women. Somewhere in the middle are South-Eastern Asia, Oceania and Western Africa, where the number of men and women is almost equal.

The regional aggregates do not always reflect the distribution in individual countries. Figure 1.6 displays the number of men per 100 women for each country with a population over 100,000 in 2010. (Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar have been omitted because the ratios there are heavily skewed to the men's side – that is, 121, 129, 134, 146, 204 and 307 men per 100 women, respectively – as a consequence of their sizeable foreign-born labour force made up predominantly of men.)

Figure 1.3
Geographical distribution of the world population by region, 2010



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

In the majority of countries there are more women than men, but in the most populous countries in Asia there are many more men than women

As can be seen from figure 1.6, in the significant majority of countries there are more women than men. Out of 190 countries or areas presented here,

the ratio in 117 countries was between 85 and 99 men per 100 women. In 23 countries the distribution of women and men was more or less equal. In 51 countries, however, there were more men than women, with a ratio between 101 and 111 men per 100 women.

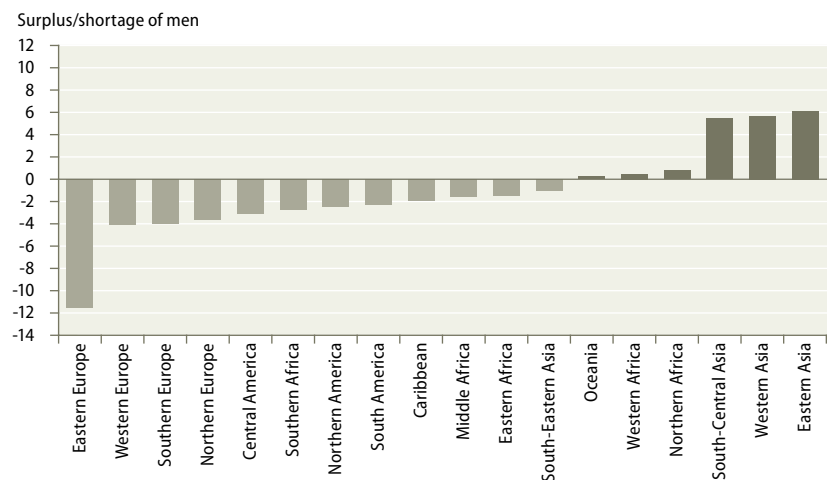
Of the most populous countries, China (with a ratio of 108 men per 100 women), India (107), Pakistan (106) and, to a lesser extent, Bangladesh (102) are at the very top of the list of countries where the “shortage” of women might have adverse consequences in the shaping of marriages

Figure 1.4
World population 2010: Surplus of women and men by age



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

Figure 1.5
Surplus/shortage of men per 100 women by region, 2010



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

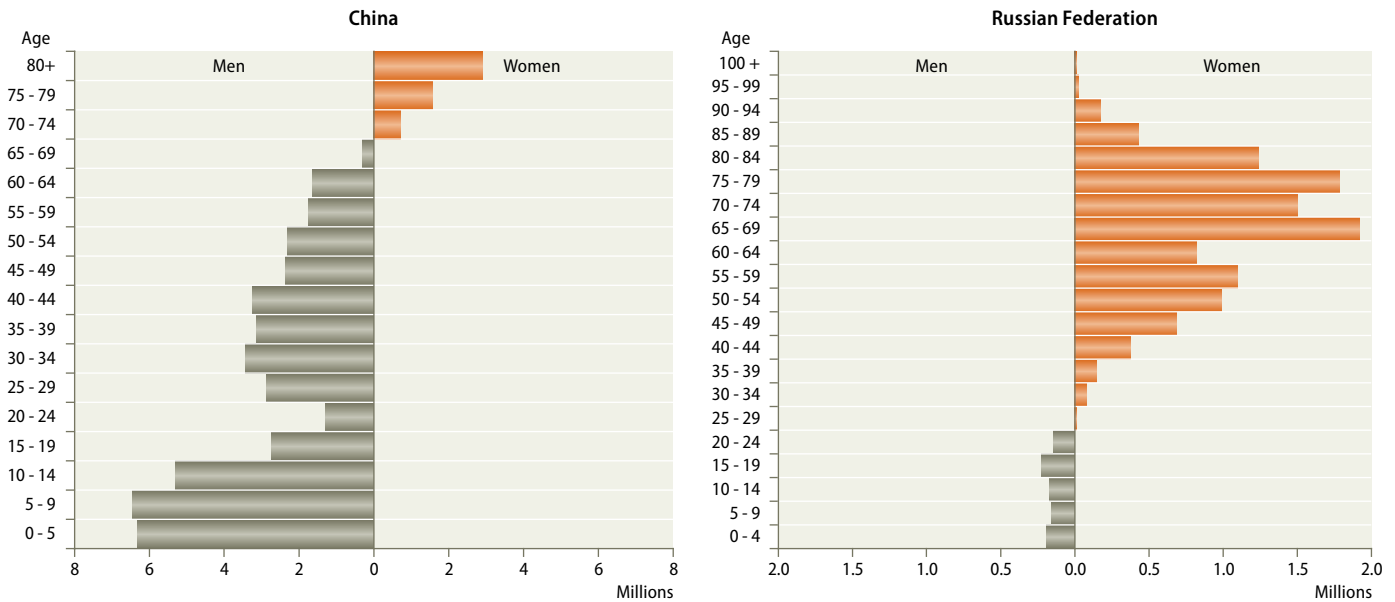
	Sex ratio	Surplus of women or men per 100 men or women
Senegal	98	● ●
Dem. Republic of the Congo	98	● ●
Greece	98	● ●
Denmark	98	● ●
Netherlands	98	● ●
Gambia	98	● ●
Somalia	98	● ●
Equatorial Guinea	98	● ●
Israel	98	● ●
Luxembourg	99	●
Sweden	99	●
Nepal	99	●
Uzbekistan	99	●
Liberia	99	●
Chad	99	●
Australia	99	●
Malawi	99	●
Norway	99	●
Ethiopia	99	●
Madagascar	99	●
Malta	99	●
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	99	●
United Republic of Tanzania	100	
French Guiana	100	
Zambia	100	
Indonesia	100	
Lao People's Dem. Republic	100	
Congo	100	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	100	
Burkina Faso	100	
Gabon	100	
Honduras	100	
Djibouti	100	
Kenya	100	
Cameroon	100	
Botswana	100	
Mayotte	100	
Grenada	100	
Ecuador	100	
Ireland	100	
Niger	100	
Uganda	100	
Suriname	100	
Peru	100	
New Caledonia	100	
Cuba	100	
Nigeria	101	●
Comoros	101	●

	Sex ratio	Surplus of women or men per 100 men or women
Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	101	●
Turkey	101	●
Dominican Republic	101	●
Singapore	101	●
Tunisia	101	●
Egypt	101	●
Sudan	101	●
Philippines	101	●
Belize	102	● ●
Panama	102	● ●
Paraguay	102	● ●
Maldives	102	● ●
Algeria	102	● ●
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	102	● ●
Syrian Arab Republic	102	● ●
Benin	102	● ●
Guinea	102	● ●
Yemen	102	● ●
Iraq	102	● ●
Bangladesh	102	● ●
Tonga	103	● ● ●
Ghana	103	● ● ●
Mauritania	103	● ● ●
Fiji	103	● ● ●
Malaysia	103	● ● ●
Costa Rica	103	● ● ●
Papua New Guinea	103	● ● ●
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	103	● ● ●
Guam	103	● ● ●
Côte d'Ivoire	104	● ● ● ●
Occupied Palestinian Territory	104	● ● ● ●
Timor-Leste	104	● ● ● ●
Vanuatu	104	● ● ● ●
Micronesia (Fed. States of)	104	● ● ● ●
French Polynesia	104	● ● ● ●
Jordan	105	● ● ● ● ●
Guyana	106	● ● ● ● ● ●
Iceland	106	● ● ● ● ● ●
Pakistan	106	● ● ● ● ● ●
Brunei Darussalam	106	● ● ● ● ● ●
India	107	● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	107	● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Solomon Islands	107	● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Afghanistan	107	● ● ● ● ● ● ●
China	108	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Samoa	108	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Bhutan	111	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Western Sahara	112	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

Note: The figure excludes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates where the sex ratio exceeds 121.

