

# Population Trends

## Morocco

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
Center for International Research

PPT/92-5  
Issued April 1993

Morocco, with an estimated population of over 27 million people in 1992, is the third most populous country in the Arab world and the seventh among all countries in Africa. Morocco tripled its population since 1950 as births exceeded deaths by a substantial margin. However, because of recent declines in fertility, the average annual population growth rate, which was nearly 3 percent during the 1950's, has slowed and is currently estimated at 2.2 percent.

Fertility in Morocco has declined substantially in the past two decades. The total fertility rate was nearly 7 children per woman in 1972. Now estimated at about 4 children per woman, the total fertility rate is over 40 percent lower than the rate in 1972. Both increased use of contraceptive methods and delayed marriage have contributed to the decline in fertility.

Despite the decrease in fertility and population growth rate, Morocco is a demographically young nation with nearly 40 percent of Moroccans under age 15 (figure 1). Also, because of the young age structure and the fertility level, which is above replacement level, Morocco will continue to grow in population size for many years. By the year 2020, with a projected decline in the total fertility rate to 2.2 children per woman, the projected population

would be nearly 44 million. Thus, between now and 2020, Morocco will add over 16 million people, almost double the size of its 1950 population.

Mortality in Morocco has improved substantially. Life expectancy at birth has increased from about 54 years in 1972 to 67 years in 1992. Over the same period, the infant mortality rate has declined by 62 percent, from approximately 152 infant deaths per 1000 births to about 57. As in most countries, women in Morocco live longer than men. In 1992, the estimated life expectancy at birth of women (69 years) exceeds that of men (65 years) by nearly 4 years.

### Contraceptive Prevalence

Morocco has made impressive progress in increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate in the last 13 years. The 1992 Morocco Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) shows that nearly 41 percent of married women of child-bearing age are current users of a contraceptive method (MSP and MI, 1992). In comparison, only 19 percent of married women used contraception in 1979. In the 5 years between 1987 and 1992, the proportion of currently married women using contraception increased by 5 percentage points (figure 2); with modern methods accounting for 90 percent of the increase.

Figure 1.  
**Total Population of Morocco, by Age: 1992 and 2020**

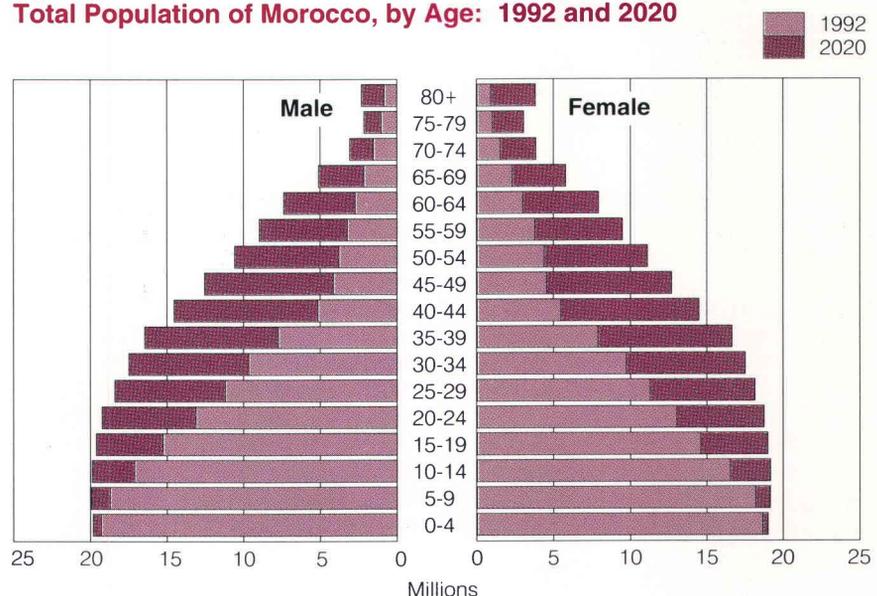
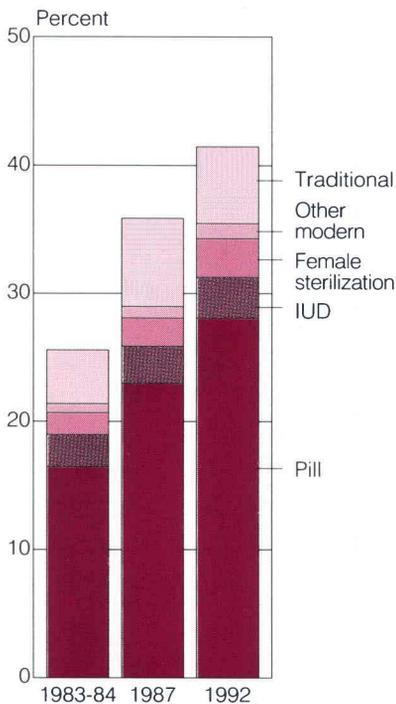


Figure 2.  
**Trends in Current Use of Contraception Among Currently Married Women of Reproductive Age, by Method: 1983-84, 1987, and 1992**



Currently, 86 percent of contraceptive users choose modern methods. An overwhelming majority of married women who are users, 1.2 million out of 1.7 million or 71 percent, use the pill. Another 8 percent rely on the IUD and 7 percent on female sterilization. The number of women relying on the pill for family planning has been increasing at a faster rate than those using any other method (figure 3).

