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No. 204, 2005

Bongaarts, John. "The causes of stalling fertility transitions," *Policy Research Division Working Paper* no. 204. New York: Population Council. ([PDF](#))

Abstract

An examination of fertility trends in countries with multiple DHS surveys found that in the 1990s fertility stalled in mid-transition in seven countries: Bangladesh, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Kenya, Peru, and Turkey. In each of these countries fertility was high (>6 births per woman) in the 1950s and then declined to fewer than 5 births per woman in the early or mid-1990s, before stalling. The level of stalling varied from 4.7 births per woman in Kenya to 2.5 births per woman in Turkey. An analysis of trends in the determinants of fertility revealed a systematic pattern of leveling off or near leveling in a number of determinants, including contraceptive use, the demand for contraception, and wanted fertility. The stalling countries did not experience significant increases in unwanted fertility or in the unmet need for contraception during the late 1990s, and program effort scores improved slightly except in the Dominican Republic. These findings suggest no major deterioration in contraceptive access during the stall, but levels of unmet need and unwanted fertility are relatively high and improvements in access to family planning methods would therefore be desirable. No significant link was found between the presence of a stall and trends in socioeconomic development, but at the onset of the stall the level of fertility was low relative to the level of development in all but one of the stalling countries.



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