Figure 1.7
Surplus of women and men by age, China, 2000 and the Russian Federation, 2006



Source: United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook 2006* (2008). Note: Scales differ for the two graphs.

and families in the medium and long term. And the fact that there is such an imbalance in those populous countries affects the overall distribution at the world level as well.

Such a disparity in the balance of women and men in some countries might be a consequence of a preference for having sons rather than daughters, and early detection of the sex of the foetus may lead to increased abortions of female foetuses. For example, an in-depth analysis of a survey of 1.1 million households in India in 1998 found that prenatal sex determination followed by selective abortion of female foetuses is the most plausible explanation for the high sex ratio at birth in that country.² The adjusted sex ratio for the second birth when the preceding child was a girl was 132 boys per 100 girls.³

The adverse consequences of sex disparity in young ages are expected to be long term and difficult to remedy – lack of women of spousal age negatively affects the formation of families. For example, figure 1.7 displays the number of women and men exceeding the 50:50 ratio by age in China at the latest population census, which took place in 2000, as well as the same statistics for the Russian Federation in 2006.

² Jha and others, 2006.

³ *Ibid.*

The figure points to the fact that in 2000 the total number of excess boys and young men up to 20 years of age in China was almost 21 million. As time goes by, this disparity will be reflected in the older ages as well; that will make matching women and men as spouses as well as starting families much more difficult. It might also eventually have adverse consequences on the fertility of the population as a whole, and might result in policy incentives for women of child-bearing age to have more children in order to maintain the necessary levels of population. On the other hand, there will be a multitude of single-person male households with specific needs – at the same time representing a highly mobile population unattached to families.

Sex ratio at birth

Sex ratio at birth is usually expressed as the number of male newborns per 100 female newborns. The most recent estimates for 2005–2010 (United Nations 2009a) show that, globally, the sex ratio is 107 baby boys per 100 baby girls. Regional differences, however, are evident. In Africa the sex ratio is 103 while in Asia it increases to 109 (and in Eastern Asia to 117). In Europe the sex ratio is 106 male newborns per 100 female newborns, while in Latin America and the Caribbean it is 105 – the same as in Northern America and Oceania.

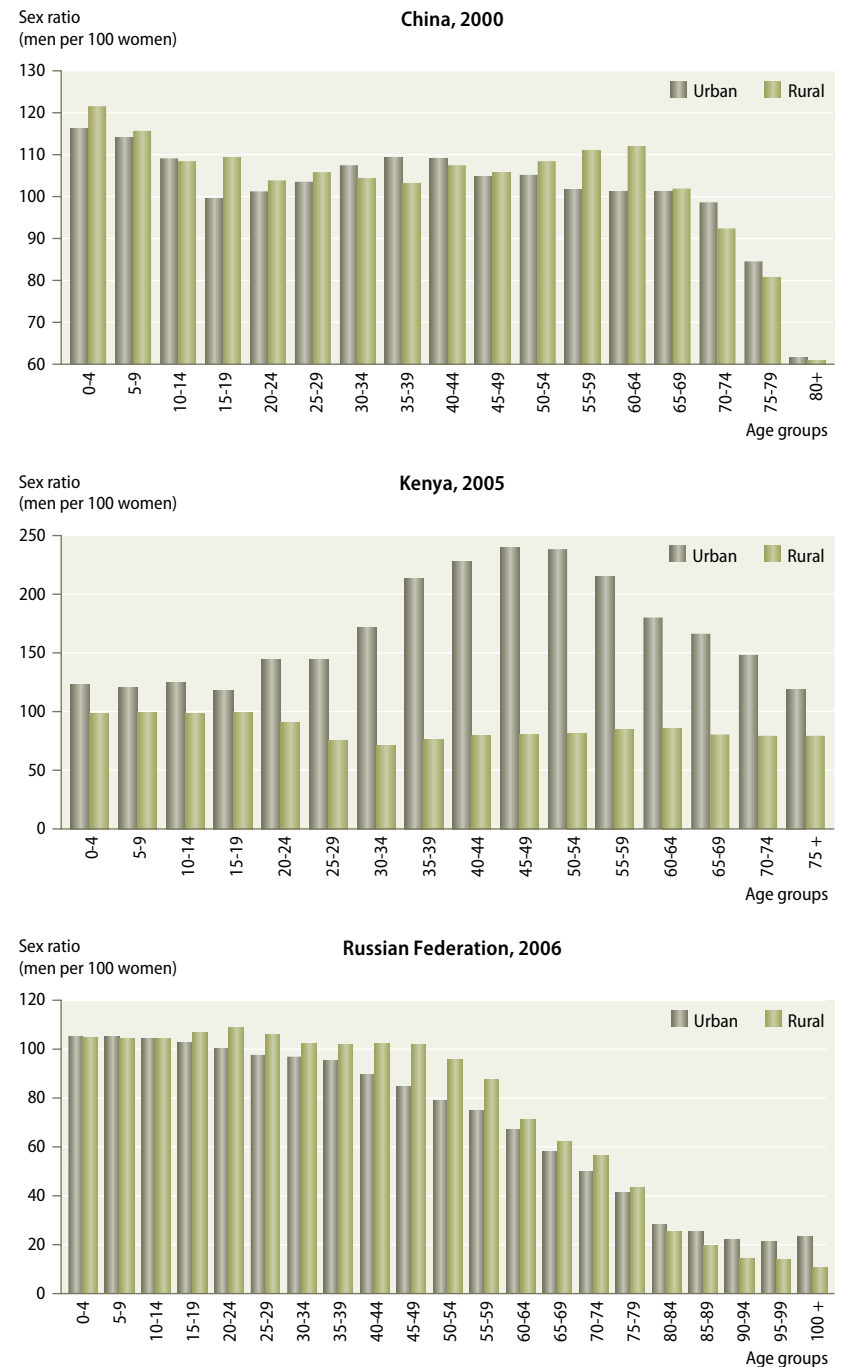
A very different set of circumstances is faced by countries or areas where there is a substantial surplus of women. For example, in 2006 there were almost 10.5 million more women than men in the Russian Federation. The gender spiral (figure 1.7) clearly illustrates that there are more boys and men in the early ages – up to 24 years – but that starting at age of 30 and in the older age categories the number of women is significantly higher than the number of men. One of the factors for the discrepancy in older years is the relatively low life expectancy for men at 60.4 years compared to that for women at 73.2 years.⁴ This difference has an impact on a range of services that need to be provided in terms of public health, social protection and so forth. It also fosters increased mobility of the female population.

Are there significant differences in sex ratios in urban and rural areas? In the case of China, while the general pattern is similar – more boys and men – there are still differences in specific age groups (figure 1.8). At younger ages, up to 10 years, the ratio is very high overall (around 120 boys per 100 girls) and is still higher in rural than in urban areas (122:117). At other ages, with the exception of the population in the 30–45 age group, the sex ratio is also higher in rural than urban areas (thus exacerbating the shortage of women in these areas). It is only at older ages that the sex ratio in urban areas exceeds the sex ratio in rural areas.

