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COLLECTION OF STATISTICS OF MARITAL STATUS IN AFRICA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
Introduction	1 - 6
International recommendations on marital status statistics	7 - 10
Marriage practices in Africa	11 - 30
The extent of polygamy	31 - 33
Problems of statistical measurement	34 - 40
Country practices in population censuses and demographic surveys	41 - 45
Concluding remarks and recommendations	46

- Appendix I. Definitions and coverage of marital status categories in selected countries of Africa;
- Appendix II. Types of data collected on marital status in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1955-1964;
- Appendix III. Additional questions asked on data collected on marital conditions in censuses and surveys in Africa, 1955-1964.

COLLECTION OF STATISTICS OF MARITAL STATUS IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION:

1. This paper has been prepared at the request of the Seminar on Population Problems in Africa held in Cairo, 1962, the Third Conference of African Statisticians, Addis Ababa, 1963, and the African Seminar on Vital Statistics, Addis Ababa, 1964.

2. In the past few years (i.e. 1956-1964), a number of African countries^{1/} have omitted from their population censuses any inquiry into marital status, either because they felt that there were technical difficulties, or because they thought the data were of "insufficient value"^{2/}. It is hoped that the paper will help to clarify some of these difficulties. Also, in order that the value of the data on marital status may be more widely understood, a summary of the uses of marriage and divorce statistics (expounded in the 1958 issue of the United Nations Demographic Yearbook) is attempted in the following paragraphs.

3. Demographically, the marital status of the population has an obvious importance as a factor influencing population growth. With a tabulation of marital status data in relation to sex and age, the influence of failure to marry, of the age at marriage, and of the prevalence of widowhood and divorce upon the reproductive capacity of the population in reproductive ages may be determined.

4. Economically, data on marital status are extremely important in many kinds of analysis. The formation of new "family units" or "households", as indicated by marriage and divorce statistics would supply needed guidance for housing programmes (both number and type), the planning of community services (e.g. provision of water supply, medical care, hospitals, etc.), and the development of enterprises concerned with newly married couples (e.g. real estate projects, furniture and clothing

^{1/} They include Bechuanaland(1963), Basutoland(1956), Comores(1958), Kenya (1962), Nigeria(1963), Rhodesia(1962), Sierra Leone(1964), Tanganyika (1957), Zanzibar(1958), Tunisia(1956), Uganda(1959), Zambia(1963).

^{2/} Report on the 1958 Census of Population of Zanzibar Protectorate.

manufacturing, infant food and clothing, etc.). Similarly, marital status data could assist in the analysis of problems of dependency and of factors affecting the supply of labour (e.g. in the case of widowhood).

5. Again, such statistics are of value for the study of sociological and medical problems connected with bachelorhood, spinsterhood, widowhood, and divorce. In countries where consensual unions and/or polygamous marriages are common, census data or sample surveys on these types of union will provide valuable information for the study of such customs.

6. Thus, from demographic, economic, as well as social points of view, the collection of data on marital status either through population censuses or demographic sample surveys in Africa, seems to be desirable as well as essential for social and economic development planning. The present study is based mainly on an analysis of country data available, with particular emphasis on the methodological approach, comparability of definitions, classifications, and coverage, and the difficulties that may be encountered in the application of international recommendations thereon, with the view to providing some food for thought for the scheduled 1970 world population census programme.

INTERNATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON MARITAL STATUS STATISTICS:

7. International recommendations^{1/} on the compilation of marital status statistics consist of those relating to classification of status categories and their definitions, minimum age for marital status tabulations, etc. The recommended statuses and definitions thereof are as follows:

- (a) Single, that is, never married.
- (b) Married, including all persons formally married, whether or not living with spouses, and persons in stable de facto unions, variously known as consensual, common-law, tribal, customary unions and the like.

^{1/} Principles and Recommendations for National Population Censuses (United Nations publication, sales No: 58.xvii.5), para. 410; Principles for a Vital Statistical System (UN publication, Sales No. 1953.XVII.8), para. 309 (c) (17).

- (c) Widowed, that is, a survivor of a marriage dissolved by death and not remarried.
- (d) Divorced, that is, a person whose marriage was dissolved by legal means and who has not remarried, including persons formerly living in stable de facto unions but no longer regarded as forming part of such a union.
- (e) Marital status not stated

8. In addition, it is recommended that persons whose marriages have been annulled may be included in either category (a) or (d), according to the requirements of each country. Where the frequency of de facto marriages is sufficient to justify special provision and where it is probable that reliable information will be obtained, it may be desirable to sub-divide the "married" category into (1) persons formally married and (2) persons in stable de facto unions. "Legally separated" persons may be shown as a separate sub-category under "divorced".

9. On the coverage of data, it is recommended that information on marital status should be collected for all persons above the minimum age for marriage as specified by civil law or as determined by the customs of the country concerned. Tabulations of marital status should show at least ages "under 15 years" and "15 years and over" as separate groups, to facilitate international comparison.

10. It is further recommended that census reports should explain clearly the definition of each tabulated marital status category (e.g. divorced, legally separated, de facto separated, temporarily separated, consensually married, etc.), taking into account the enumeration instructions and the data processing procedures.