Statistics on the differences in sex ratios for urban and rural areas of the Russian Federation indicate that there are proportionally more women in urban areas, as seen in figure 1.8. Namely, in urban areas the number of men per 100 women is already below 100 in the 25–29 age group, while in rural areas this occurs only in the 50–54 age group, thus indicating a significant surplus of women in urban areas.

In some other parts of the world, statistics register exactly the opposite – the surplus of women is much more likely to be found in rural areas. For example, as seen in figure 1.8, scores of men of working age are enumerated in urban areas in Kenya. In the most productive age group (20–45) there are around 700 000 surplus men in urban areas and the number of men per 100 women exceeds 200 in some age groups, while at the same time and in the same age groups there is a surplus

Figure 1.8
Sex ratio by age, urban and rural areas. China, 2000; Kenya, 2005;
and the Russian Federation, 2006



Source: United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook 2006* (2008).

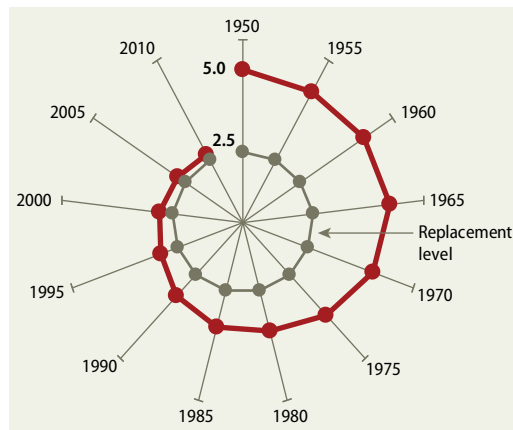
Note: Data presented on different scales for sex ratio to better highlight urban/rural differences.

of approximately 1 million women in rural areas.⁵ This distribution has an adverse effect in regard to the living conditions of women stranded in rural

⁴ United Nations, 2008.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Figure 1.9
World total fertility rate (births per woman), 1950 to 2010



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

areas where production is almost exclusively linked to agriculture, infrastructure is scarce, and education and basic public health services are lacking.

It should be emphasized that the definitions of urban and rural areas vary significantly among countries. Even within a single country there are often significant differences, and not all rural areas are alike. Presenting statistics in such broad categories shows general patterns; however, to assess the disparities in the distribution of women and men and hence to be able to fine-tune regional and local population policies, more specific data would be needed.

3. Fertility

Fertility, understood in terms of childbearing, is dependant of many factual and societal circum-

stances, such as cultural traditions, education and the overall level of development of the society and community. Two key proximate determinants of fertility are also the age of entry into union and the availability of contraception. The most commonly used measure of fertility is the total fertility rate (TFR) – the number of children that a woman would have over her childbearing years if, at each age, she experienced the age-specific fertility rate. The age-specific rate, in turn, is the number of births to women of a given age group per 1,000 women in that age group.

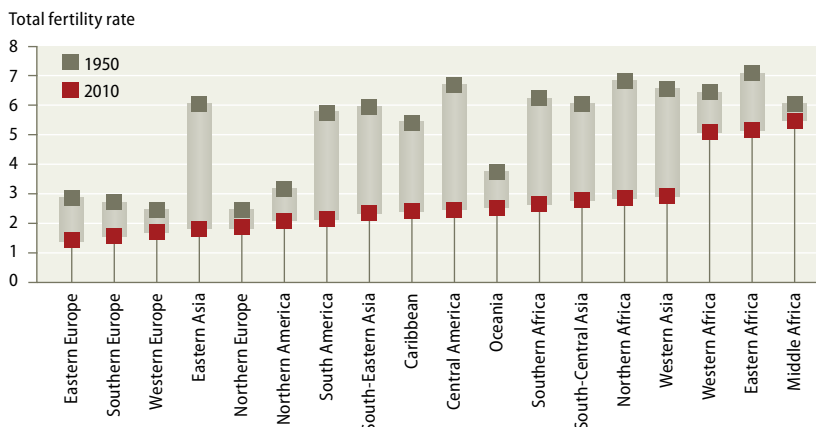
The total fertility rate in the world was halved between 1950 and 2010

In the period 1950–2010 the TFR in the world was halved from around 5 children to around 2.5 (figure 1.9). The replacement level is the number of children needed per woman for a population to replace itself. It is generally taken to be a TFR between 2.10 and 2.33 children per woman, depending on the impact of infant and child mortality – the lower the levels of these two phenomena, the lower the value of the replacement level. Populations below the replacement level ultimately confront the danger of extinction; populations with much higher TFR than the replacement level face the challenges of successfully sustaining the growing number of their members.

Although this general trend of women having fewer children is evident in all regions of the world, it has not had the same intensity everywhere. In some regions the TFR declined drastically – for example, in Central America the 1950 TFR was around 6.7 children while 60 years later it is 2.4 children, just above the replacement level (figure 1.10). Similarly, in Eastern Asia the 1950 TFR was around 6 children per woman but the 2010 level is well below the replacement line at 1.7 – a drop of more than 4 children per woman. Northern Africa is another example of this trend, with the 1950 TFR of 6.8 children going down to 2.8 children in 2010 – again a decrease of almost 4 children per woman.

Figure 1.10 provides an overview of the 2010 TFR and the decline compared to 1950. In some cases the decline was relatively small in absolute terms, as is the case in all European regions, but it has to be emphasized that the rates were already quite low at the beginning of this period at between 2.4 and 2.8 children per woman. On the other hand, in some regions of Africa, such as Middle, Eastern and Western Africa, the decline was also relatively

Figure 1.10
Total fertility rate by region, 1950 and 2010



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

modest but the TFR remains quite high at just over 5 children per woman.

This trend of declining fertility, although universal, was not evenly distributed and has resulted in countries finding themselves in very different situations after the first decade of the twenty-first century, as shown in table 1.1.

The group of countries or areas where the fertility rate is significantly lower than the reproduction level

has China, Macao SAR and China, Hong Kong SAR at the top with around one child per woman. The total number of countries or areas in this group is 29 (included are only countries or areas with over 100,000 inhabitants). Out of these, 24 are located in Europe. In addition, most more developed Asian countries or areas are also found here, including Japan, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

The second group consists of 55 countries or areas, with Cuba at the top with a fertility rate

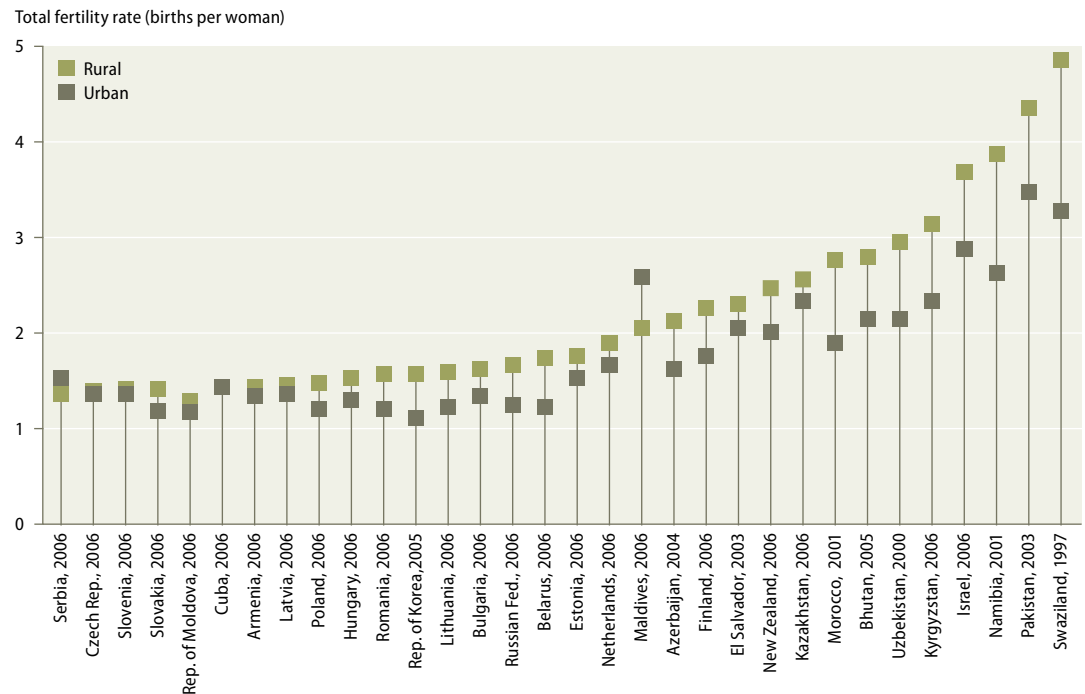
Table 1.1

Countries or areas by level of total fertility rate, 2010

Countries/areas with low fertility TFR < 1.5 29 countries	Countries/areas with fertility under replacement level TFR 1.5 – 2.1 55 countries		Countries/areas with fertility above replacement level TFR 2.1 – 5 91 countries		Countries/areas with high fertility TFR > 5 21 countries
Austria	Albania	Maldives	Algeria	Lesotho	Afghanistan
Belarus	Armenia	Martinique	Argentina	Liberia	Angola
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aruba	Mauritius	Azerbaijan	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Benin
Bulgaria	Australia	Mexico	Bahrain	Madagascar	Burkina Faso
Channel Islands	Bahamas	Mongolia	Bangladesh	Malaysia	Chad
China, Hong Kong SAR	Barbados	Montenegro	Belize	Mauritania	Democratic Republic of the Congo
China, Macao SAR	Belgium	Netherlands	Bhutan	Mayotte	Equatorial Guinea
Croatia	Brazil	Netherlands Antilles	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Micronesia (Fed. States of)	Ethiopia
Czech Republic	Brunei Darussalam	New Caledonia	Botswana	Morocco	Guinea
Germany	Canada	New Zealand	Burundi	Mozambique	Guinea-Bissau
Greece	Chile	Norway	Cambodia	Myanmar	Malawi
Hungary	China	Puerto Rico	Cameroon	Namibia	Mali
Italy	Costa Rica	Republic of Moldova	Cape Verde	Nepal	Niger
Japan	Cuba	Saint Lucia	Central African Republic	Nicaragua	Nigeria
Latvia	Cyprus	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Colombia	Occupied Palestinian Territory	Rwanda
Lithuania	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Serbia	Comoros	Oman	Sierra Leone
Malta	Denmark	Sweden	Congo	Pakistan	Somalia
Poland	Estonia	Thailand	Côte D'Ivoire	Panama	Timor-Leste
Portugal	Finland	Trinidad and Tobago	Djibouti	Papua New Guinea	Uganda
Republic of Korea	France	Tunisia	Dominican Republic	Paraguay	United Republic of Tanzania
Romania	Georgia	Turkey	Ecuador	Peru	Zambia
Russian Federation	Guadeloupe	United Arab Emirates	Egypt	Philippines	
Singapore	Iceland	United Kingdom	El Salvador	Qatar	
Slovakia	Indonesia	Uruguay	Eritrea	Réunion	
Slovenia	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	United States Virgin Islands	Fiji	Samoa	
Spain	Ireland	United States of America	French Guiana	Sao Tome and Principe	
Switzerland	Lebanon		French Polynesia	Saudi Arabia	
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Luxembourg		Gabon	Senegal	
Ukraine			Gambia	Solomon Islands	
			Ghana	South Africa	
			Grenada	Sri Lanka	
			Guam	Sudan	
			Guatemala	Suriname	
			Guyana	Swaziland	
			Haiti	Syrian Arab Republic	
			Honduras	Tajikistan	
			India	Togo	
			Iraq	Tonga	
			Israel	Turkmenistan	
			Jamaica	Uzbekistan	
			Jordan	Vanuatu	
			Kazakhstan	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	
			Kenya	Western Sahara	
			Kuwait	Yemen	
			Kyrgyzstan	Zimbabwe	
			Lao People's Dem. Republic		

Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a)

Figure 1.11
Urban and rural fertility rates, selected countries and years



Source: United Nations,
Demographic Yearbook 2006 (2008).

of 1.51 children per woman. The fertility rate in this group is also below the replacement level, but not drastically so, and ranges between 1.51 to 2.1 children per woman. It is worth noting that all European countries that did not fall in the first group – low fertility – are to be found in this second group, thus pointing to the fact that there is currently no country in Europe able to ensure population replacement levels.

The third group, with a fertility level ranging from 2.1 to 5 children per woman, is made up of 91, mostly developing, countries or areas around the world, while the fourth group, with high fertility (over 5 children per woman), consists of 21 countries or areas. The fact that 19 of these 21 countries are in Africa highlights the relationship between women's access to reproductive health and other services that affect the number of births and fertility levels, especially in rural areas.

Indeed, there are generally differences in the level of fertility rates in urban compared to rural areas of a country, as illustrated by figure 1.11. This is mainly due to the relatively easy access of women in more modern urban settings to a range of services, such as education, family planning and health care, as well as their exposure to a different set of cultural and societal values. In Namibia and

Swaziland, for example, a woman in a rural area would give birth to one more child than a woman in an urban setting.

4. Ageing

People are living longer – particularly women, who tend to outlive men on average

One phenomenon that displays a constant rate of increase is the proportion of the older population. The world's population age distribution is undergoing a significant shift. Mortality is falling and people are expected to live longer than at any time in recorded history. This phenomenon particularly affects women as they tend, on average, to outlive men.

The transformation of societies from ones with a preponderance of young people towards ones where older people are becoming more numerous poses significant challenges, primarily in ensuring the right to adequate living conditions throughout the extended lifespan.

The total number of older people (aged 60 and above) went from 204 million in 1950 to approximately 760 million in 2010, an almost four-fold increase. The total number of older men increased

slightly faster than the total number of women of the same age – from 92 million to 350 million for men, an increase of 3.8 times, compared to 113 million to 413 million for women, a 3.7 times increase. However, the gap between women and men, in absolute numbers, actually grew over this period (figure 1.12).

While this general trend of rising numbers of older women and men is more or less apparent in all regions, the pace of the increase varies significantly. At the world level, the share of older people in the total population grew from 8 per cent in 1950 to around 11 per cent in 2010 (figure 1.13). In several regions, however, a slight decline in the share of older population can be noticed, as in Western and Eastern Africa (by 0.3 and 0.1 percentage points, respectively) and Western Asia (by 0.1 percentage point). Some of this decline can be attributed to the influx of a younger population from abroad, such as, for example, in Western Asia, where in recent decades an increase in the number of immigrants of younger age has had an impact on the age distribution of the population.