MARRIAGE PRACTICES IN AFRICA:

11. Before examining the applicability of international recommendations to African practice, it is necessary to summarize the various types of marriage that are being contracted in Africa. The attempted summary is based on rather limited information on the subject, which, however, may serve to throw some light on the categories of statistical interest. The

available statistical studies are few, and the results are often of questionable interpretation because of the small size of population groups studied, of the possibility of bias resulting from inevitable errors of observation and of selective factors in certain cases.^{1/}

12. Africa is currently experiencing a transition from the age-old isolation and primarily self-sufficing economy to that of modernization and development. With the growth of towns and rapid development of trade and industry, bringing in their wake a growing degree of mobility of labour and greater individual freedom, the authority of the family or clan on the individual is fast declining, and in time perhaps many of the various marriage practices now in force will become obsolete. Nevertheless, for the time at least and probably for some years to come, the remarks on African marriages in the following paragraphs will continue to apply.

13. In the minds of probably the majority of Africans today, marriage is still regarded as "primarily an institution for procreation",^{2/} with the "procreation of children as its essential aim",^{2/} as "an alliance between the two bodies of kin based on their common interest in the marriage itself and its continuance, and in the offspring of the union, who will be, of course, kin of both of the two kin-groups."^{3/} As is common in a predominantly agricultural society, where continuation of the ancestral lineage and the provision of working teams are important, marriage by payments (e.g. of cattle, hoes, beer, etc.) and counter-payments in many parts of Africa, in accordance with long-standing traditions and customs, would establish legal paternity over the children born, and gives a husband and his kin certain rights in relation to his wife and the children she bears.^{3/} For him, this means that they are members of his working team (and in the old days his fighting force), are subject to his

1/ R. Blanc, Le Mariage en Afrique : Concepts et Aspects démographiques, International Population Conference, New York, 1961, p. 172.

2/ Survey of African Marriage and Family Life, edited by A. Philips, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 3 & 15.

3/ African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, edited by Radcliffe-Brown & Daryll Forde, 1958, Oxford University Press, pp. 46 & 50.

authority, contribute to his support in old age, and if they are girls, he receives their marriage payments; for them that he is the man they look to for marriage cattle and land to cultivate, to sacrifice on their behalf to the ancestors, and ultimately for a share in his possessions.^{1/} It is due to the desire for children, the alliance between two clans or kinsmen rather than between two individuals in a marriage, and the general position of dependence of a woman in an African society, that a number of varieties of marriage practice exist among the peoples of Africa today.

14. The existing types of marriage practised in Africa may be summarized under the following headings:

- (i) Customary marriages, that is, marriages contracted in accordance with established traditions and customs, including marriages by payments, by service, or by service and payment;
- (ii) Non-customary marriages, which may be sub-divided into:
 - (a) civil marriages, and
 - (b) marriages performed according to rites of organized religions, e.g. Christianity, Islam, etc., and
- (iii) Stable de facto unions (consensual marriages), which are generally not regarded as legally binding by either of the two systems, customary or otherwise, but should be included under the category "married" for statistical purposes.

The first two categories of marriage and their sub-categories may overlap in the case of 'customary and civil' and 'Church and civil' marriages.

15. Both monogamy and polygamy may be distinguished under any of the above three marriage categories. Polygamy is important under Islamic law and also under local custom in many non-Moslem societies in Africa. A special note on polygamy is presented below in paragraphs 31-33.

16. Within the customary forms of marriage, it is possible to distinguish a variety of practices other than marriage by payment and/or

^{1/} Philips, op. cit., p. 54.

service. They include: (a) marriage by exchange, (b) secondary marriage, (c) ghost marriage, (d) leviratic marriage, (e) woman-to-woman marriage, (f) a type of polyandrous marriage (the 'wife of the village'). In the following sections, some brief comments are made on these, as well as on non-customary marriages and de facto unions.

17. Marriage by payment (cattle, hoes, cloths, spears, cowry shells, copper rings, iron bars, beer, or cash, etc.). Examples of such payments are found in East and West Africa and the Congo (Leopoldville). In South Africa, the cattle payment is termed Lobola and constitutes one of the prerequisites of a customary marriage. "The marriage payment, whether it be small or large, is the objective instrument by which a legal marriage is established. In some instances it is a compensation or indemnity to the woman's family for the loss of a member. This is particularly so where the marriage payment is considerable and is used to obtain a wife for the woman's brother."^{1/} In the case of a divorce, the marriage payment will have to be repaid. In some tribes where the payment consists of cattle, it is the same cattle with all their increase that should be returned.^{2/} Where the marriage cattle received for marrying a sister is used in obtaining a wife for a brother, a divorce from the former may precipitate that of the latter.

18. Marriage by services only: consists mainly of two types: (a) where the husband both before and after his marriage lives and works permanently at the village of his wife's father, characteristic of the matrilineal peoples of North-Eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland^{3/}, and (b) In some tribes where marriage is normally legalized by payment, a man who cannot make the payment is allowed to marry on the basis of service and residence with his wife's father, who claims the children of the union as members of his lineage^{3/}.

^{1/} Raddcliffe-Brown & Forde, op. cit., p. 53.

^{2/} Ibid, p. 52.

^{3/} Philipps, op. cit., p. 7.

19. Marriage by service and payment: Where both payments and certain prescribed services are given to the girl's father in the period before the marriage, which is characteristic of the peoples of the Nuba hills and some tribes of the Nigerian Plateau^{1/}. The services may consist of the boy and his age-mates' labour in hut building and farm work for extended periods.

20. Marriage by exchange: a dying custom in parts of Nigeria^{2/}, where there is an exchange of women, each group (family, lineage, or clan) providing a wife for a man of the other. If a marriage broke up through the wife's fault, no compensation was possible other than the return of the woman exchanged for her, and hence the dissolution of a second marriage.

21. Secondary marriage: Among certain tribes of Northern Nigeria, a woman already married may be sought in marriage by another man^{3/}. This would involve an element of elopement or capture, real or pretended, usually with the agreement of the woman's parents, but against the will and without the knowledge of the first husband. Secondary marriages are real marriages, and possess all the ritual of a marriage, that is, preliminary payments, 'bride price', appointment of a wali (an arbitrator of marital disputes), and a wedding feast. "The secondary marriage does not annul the primary marriage, for the primary husband does not formally dissolve the marriage and reclaim the 'bride price'. He lives in the hope that she will one day resume her married life with him, and this she frequently does."^{4/}

22. 'Ghost marriage', recognized by some tribes in South Africa, notably the Zulu, Basuto and the Vonda group^{5/}, and practised among the Nuer in the Southern Sudan and other parts of Africa^{6/}. In this type of

^{1/} Philipps, op. cit., p. 7.

^{2/} Ibid, p. 131.

^{3/} Ibid, p. 133.

^{4/} Ibid, p. 134

^{5/} Ibid, p. 15.

^{6/} E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family Among the Nuer, 1935.

marriage practice, a woman may be married "to the name" of a man who has died unmarried, or, though married before death, but died without male offspring, so that his line need not die out. The marriage is effected in the dead man's name by one of his kinsmen, in which case, the legal husband is the 'ghost' in whose name the bride cattle were paid and the marriage ritual performed, and the legal father of the children is the 'ghost', while their genitor and foster-father has the status of vicarious husband to their mother.^{1/}

23. 'Liviratic marriage': In the livirate, exemplified by the customs of the Hebrews, and in Africa by the Nuer and Zulu and many other peoples^{2/}, when a man dies and his wife has not passed the age of child-bearing it is the duty of the man's brother or other near relatives to live with the widow in order to raise children. The widow remains the wife of the dead man, and the children begotten by the new husband will also be counted as those of the deceased. Similarly, in some tribes of South Africa, such as the Zulu, if a woman proves to be barren, her kin will provide a sister to bear children who will be counted as children of the barren wife.^{2/}

24. A woman-to-woman marriage: In several regions of Africa, there is a custom whereby a woman may go through a rite of marriage with another woman and thereby she stands in the place of a father (pater) to the offspring of the wife, whose physical father (genitor) is an assigned lover.^{3/} This is done sometimes by a barren woman to secure issue for her husband, but also by a wealthy woman so as to found a compound of which she will be the head.^{4/} The assigned or chosen 'lover' could be socially

1/ E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer, 1945.

2/ Radcliffe-Brown & Forde, op. cit., p. 64.

3/ Radcliffe-Brown & Forde, op. cit., p. 4.

4/ Philips, op. cit., p. 128.

recognized as this woman's husband, but his children would be regarded as the children of the woman who had made the marriage payment. This practice was reported to exist also among the Nuer of the Southern Sudan.^{1/}

25. A type of polyandrous marriage, the 'wife of the village', is found among the Lela, of the region between the Kwilu and Kasai, and their neighbours the Pende, Bunda, and Dinga.^{2/} She is theoretically the wife of all its men except those who, as members of her own clan, call her their sister.^{2/} This institution is forbidden by the law of the Congo, but "the prohibition has been ineffective".^{2/}

26. Civil marriages: This type of marriage is usually contracted in accordance with the requirements of the civil law of a country, and performed in court, in municipal offices, or at home in the presence of witnesses. The marriage contract may be either written or, as in some parts of Ethiopia^{3/}, oral. In South Africa, civil marriages must be performed by a marriage officer (a magistrate, native commissioner, or a Minister of Religion).^{4/}

27. Marriages with rites of organized religions: that is, marriages contracted in Church or those performed with Moslem rites, etc.

28. De facto or consensual unions: which may include 'trial marriages'^{5/}, union by 'mutual consent', widow-concubinages, and salaried marriages^{6/} (i.e. on monthly payments), etc.

29. Polygamous marriage, where a man may legally marry more than one wife concurrently.

1/ E.E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p. 38.

2/ Philips, op. cit., p. 90 & 91.

3/ Nathan Marein, The Ethiopian Empire-Federation and Laws, 1955. p. 161.

4/ Ruth Levin, Marriage in Langa Native Location, University of Cape Town, 1947, p. 43.

5/ Enquête démographique par Sondage, 1955-57, Congo (Léopoldville).

6/ Nathan Marein, op. cit., p. 162.

30. To summarize, the following practices in regard to marriage may be said to exist in parts of the following regions of Africa:

Type of marriage	Selected parts of			
	East Africa	Central Africa	West Africa	South Africa
(a) Marriage by payment ...	x	x	x	x
(b) " " service ...	x ^{1/}	-	x	x ^{2/}
(c) " " service & payment ...	-	x ^{3/}	x	-
(d) Marriage by exchange ..	-	-	x ^{4/}	-
(e) Secondary marriage	-	-	x	-
(f) Civil marriages	x	x	x	x
(g) Marriages with rites of organized religions ...	x	x	x	x
(h) "Ghost marriage"	x ^{5/}	-	-	x ^{6/}
(i) "Leviratic marriage" ...	x ^{5/}	x ^{7/}	x	x
(j) Polygamous marriage ...	x	x	x	x
(k) De facto (or consensual) unions ...	x	x	x	x

N.B. "x" indicates existence of type of marriage; "-" indicates absence of practice as far as can be ascertained with available information.