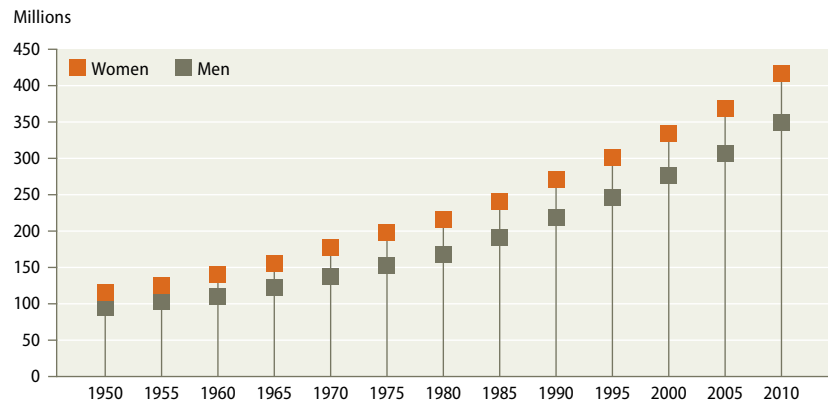
In several regions – such as in South-Central and South-Eastern Asia, Southern and Northern Africa and Central America – the increase of the share of older population was not significant and ranged from 1–3 percentage points. The increase was higher, from 3–5 percentage points, in Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Oceania and Northern and South America. By far the highest increase was registered in Eastern Asia (around 7 percentage points) and Northern and Western Europe (both 8 percentage points). In Southern Europe the share of older population in 1950 was around 12 per cent, and 60 years later it reached 24 per cent (an increase of 12 percentage points, the highest among all the major regions), indicating that in that region almost every fourth person is 60 years of age or older.

As women live longer than men, it is to be expected that the share of women aged 60 and above would be higher than the share of men. Indeed, women make up around 55 per cent of the total older population in the world. Yet, this percentage varies quite significantly from region to region (see figure 1.14). Although in all the regions the share of women exceeds 50 per cent, in Eastern Europe it is much higher, at 63 per cent. Southern Africa also has a high percentage of women aged 60 and above compared to men of the same age, around 59 per cent.

Population ageing usually refers to the combination of lower fertility and extended life expect-

Figure 1.12

Total number of women and men age 60 and over in the world, 1950 to 2010

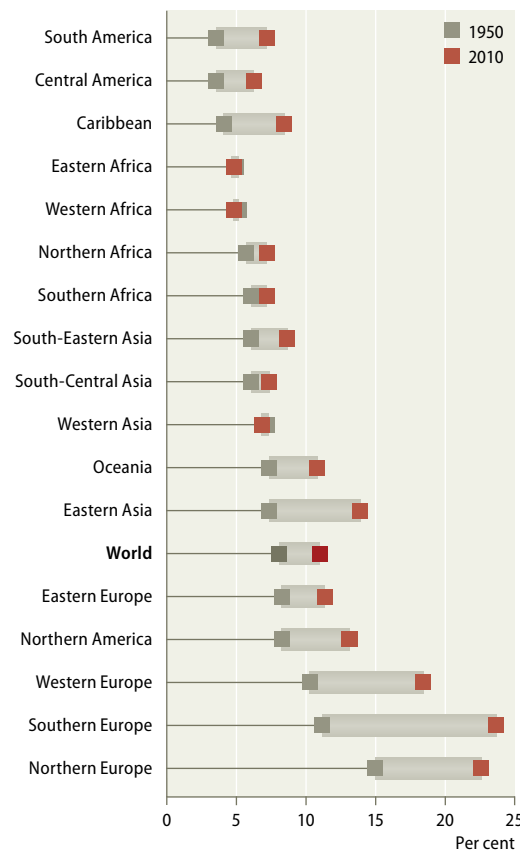


Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

ancy. Fertility levels were elaborated on in the previous section; a short discussion on life expectancy follows below, while the detailed presentation and analysis of this issue is presented in Chapter 2 – Health.

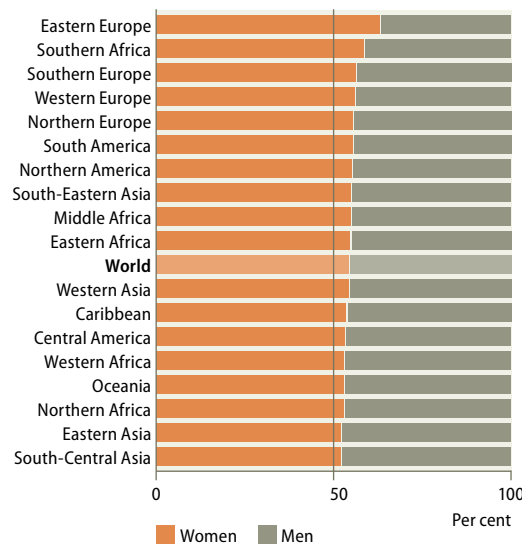
Figure 1.13

Share of population age 60 and over in the total population by region, 1950 and 2010



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

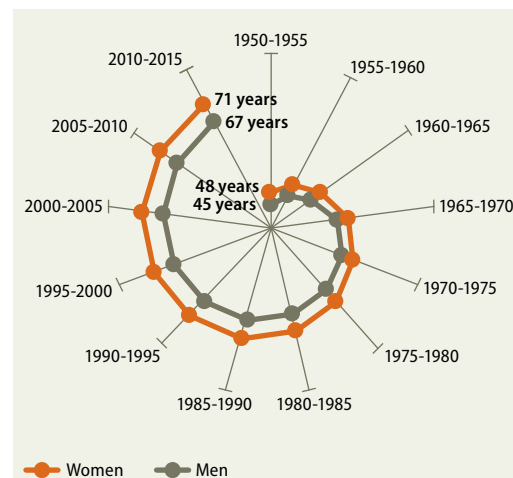
Figure 1.14
Share of women and men in the total population age 60 and above, world and regions, 2010



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

In the period 1950–2005, overall life expectancy rose from 47 years to 69 years, which indicates that the average lifespan increased around one third. This increase was almost identical for women and men, although the difference in the actual life span remains steady in favour of women (see figure 1.15). In the 1950s women were expected to live to around 48 years of age on average, compared to 45 years for men. In 2010 women's life expectancy is expected to average 71 years, while men's is expected to be around 67. In terms of the gap between women and men, the difference

Figure 1.15
Life expectancy, women and men, 1950 to 2015



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision* (2009a).

in life expectancy can thus be seen to be growing, albeit at a very slow pace – from around three years in the 1950s to around four years in 2010.

The data indicate that there is a considerable gap in the expected life span of women and men in different regions of the world. While a woman in Middle Africa born in the period 2010–2015 is expected to live, on average, 51 years, her contemporary in Australia/New Zealand is estimated to live over 84 years on average, just slightly more than in Western, Southern and Northern Europe and in Northern America. As for men, the lowest life expectancy is estimated for men in Middle Africa, around 48 years of age, with the longest time span expected to occur in the same regions as for women, albeit lower at from 77 to 80 years of age.

Overall, life expectancy has the lowest value for both women and men in all regions of Africa, with the exception of Northern Africa. South-Central Asia is also facing lower life expectancy. All other regions of the world (including Northern Africa) are expected to witness an average life expectancy of over 70 years of age for women and over 67 for men.

5. International migration

The number of international migrants has been steadily increasing, and more women are migrating

Population movements are as old as humankind itself. These movements are the result of a whole set of different socio-economic, political and demographic circumstances. Migration of people across borders is one of the phenomena most difficult to measure in real time – without even attempting to include illegal border crossings. Consequently, one of the usually applied methods in calculating international migration is quantifying the foreign-born population in a given country, thus generating statistics on the stock of international migrants.

The total number of international migrants has been steadily increasing.⁶ In 2010 it is expected to reach over 213 million people, up from around 155 million in 1990, an increase of 37 per cent (see figure 1.16).

⁶ The data for this part of the chapter are derived from United Nations, 2009b.

The composition of the migrant stock has changed over time. As societies have modernized and as education and mobility as well as employment opportunities have become more accessible to women, international migration has become much more balanced by sex. Currently, it is estimated that 105 million women make up 49 per cent of international migrant stock in general, although, as with other phenomena, regional differences exist (figure 1.17).