- 1/ Among the Nyakyusa (see Philips, p. 63).
- 2/ Among the Shona of the north-eastern region of Southern Rhodesia (see Philips, p. 16).
- 3/ Among the Pemba.
- 4/ The custom is probably obsolete.
- 5/ Among the Nuer, the Gusii and the Kipsigis.
- 6/ Recognized by the Zulu, Basotu, and the Venda group.
- 7/ Among the Ngonis, the Ila, and the Tonga.

(Sources: National reports and publications on Population Censuses or demographic surveys conducted in 1955-1964 in the individual countries listed).

COUNTRY COUNTRY	Type of data (C=census) (S=sample)	Year	No. of married women for every 100 married men	Percentage of all married men		Percentage of all married women	
				Monogamy	Polygamy	Monogamy	Polygamy
1. Cameroun Douala Yaounde	C C	1955-56 1957	117 110	91.4 89.7	8.6 10.3		
2. Central African Rep. Centre-Oubangui	S	1959	132	73.9	26.1		
3. Congo (Brazzaville) Pointe-Noire	C	1958	113	88.6	11.4		
4. Congo (Leopoldville)	S	1955-57	121	83.3	16.7	69.0	31.0
5. Dahomey	S	1961	144	68.9	31.1	47.9	52.1
6. Gabon Libreville	C	1960-61	...	91.1	8.9		
7. Guinea: Country Konkoure	S S	1954-55 1957	157 ^{1/} 162	64.6 59.7	35.4 40.3		
8. Ivory Coast Abidjan Bouake	C C	1955 1958	118 ...	84.0 ^{1/} 85.0 ^{1/}	16.0 ^{1/} 15.0 ^{1/}		
9. Mali Central Nigerian Delta Bamako Town Haute Vallée	S S S	1956-58 1960 1960	127 136 163	77.0 71 57	23.0 29 43		
10. Niger	S	1959-60	130 ^{2/}	77.3	22.6		
11. Senegal Dakar	S	1955	121	84.7	15.3	70	30
12. Sudan	C	1955-56	...	84.2 ^{3/}	15.8 ^{3/}		
13. Tanganyika	S	1957	...	78.8 ^{4/}	21.2 ^{4/}		

(Continued)

Extent of Polygamy in selected countries of Africa

COUNTRY	Type of data (C=census S=sample)	Year	No. of married women for every 100 married men	Percentage of all married men		Percentage of all married women	
				Monoamy	Polyamy	Monoamy	Polyamy
14. Togo Urban census Rural survey	C S C	1958-60 1958-60 1960	147	68.0 62.7 96.2 ^{5/}	32.0 37.3 3.8 ^{5/}		
15. UAR (Egypt)	C	1960	...				

- 1/ Excluding consensual unions
- 2/ Referring to distribution of heads of households (males)
- 3/ Excluding "married males over puberty" with no wife
- 4/ As percentage of adult males (aged 16 and over) with wives
- 5/ Referring to married Moslem males only

THE EXTENT OF POLYGAMY:

31. Statistics on the various practices of marriage are lacking with the exception of polygamy. From data compiled for 15 countries in Africa from results of population censuses or demographic surveys conducted in 1955-64, it would seem that polygamous marriage is still being widely practised in Africa today. This is by no means limited to the countries listed in the accompanying table, but data are not available for most countries in North, East, and South Africa.

32. There seems to be a high percentage of polygamy in Western African countries in general, and in Guinea, Togo, Dahomey, Mali, Central African Republic, Niger, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Congo (Leopoldville) in particular, in order of declining importance. As revealed in the relevant surveys, the average number of wives per married man reached 1.32 for the Central African Republic, 1.44 for Dahomey, 1.47 for Togo (Urban Census, 1958-60), and 1.57 for Guinea, due partly to the early marriage of girls and late marriage of men, and partly at least to the custom of "widow inheritance". In Dahomey, not less than 31% of the married men were polygamous in 1961, and over 52% of the married women were married to polygamous husbands, the corresponding percentages of polygamously married men in Togo (rural survey), Guinea, Mali (Haute Vallée) being 37%, 35%, and 43% respectively. Of the three countries for which data are available on distribution of married women by monogamy or polygamy, the Congo (Léo.) recorded in 1955-57 that 31% of the married women were married to polygamous husbands, the corresponding percentages for Senegal (Dakar only) and Dahomey being 30% and 52% respectively.

33. Among the North African countries, data are available only for the Sudan and the United Arab Republic (Egypt). The 1955/56 Sudan census showed that about 16% of the total number of "married males over puberty and with wives" were polygamous, while in the UAR (Egypt), only some 4% of the total of "married Moslem males" had more than one wife in 1960. Data for East African countries are lacking except for Tanzania, where the 1957 sample census of Tanganyika showed that about 21% of the "adult males" (aged 16 years and over) with wives were polygamously married.

PROBLEMS OF STATISTICAL MEASUREMENT:

34. In the following paragraphs on problems of definition, classification and statistical measurement, what applies to population censuses and demographic surveys would perforce apply to civil registration. At present, registration of vital events, in particular that of marriages and divorces, is not generally enforced in most African countries. The problems of registration relate to completeness of coverage, timeliness of data, etc., apart from the usual definitional and classificatory problems. The paper does not go into the question of registration because of the difficulties at present prevailing in the African region.