The participation of women in international migration was lowest in Western Asia, at around 39 per cent, followed by Southern and Northern Africa (both 43 per cent) and Southern Asia (45 per cent). At the other extreme is Eastern Europe, where the share of women international migrants was around 57 per cent, followed by Central and Eastern Asia (both 55 per cent) and Northern Europe (53 per cent).

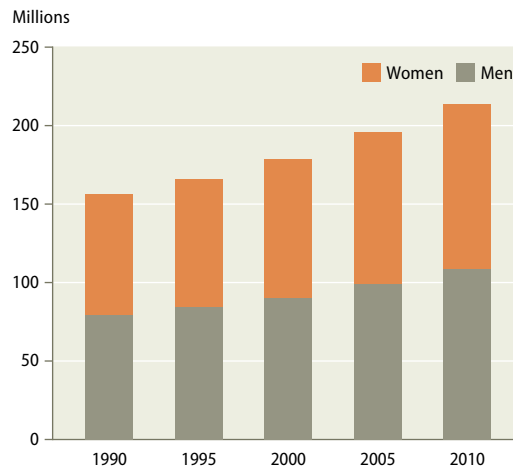
A closer look at the trends in the participation of women in international migration reveals further differences among the regions. For example, the share of female migrants in Eastern Asia increased from 49 per cent in 1990 to 55 per cent in 2010. Similarly, in Southern Africa the share of women increased from 39 per cent in 1990 to 43 per cent in 2010. In all other regions, however, the changes in women's share were less noticeable and generally in the range of a 1 or 2 percentage points increase or decrease.

Some 75 per cent of all international migrants are located in 30 countries in the world, which identify them as the preferred destinations. The proportion of women immigrants in these countries is shown in figure 1.18.

The share of women migrants in the oil-wealthy Gulf States, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, is less than one third of the total number of migrants as the bulk of the foreign-born population are men of working age. In the United States of America the proportion of female and male migrants is almost identical, while in other more developed countries – such as Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Netherlands and the United Kingdom – women's share exceeds 50 per cent. This is probably due to settlement migration through family reunification and also the fact that migrant women have more longevity than men and increasingly migrate by themselves.

The high proportion of female migrants in Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine is a consequence of the dissolution of the former Soviet

Figure 1.16
International migrants by sex, the world, 1990 to 2010



Source: United Nations, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (2009b).

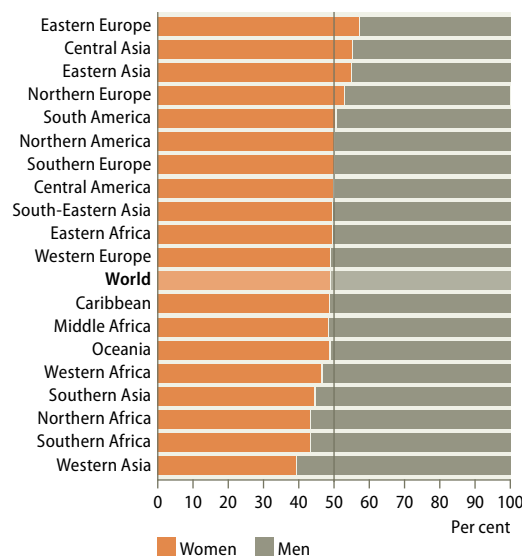
Union, and some of these women may have not moved at all but were enumerated differently due to their place of birth.

B. Families

1. Marriages and unions

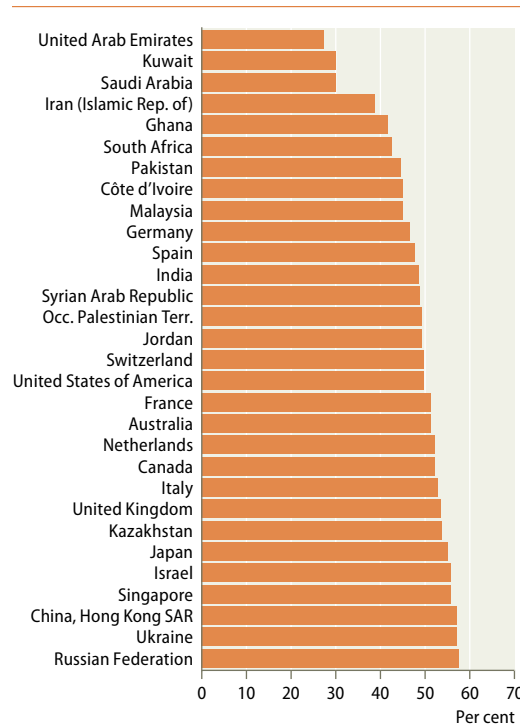
Marriage, a social construct shared by all societies and people, is the act, ceremony or process that unites two people in a relationship that, in almost all cultures, is consensual and contractual and recognized as such by law. Marriage and union are

Figure 1.17
Share of women and men in total international migrant stock by region, 2010



Source: United Nations, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (2009b).

Figure 1.18
Share of women in total immigrant stock, 30 top destination countries or areas, 2010



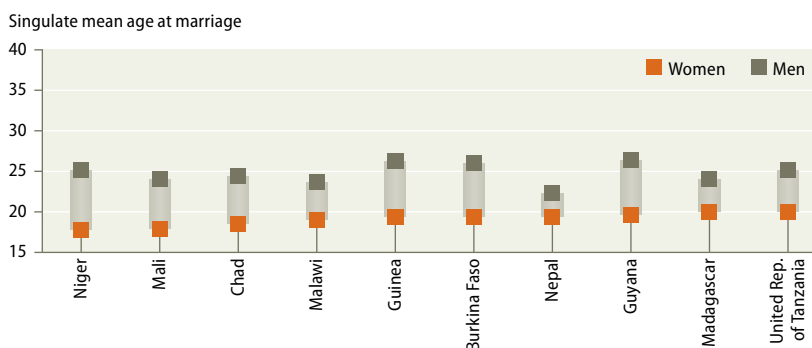
Source: United Nations, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (2009b).

in most cases a first step in establishing a family, often the essential unit in the composition and functioning of a society.

Young people are marrying at older ages than their parents did

Women and men do not enter marriage at the same age. In fact, throughout history, the average

Figure 1.19
Singulate mean age at marriage for women and men and the difference in years, countries where women marry on average at age 20 or earlier, 2002–2006 (latest available)



Source: United Nations, *World Marriage Data 2008* (accessed in December 2009).

age at marriage for women has always been lower, sometimes considerably so, than the average age for men. This is still apparent at the beginning of the twenty-first century, although the average age of women at first marriage is now much higher, with young people worldwide marrying at older ages than their parents did.

Substantially smaller percentages of women today marry before age 20 than in previous generations,⁷ and median age at marriage is rising in nearly all regions. In developed countries, the Near East, East Asia and a few Latin American countries, women tend to marry in their early to mid-20s. Two thirds or more of young women in these regions do not marry until after age 20. In contrast, however, as many as two thirds of young women in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa marry before age 20. In several of these countries high proportions of women marry at very young ages (15 or less). In almost all developing countries women in rural areas are more likely than women in cities to marry before age 20.⁸

In addition, in a number of countries marriage has been replaced by cohabitation, which may or may not be formalized by the state. Therefore, statistics displaying singulate mean age at marriage⁹ for any given year may not reflect accurately the fact of women and men living together in unions. Still, these statistics provide an overview of the marriage patterns in contemporary times.