35. As evident from the foregoing paragraphs on marriage practice and polygamy, a number of problems pose themselves which render classification and definition difficult if not impossible in some cases. First and foremost, the classification of marital status categories in general. Due to the relative instability of marriages in certain parts of Africa, and customary practices of varied forms of marriage, in particular, consensual unions, it is sometimes impossible to state clearly what a person's marital status is in individual cases. Roberts & Tanner in their localized study in an area of low fertility in north-east Tanganyika, 1957/58, observed that "the conjugal condition cannot be specified in categories more detailed than 'currently married' and 'currently not married', for it is impossible to distinguish their sub-divisions. The latter include the divorced, widowed, and not yet married. The married category includes those practising any of the seven different types of marriage observable in the area, together with the participants in common-law unions."^{1/} Although this reference pertained to a particular and tiny area of one African country only, nevertheless it indicates the problems of classification that may exist in other parts of Africa as well. This is especially important, as countries may adopt different practices and

1/ D.F. Roberts & R.E.S. Tanner, A Demographic Study in an Area of Low Fertility in North-east Tanganyika, Population Studies, Vol. XIII, No. 1, July 1959, p. 64.

definitions for the same marital status categories such that international comparability of the resultant statistics would be seriously impaired.

36. Polygamy poses statistical problems in the following ways:

(a) The definition of the household: Should polygamous households with a number of wives and their respective children be counted as one household or several households? An international recommendation seems to take the line that in the case of a polygamous union, it should be counted as one household: "if the members share the principal meals and generally are regarded as one unit, the various housing units may be considered as separate sleeping quarters since the numbers of the group household sleep apart but eat together."^{1/} If they also eat separately, they may be considered separate households and steps must be taken to avoid over-counting of the husband who lives with different wives at different periods.

In the post-enumeration survey of Ghana following its 1960 census, however, a different approach seems to have been adopted, namely,

"If in a house or compound, a man has several wives, with each wife and her children occupying their own set of rooms in the house, and the man eats successively with each of his wives, the whole house should be treated as one household."^{2/}

(b) Marital status of the husband: In case of divorce of one of a polygamous husband's wives, the marital status of the husband would remain unchanged although the wife's status would be changed from "married" to "divorced". Similarly, in case of death of the husband, a number of widows would result.

(c) New family units: with polygamous husbands taking on additional wives the marriage may or may not give rise to the formation of additional family units, and this would have a bearing on the number of "consumer-units" and such other criteria related to market research for the newly married, demand analysis, etc.

^{1/} Handbook of Household Surveys - A Practical Guide for Inquiries on Levels of Living (United Nations publication: Sales NO. 64.XVII.13), p. 12.

^{2/} Instructions to Enumerators for Post-enumeration Survey, Ghana, 1960.

37. Other complications would occur in the following marriage practices:

"Secondary marriages" referred to in paragraph 19 might have the effect of double-counting, as both the primary and the secondary husband would be counted as "married" in status (to the same woman), even though there would be a separation in fact, possibly only temporary, between the woman and her primary husband.

38. Theoretically no problems would be encountered in the type of marriage, known as marriage by exchange, and the type where the cattle payments ("bride-price") received for a sister is used in obtaining a wife for a brother. In both cases the "true" divorce rates as related to the number of marriages would be unduly inflated, on account of the disrupting effect of one marriage on the other.

39. With "leviratic" marriages, the different statistical treatment accorded to widows inherited in different countries would give rise to problems of international comparability. As widows inherited are still considered to be legally married to their deceased husbands (i.e. no re-marriage), the inheriting brother or near relative of the deceased would in some countries be considered as not "married".

40. De facto (or consensual) unions naturally give rise to additional problems:

(a) Where de facto unions are singled out as a separate sub-category of the "married" in a census or sample survey, the possibility of significant under-statement of this type of union cannot be ruled out;

(b) Where stable de facto unions are included in the category "married" while dissolution of the same unions are disregarded and excluded from the divorce statistics (as in the 1955-57 Demographic Survey of the Congo (Léop.)), the net effect would be an under-statement of the divorce rates.

COUNTRY PRACTICES IN POPULATION CENSUSES AND DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEYS:

41. A study of country practices in population censuses and demographic surveys conducted during the period 1955-64 in Africa gives the following results:

Summary of population censuses and demographic sample surveys in Africa, 1954-1964 *

Total number of countries covered	39
Of which: no information collected on marital status	12
Of the remaining 27 countries where marital status information was included:	
(a) "separated" shown as separate category	5
(b) "separated & divorced" grouped together	1
(c) "Widowed & divorced" grouped together	1
(d) "Marital status not stated" shown as separate category	12
(e) Number of wives and/or ranking of wife (polygamy) ...	18
(f) Type of marriage ceremony	6
(g) Consensual union	11
(h) Age at first marriage	4
(i) Number of marriages contracted	7
(j) Duration of present marriage	1
(k) Duration of married life	1
(l) Number of divorces (for women)	1

* For list of countries see the following Appendices:

Appendix III. Type of data collected on marital status
in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1954-64.

Appendix IV. Additional questions included or data
collected on marital condition in censuses
or surveys in Africa, 1955-64.

42. On the minimum age limit to be used for marital status statistics tabulations, the international recommendations have by and large been observed. The majority of the countries listed used 14 or 15 years of age as the minimum age for such tabulations (See Appendix V for detailed country information), the principal variants being:

Liberia: 10 years (1962 census);

Sudan: Over puberty (1955/56 census),
11 years (Census of Wadi Halfa, 1960);

South Africa: No minimum age specified in questionnaires (1960 Census
of Indigenous and non-indigenous populations);

UAR (Egypt): 16 years & over for females, and 18 years & over for males.

43. On the definitions of terms used, only 18 countries out of the total of 27 which collected marital status statistics in the censuses or surveys took the trouble to define terms used, and one additional country did it indirectly in its statistical reports. (See Appendix I for detailed country definitions of marital status categories). The general attitude toward marital status statistics collection seems to be best illustrated by the instructions to enumerators issued in the case of Ethiopia and Ghana for their respective post-enumeration surveys held in 1961 and 1960:

Ethiopia: Under definition of "married": "In general, if a person claims to be married, you should accept his or her word. If you express doubts, or enquire too much, you may embarrass the informant and lose his co-operation."

Ghana: Under "marital status": "In general your guide as to who is 'married' or not will simply be what the respondent tells you."

44. The internationally recommended definitions of "widowed" and "divorced" seem to have been followed throughout by the countries concerned, excepting the Congo (Leopoldville), where in the Demographic Survey of 1955-57, separation, widowhood and divorce were made contingent on the legal marriage. Consequently, dissolution of stable de facto unions was not considered as divorce nor separation. In some countries at least, the demarcation line between divorce and a separation was so difficult to draw that the category "divorced or separated" had to be used instead.

45. Statistical treatment of "inherited widows" is of theoretical interest as well as of statistical importance in certain countries. Widows accounted for an average of well over 10% of the total number of females aged 14 years and over in 14 selected African countries, based on their respective census or sample survey results. Country practices in this respect differ. However, the coverage of the ground is rather poor

as information is lacking for the majority of countries where the custom of widow inheritance is known to exist. Only four countries indicated their methods of classifying inherited widows, as follows:

Congo (Brazzaville): (Census of Pointe-Noire, 1958): When widows were inherited, they were counted as re-married.

Congo (Leopoldville): (Demographic Survey, 1955-57): Inherited widows were counted as married once there was effective cohabitation.

Guinea (Demographic Survey, 1954-55): Included in "married" category only those inherited widows who had given birth to at least one child by their new husband.

Sudan (1955-56 census): The "married" category included widowed, divorced, and widows inherited.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

46. In the light of the conceptual and methodological problems reviewed in the paper, the following recommendations are suggested for the consideration of the Working Group:

(a) The existing international recommendations on marital status categories and their definitions be used as a framework within which further refinement or modification may be made as necessary;

(b) A simple question on marital status (by the main categories together with their definitions) be included in a general census questionnaire;

(c) In view of the different stages of statistical development reached by individual countries, their particular needs for detailed data on marital status may best be met by intensive sample surveys, which may include such questions as type of marriage ceremony, age at first marriage, duration of marriage, number of marriages contracted, number of divorces, etc.

(d) In as much as polygamy is still being practised to a greater or lesser extent in various regions of Africa, such straight forward questions as "the number of wives" of a married man may profitably be included in either a census or a sample inquiry;

(e) Stable de facto unions should be regarded as a distinct sub-category of the "married" only where it is believed, on the basis of pre-tests or pilot studies, that reliable information thereon can be obtained; otherwise, they had better be merged in the "married" category without being collected separately. Dissolutions of stable de facto unions should logically be regarded as divorces or separations;

(f) Widows inherited should be counted as re-married only where effective cohabitation is established, with their new inheriting husbands correspondingly counted as "married". Where there is no cohabitation, such women should be counted as still widowed.

(g) While full recognition is given to the difficulties of obtaining current statistics of marriage and divorce in the region, it is nevertheless recommended that countries which have the resources to do so, should seek to introduce a system of registration (or to expand and improve an existing one), taking into account the international recommendations.

Appendix I. Definitions and coverage of marital status categories in selected countries of Africa;

Appendix II. Types of data collected on marital status in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1955-64;

Appendix III. Additional questions asked or data collected on marital condition in censuses and surveys in Africa, 1955-64;

Appendix I. Definitions and coverage of marital status categories
in selected countries of Africa

(Source: Census or Surveys reports, or instructions to enumerators
therefore issued by the countries concerned)

Country	Type of data	Year	Definitions and coverage
1. Congo (Leopoldville)	S	1955-57	<p>1. "Married" includes two types of marriages:</p> <p>(a) Regular marriage: following the customary procedure of marriage, recognized by law and consecrated by payment of a dot.</p> <p>(b) "De facto unions": Including stable <u>de facto</u> unions but excluding unstable concubinage. Trial marriages (mariages à l'essai), tolerated and even encouraged in certain tribes, are included here.</p> <p>2. Other states of marriage (separation, divorce, widowhood, etc.) are considered in relation to the <u>legal</u> marriage. Therefore, no divorce or widowhood unless the marriage had been regularly established. Dissolution of <u>de facto</u> unions are not taken into account.</p> <p>3. "Inherited widows" are included in "married" once effective cohabitation was started.</p>
2. Ethiopia Addis Ababa	S	1961	<p>1. Never married: never married in any form, whether civil, religious, or by custom.</p> <p>2. Married and living together: means <u>married now, with the spouse still living, and with no divorce or separation.</u></p> <p>3. Widowed: applies to a person who is widowed now, and not remarried.</p> <p>4. Divorced or separated: applies where</p>