Figure 1.19 displays statistics on the singulate age at marriage for women and men in countries where women, on average, marry at age 20 or earlier and for which these data are available. The lowest average age at first marriage for women, between 17 and 18 years, is in Niger and Mali, followed by several other countries in Africa (Chad, Malawi, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Madagascar and United Republic of Tanzania). In two countries outside of Africa, Guyana and Nepal, women marry on average when they are between 19 and 20 years old. When it comes to the singulate mean age at marriage for men in these countries, it can be seen that the differences are significant, with the exception of Nepal; for example, in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea,

⁷ McCauley and Salter, 1995.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Singulate mean age at marriage compares the age-specific proportion of those who are single with those who are married or widowed to calculate the average age at which the transition was made between the two states.

Guyana, Mali and Niger the difference in age at marriage between women and men is 6–7 years.

Although it may be nominally consensual, the fact that the institution of marriage is so strongly linked to tradition and the “pride” of both the bride’s and groom’s families often places the future bride under pressure to comply with choices that are not necessarily hers. As a UNICEF report outlines, many girls, and a smaller number of boys, enter marriage without any chance of exercising their right to choose.¹⁰ This is more often the case with younger and less educated women. Entering into marriage at a young age almost certainly removes the girl from the educational process since assuming a wife’s responsibilities usually leaves no room for schooling. This, in turn, results in less knowledge about concepts such as contraception and family planning. Early childbearing is identified with higher health risks for both mother and child.¹¹ Another serious concern relates to the fact that adolescent brides are an easy target for abusive partners.

Yet, the practice of girls marrying young persists in almost all societies at the beginning of this century, as figure 1.20 illustrates. It presents the data for all the countries where the percentage of girls aged 15–19 that are married or in consensual unions exceeds 5 per cent. In Niger, the share of married girls aged 15–19 is almost two thirds of the total number of girls. Almost all women there are married by age 24. In Nepal, one third of girls aged 15–19 is married, while in Zambia the same proportion is either married or living in a consensual union. India, Thailand and Uganda report over 20 per cent of all girls aged 15–19 as being married.

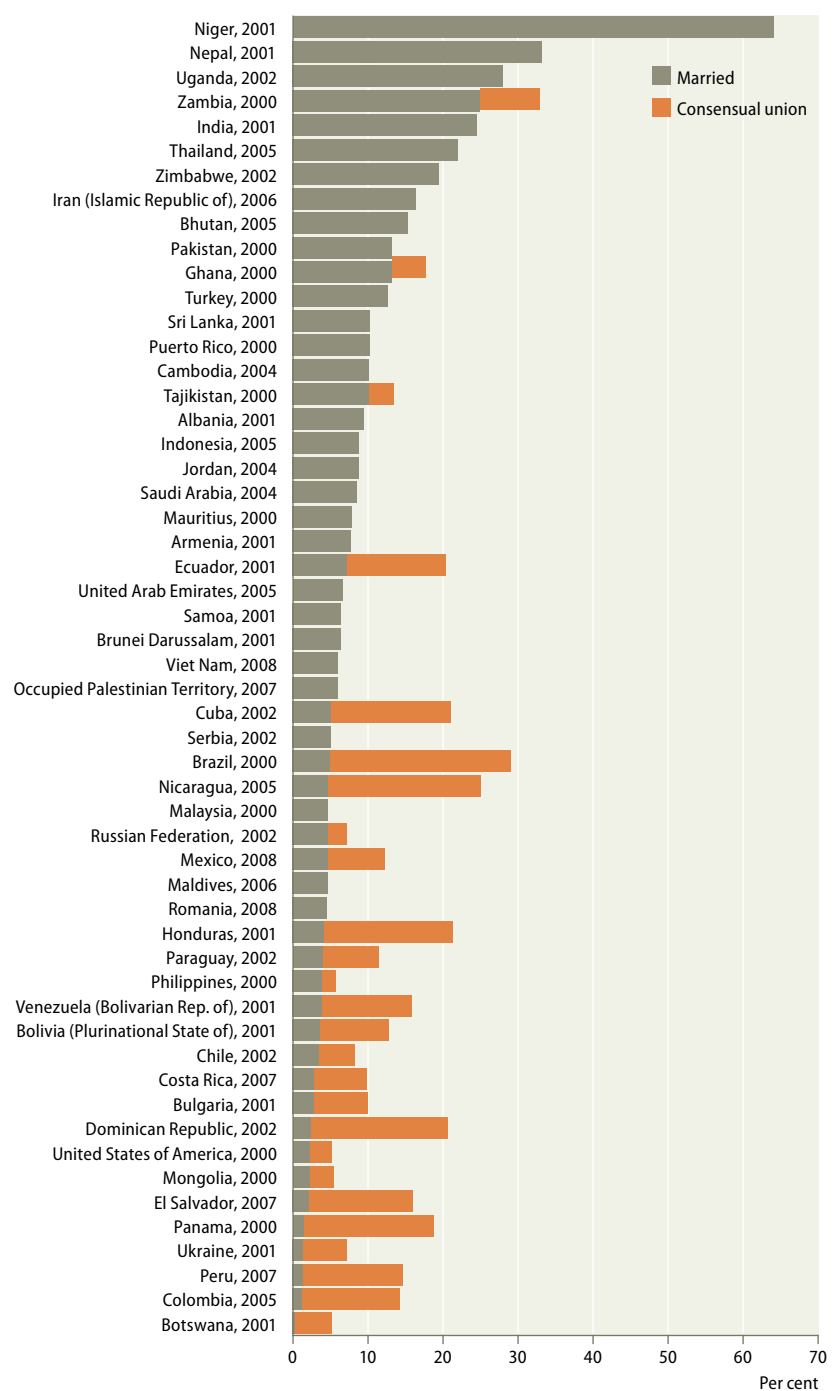
**In some countries very young girls
(15 years of age or below) enter into either
marriage or a consensual union**

Data also show that in Latin America and the Caribbean a significant number of girls aged 15–19 choose to live in consensual unions – for example, almost 24 per cent in Brazil, 20 per cent in Nicaragua, 18 per cent in Dominican Republic, around 17 per cent in Honduras and Panama, 16 per cent in Cuba and about 13 per cent in El Salvador and Peru. The proportion of young girls in these countries entering formal marriage

¹⁰ UNICEF, 2001.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Figure 1.20
Proportion of girls aged 15–19 who are married or in consensual unions^a



Source: United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook* data collections (2009d).

Note: ^a Only countries or areas where the proportion exceeds 5 per cent are shown.

ranges from 1–5 per cent, however, indicating clearly the preference of consensual unions over marriages but still entering into these relationships at a very early age.

Collecting statistics on population by age, sex and marital status reveals that in some countries very young girls (15 years of age or below) enter into either marriage or a consensual union, making them prey to all the dangers to their physical and mental health that more often than not accompany such arrangements. While the proportion of married girls aged 15 years or less is usually quite low (below 1 per cent in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)), in some countries it ranges from 1–5 per cent (El Salvador, Ghana, Malaysia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Uganda and Zambia), while in Niger the share of such young girls that are married is around 20 per cent¹².

At the other end of the spectrum for average age of women and men entering marriage are countries where this is delayed until age 30 and above. Figure 1.21 presents singulate mean age at marriage for countries or areas where women are at least 30 years of age at that moment. The majority of these countries or areas are in Europe, such as Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden. China, Hong Kong SAR and three island countries or areas – French Polynesia, Jamaica and the Netherlands Antilles – are also in that group. In contrast to the

countries where women marry early and where the difference in age between women and men at first marriage is significant, in these countries the difference in age is relatively small, between one and three years at most.