Appendix I. Definitions and coverage of marital status categories in selected countries of Africa (continued)

Country	Type of data	Year	Definitions and coverage
Ethiopia (cont'd)			a person has been separated, either legally or by agreement with the husband or wife, and has not remarried since. In order to be entered as such, the person should have stated that he or she regards the separation as permanent, even if it is not a legal separation.
3. Ghana	S	1960	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never married: never at one time or another entered into any marital union, irrespective of form or type of marriage, e.g. customary, Moslem rites, Christian rites, etc. 2. Married*: All persons who have married partners including those who are married but living apart from their partners. 3. Consensually married: "Mutual consent", for couples who claim to be married, but have not performed any ceremony and are simply living together. 4. Divorced: Persons who have formally (either in court or customarily) annulled their marriages or put off their partners. 5. Widowed: Persons who have lost their marriage partners through death and have not remarried.
4. Mauritius	C	1962	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Married: legally or religiously married. 2. Consensually married: not single, and never married civilly or religiously.

* A marriage is defined in the Post-Enumeration Survey of Ghana, 1960, as: A union between a man and a woman for which customary or legally recognized rites or ceremonies have been performed. The type of marriage ceremony included, (1) customary only, (2) customary and ordinance, (3) Church and ordinance, and (4) Other, which included Church marriages, Moslem rites marriages, consensual unions, etc.

Appendix I. Definitions and coverage of marital status categories
in selected countries of Africa (continued)

Country	Type of data	Year	Definitions and coverage
5. South Africa: Indigenous P	C	1960	1. "Married": Includes marriages performed according to civil or religious ceremonies (i.e. by magistrate, Bantu Commissioner or clergyman), Bantu law or custom (Lobola), or both Lobola and civil or religious, and apparently, excludes <u>de facto</u> unions.
6. Sudan: Wadi Halfa	C	1960	1. Single: A person never married. 2. Married: Where a person has married, and wife and husband are alive. 3. Widowed: Where a person has married but her husband or his wife has died, and no new marriage yet. 4. Divorced: Applies where a person has married, but the marriage has been broken up and no new marriage yet.
7. Togo: Urban Census	C	1958-60	1. Single: A person never married. 2. Married: A polygamous man, who has divorced one of his wives, is to be registered as "married" and not as "divorced".
8. UAR (Egypt)	C	1960	1. Never married: Persons who are not married at present and never been married before. 2. Married: Persons who are married as of the census night. 3. Divorced: For males or females who have been divorced and are not remarried. 4. Widowed: A person whose spouse died and who has not remarried.

9. Fed. of Rhodesia
and Nyasaland 6 1961
(non-indigenous
population)

1. Married: Persons, who though not legally married, have set up a household and are living as man and wife, may record themselves, for census purposes, as married.
2. Separated: Persons, though married, not living together as man and wife as well as legally separated persons, who are not divorced. Married persons who are only temporarily separated should be entered as "married".

Appendix II. Type of data tabulated on marital status in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1954-1964
(S=Single, M=married, W=widowed, D=divorced, Sep.=separated)

COUNTRY	Type of inquiry (C=census S=sample)	Year	S	M	W	D	Sep.	Polygamy	M.S. not stated
1. Algeria	C	1954	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
2. Bechuanaland	C	1963	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Basutoland	C	1956	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Cameroun:									
Douala	C	1955-56	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Yaoundé	C	1957	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Ebolowa	C	1958	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Mbalmayo	C	1956	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
5. Central African Republic:									
Centre-Oubangui	S	1959	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
Bangui	C	1955-56	X	X	-	-	-	-	X
6. Comores	C	1958	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Congo (Brazzaville):									
Whole country except									
Brazzaville and									
Pointe Noire	S	1960-61	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Brazzaville	C	1961	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Pointe Noire	C	1958	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
8. Congo (Léopoldville)	S	1955-57	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
9. Dahomey	S	1961	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
10. Ethiopia:									
Addis Ababa	S ^{3/}	1961	X	X	X	X	←→	-	X
11. Gabon:									
Libreville	C	1960-61	X	X ^{2/}	X	X	-	X	-
12. Ghana	S ^{3/}	1960	X	X	X	X	-	X	-

Appendix II. Type of data tabulated on marital status in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1954-1964

(Continued)

(S=Single, M=married, W=widowed, D=divorced, Sep.=separated)

COUNTRY	Type of inquiry (C-census S-sample)	Year	S	M	W	D	Sep.	Polygamy	M.S. Not stated
13. Guinea: Sample inquiry Konkoure	S	1954-55 1957	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
14. Ivory Coast: Abidjan Subdivision of Bongouanou Abangorou, Aboville, etc. Bouake	C	1955-56	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
15. Kenya	C	1956-57 1958	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
16. Liberia	C	1962	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17. Libya	C	1962	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
18. Madagascar	S	1964	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
19. Mali Central Nigerian Delta Bamako	S	1959	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
20. Mauritius	S	1956-58	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
21. Morocco	C	1960	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
22. Mozambique: Indigenous Non-Indigenous	C	1962	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
23. Niger	C	1960	X	X	X	X	-	-	-
24. Nigeria	S	1959-60 1963	X	X	X	X	-	X	X

Appendix II. Type of data tabulated on marital status in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1954-64

(Continued)

(S=Single, M=married, W=widowed, D=divorced, Sep.=separated)