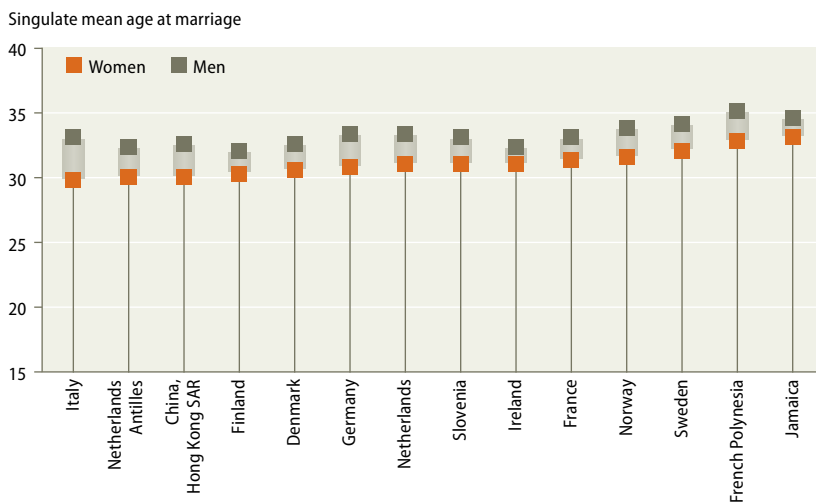
2. Family responsibilities

Family life rests solidly on the shoulders of women in all areas of the world. As spouses, parents and caregivers, they take on the primary responsibility for ensuring the proper functioning of families and the provision of everyday care and maintenance. Preparing family meals, maintaining hygiene, caring for other family members and a myriad of other chores related to children consume a good part of the day for women in the world. While men are increasingly getting involved in the daily functioning of families, it is still predominantly women's responsibility.

The tool of choice for assessing the amount of time people spend on various activities is the time use survey. Time use surveys occupy a specific place in contemporary national statistical systems as they can provide a wealth of data that can be used to quantify social and economic phenomena. They can help answer many crucial questions related to the differences in the status of women and men, generating much needed gender-disaggregated social statistics. Time use surveys encompass a number of areas including paid and unpaid work, division of labour within families, characteristics of family life, social connectedness, civic participation, standards of living and the differences between women's and men's participation in the labour market, education and cultural activities.¹³

Figure 1.21

Singulate mean age at marriage for women and men and the difference in years, countries or areas where women marry at age 30 or later, 2002–2008 (latest available)



Source: United Nations, *World Marriage Data 2008* (accessed in December 2009).

Time use studies show that women spend more time on housework and community and volunteer work than men do

Figure 1.22 illustrates differences in the use of time for women and men in terms of housework, caring for family members and community/volunteer work in several countries (the complete set of data is displayed in the Statistical Annex, table 4.C). Housework includes preparation of daily meals and washing dishes, tidying and cleaning the house, maintenance of clothing and footwear,

¹² United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook* data collection, 2009d.

¹³ A more detailed elaboration on differences in the use of time between women and men is presented in Chapter 4 – Work.

childcare, teaching and helping children, purchasing goods and other household management.

The figure clearly points to the fact that, as a rule, the number of hours that women spend on housework and community and volunteer work exceeds those spent by men for the same purposes. The average number of hours per day used for these activities by women ranges from around three (in Denmark) to over six (in Turkey, for example). At the same time, in several countries, men spend less than one hour on these activities – for example, in Cambodia and Pakistan¹⁴.

It is also striking to note that the difference in the time spent by women and men per day in maintaining the household and participating in childcare and other family activities in Armenia, Iraq, Italy, Pakistan and Turkey ranges from four to five hours per day. At the other end of the spectrum, the difference in women's and men's involvement in family life ranges from one to two hours in Denmark and Sweden.

3. Family and work

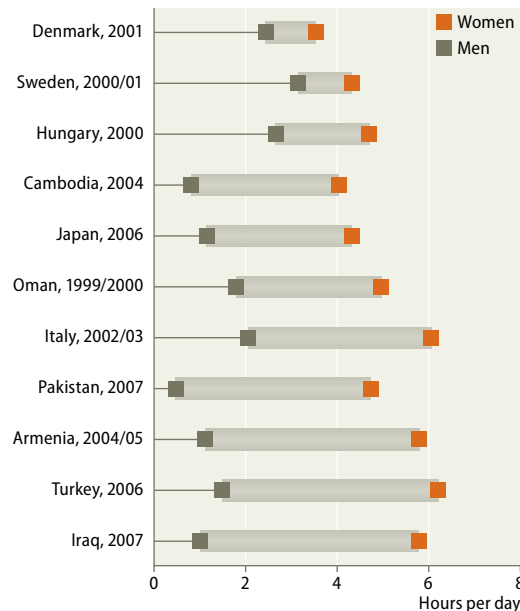
As demonstrated earlier, the bulk of family care and housework continues to rest on women. However, working men are not spared. Expectations for men of long or uninterrupted hours of economic work limit their ability to be actively involved in family matters. To help both working women and men reconcile work and family responsibilities, some countries and institutions have instituted shorter work hours and family-friendly working arrangements such as flexible hours, part-time work, job-sharing, work from home and telecommuting.

**The provision of public childcare
is a key factor in whether mothers return
to or start work outside the home**

For mothers with young children, decisions regarding working hours – or whether to work at all – often depend on the availability of affordable and reliable childcare. In the past many workers were able to count on help from non-working relatives for childcare and other domestic tasks. Although such traditional family support still exists to a greater or lesser degree in most countries, it is becoming less available with urbanization and the increased labour force participation

Figure 1.22

Average time used for housework, caring for family members and community/volunteer work, by sex, selected countries



Source: Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from national statistical surveys on time use.

of women. Thus, the provision of public childcare has become a key factor for mothers contemplating returning to or starting employment. Statistics on the percentage of children in formal care or pre-school (Table 1.2) show that in countries like Czech Republic, Slovakia, Mexico, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary and Austria this percentage does not exceed 10 per cent, thus indicating that in these countries the overwhelming number of children remain in the care of their homes in early ages, with all the implication that has primarily on mothers. On the other end of the spectrum, in Netherlands, Iceland and especially Denmark, over 50 per cent of children can be found in formal care of pre-school, thus allowing much more room for employment or other activities. Certainly the percentage of children in public childcare directly depends of its availability and affordability; therefore, this has to be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of these services to family life and responsibilities.

There are also benefits to the wide availability of affordable, reliable and high quality care for the elderly, disabled and sick. In the absence of adequate facilities or services for such persons requiring care, the task of caring for them often rests on women in the household, with similar implications in terms of demand on women's time.

¹⁴ See Chapter 4 – Work.

Table 1.2
Children in formal care or pre-school

	Percentage of children in formal care or pre-school		Percentage of children in formal care or pre-school
Eastern Europe		Southern Europe (continued)	
Bulgaria	31	Italy	29
Hungary	10	Greece	18
Poland	9	Malta	7
Slovakia	5	Western Europe	
Czech Republic	3	Netherlands	54
Northern Europe		Luxembourg	43
Denmark	63	France	43
Iceland	56	Belgium	42
Sweden	45	Germany	14
Norway	42	Austria	10
United Kingdom	40	Other more developed regions	
Finland	26	New Zealand	38
Ireland	25	United States of America	31
Estonia	18	Japan	28
Latvia	8	Australia	25
Lithuania	8	Canada	24
Southern Europe		Less developed regions	
Portugal	44	Cyprus	20
Spain	34	Republic of Korea	31
Slovenia	33	Mexico	6

Source: OECD, OECD Family Database PF11.2: Full-time equivalent participation rates for children under 3 years old (2009). For details on individual country sources, see <http://www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database>.

Note: Data refer to children less than 3 years of age. Data for the Republic of Korea and New Zealand refer to 2008. Data for Australia and the United States of America refer to 2005. Data for Mexico refer to 2009. The information for Cyprus relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of Cyprus.