	COUNTRY	Type of inquiry (C=census S=sample)	Year	S	M	W	D	Sep.	Polygamy	M.S. not stated
25.	Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Federation of): Non-Indigenous	C	1961	X	X	X	X	X	-	-
26.	Rhodesia: Indigenous	C	1962	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27.	Senegal: Dakar	S	1955	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
28.	Seychelles	C	1960	X	X	X	X	-	-	X
29.	Sierra Leone	C	1964	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30.	South Africa: Indigenous P. Non-indigenous P.	C C	1960 1960	X X	X X	X X	X X	- -	- -	- -
31.	Sudan: Whole country Wadi Halfa	C C	1955-56 1960	X X	X ^{5/} X	- X	- X	- -	X -	- -
32.	Swaziland	C	1956	X	X	X	X	-	-	X
33.	Tanzania: Tanganyika Zanzibar	C C	1957 1958	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	X -	- -
34.	Togo Urban Census Rural Survey	C S	1958-60 1958-60	X X	X X	X X	X X	- -	X X	- -
35.	Tunisia	C	1956	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
36.	Uganda	C	1959	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
37.	UAR (Egypt)	C	1960	X	X	X	X	-	X	X

Appendix II. Type of data tabulated on marital status in censuses or surveys in Africa, 1954-64

(continued)

(Single, W-married, W-widowed, D-divorced, Sep.=separated)

[illegible]

1955-1964

COUNTRY	Type of inquiry (C=census, S=sample)	Year	Age at marriage (women)	No. of marriages (women)	Duration of marriage (women)	Number of divorces (women)	No. of wives or rank of wife	Type of marriage ceremony	Types of marriage					
									Con- sen- sual	Non- Customary	Reli- gious	Cus- to- mary		
1. Cameroun:														
Douala	C	1955-56	-	-	-	-	X	-						
Yaounde	C	1957	-	-	-	-	X	-						
Ebolowa	C	1958	-	-	-	-	X	-						
Mbalmayo	C	1956	-	-	-	-	X	-						
Subdivision														
2. Central African Rep.														
Centre-Oubangui	S	1959	X	X	-	-	X	-		X				
3. Congo (Brazzaville)														
Whole country														
except Brazzaville	S	1960-61	X	X	-	X	-	X						
and Pointe Noire														
Brazzaville	C	1961	-	X	-	-	X	-						
Pointe Noire	C	1958	X	X	-	X	X	-		X				X
4. Congo (Leopoldville)	S	1955-57	-	-	-	-	X	-						X
5. Gabon:														
Libreville	C	1960-61	-	-	-	-	X	-		X ²			X ²	X ²
6. Ghana	S	1960	-	-	-	-	X	-		X ²			X ²	X ²
7. Guinea:														
Whole country	S	1954-55	-	-	X	-	-	X		X			-	X
Konkoure	S	1957	-	-	-	-	-	-		-			-	-
8. Ivory Coast:														
Abidjan	C	1955	X	X	-	-	X	-		-			-	-
Subdivision of														
Bongouanou	S	1955-56	X	X	-	-	X	-		-			-	-
Abengorou, Aberville														
etc.	C	1956-57	-	-	-	-	-	-		-			-	-

Appendix III. Additional questions asked or data collected on marital conditions in census and survey in Africa
1955-1964 (continued)

COUNTRY	Type of inquiry (C=census) (S=sample)	Year	Age at 1st marriage (women)	No. of marriages (women)	Duration of marriage (women)	Number of divorces (women)	No. of wives or rank of wife	Type of marriage ceremony	Types of marriage		
									Con- sensual	Non- customary Ci-Reli vili- gious	Customary
Ivory Coast (cont'd) Bouake	C	1958	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Libya	C	1964	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Mali Central Nigerian Delta Bamako	S	1956-58 1960	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Mauritius	C	1962	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-
Mozambique: 3/ Indigenous	C	1960	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Niger	S	1959-60	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Senegal: Dakar	S	1955	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
South Africa: Indigenous P. Non-indigenous P.	C	1960 1960	- X	- X	- X ^{5/}	- -	- -	Z -	X ^{4/} -	X -	X -
Sudan: Whole country	C	1955-56	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Swaziland	C	1956	-	-	-	-	-	X	X ^{4/}	X	X
Tanzania: Tanganyika	S	1957	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Togo: Urban Census Rural Survey	C S	1958-60 1958-60	- -	- -	- -	- -	X X	- -	X -	- -	- -

Appendix III. Additional questions asked of data collected on marital conditions in census and survey in Africa
1955-1964 (Continued)

COUNTRY	Type of inquiry (C=census; S=survey)	Year	Age at first marriage (men) (women)	No. of marriages (men) (women)	Duration of marriage (years) (years)	Number of divorces (men) (women)	No. of wives or husbands of wife	Type of marriage ceremony	Types of marriage Ceremonial Non- ceremonial Religious Customary	Customary
20. Upper Volta	C	1960	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	-
21. Upper Volta: Ouagadougou	C	1960-61	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-

- a/ Referring to marriages with rites of organized religions, e.g. Christianity, Islam, etc.
- b/ The classification used being: customary only; customary and ordinance; Church and ordinance; other (e.g. Church only; Moslem rites; customary and Moslem; "Mutual consent", etc.)
- c/ The classification of type of marriage used being:
Kaffirs (catholic); civil; catholic; Protestant; Mohammedan; etc.
- d/ Indicated by the marital status category of "living together" (no formal marriage).
- e/ Referring to duration of married life, including previous marriages, but excluding intervening years.