The 1992 MDHS shows that the contraceptive prevalence rate is substantially higher in urban areas (55 percent) than in rural areas (32 percent). The rate increases markedly with increase in the education of married women. Only 36 percent of women with no education are users compared

with 57 percent of women with primary education; the rate was as high as 65 percent for women with secondary or higher education.

The 1992 MDHS suggests that Moroccan women are showing an increased preference for smaller families. Almost 50 percent of married women do not want an additional child and another 24 percent want to wait at least 2 years before having their next child (figure 4). As a result, there exists a substantial unmet need for family planning in Morocco. In 1992, 19.3 percent of married women in reproductive age (over 800 thousand) have an unmet need for family planning; i.e., although fecund, they are not using contraception and wish either to have no more children or to space the next birth. Among those with unmet need, 41 percent are in need of a spacing method, and 59 percent need a long term method. The unmet need is associated with age. For spacing, it is concentrated in younger ages and decreases among older women;

while for limiting, it increases with advancing age (figure 5).

### Literacy

The literacy rate of the Moroccan population has improved over the last two decades (figure 6). In 1990, estimates show that 1 out of every 2 adult Moroccans (age 15 and over) was literate (UNESCO, 1991) compared with 1 in 3 in 1982, and 1 in 5 in 1971. Over the last two decades, the female literacy rate also improved, but it remains substantially below the rate for males. In 1990, only 38 percent of adult females were estimated to be literate compared with over 61 percent of adult males.

### Urbanization

Morocco is becoming increasingly urbanized. In 1950, 26 percent of its population was urban; in 1990, nearly 46 percent was urban (United Nations 1992; see figure 7). In 1950, about 2.4 million people lived in urban areas. Now, more than five times as many people (or nearly 13 million) live in urban areas. By 2020, the urban population will grow by an addi-

Figure 3.  
**Trends in Estimated Number of Currently Married Women Using Contraception, by Method: 1983 to 1992**

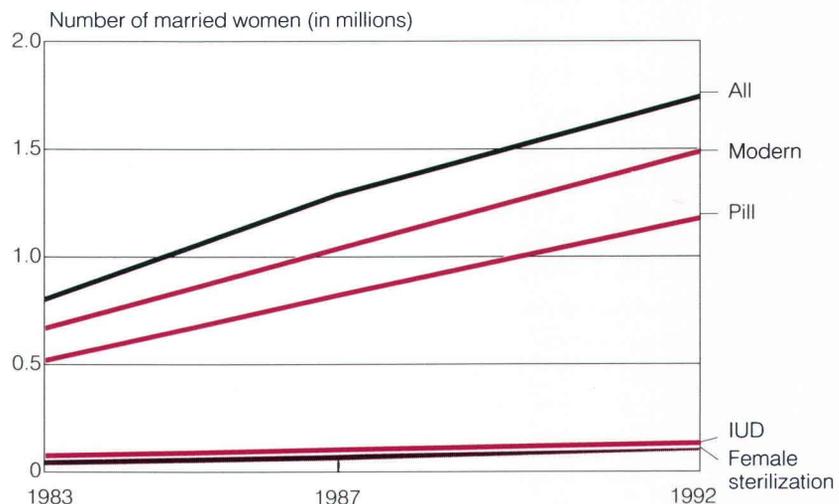
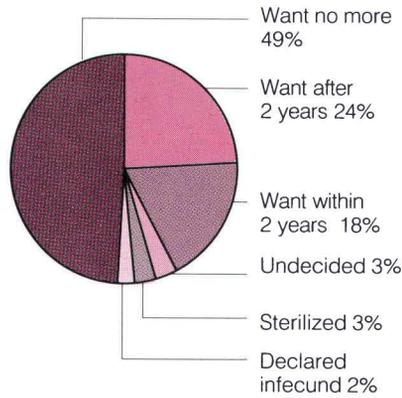


Figure 4.  
**Fertility Preferences of Currently Married Women Age 15 to 49: 1992**



tional 15 million, more than the entire 1965 population of Morocco.

**Population Composition**

Morocco is a demographically young nation with 60 percent of Moroccans under age 25 and 40 percent under age 15. As a result of the past and projected decline in fertility of women, these proportions will decline in the future. Still, the number of children under 15, currently about 11 million, will continue to increase, albeit slowly, to nearly 12 million by 2020. The working age population will grow faster than the total population and nearly double from the current 15 million to nearly 29 million in 2020. During the same period, the number of women of reproductive age will increase from under 7 million to over 11 million.

**References**

Morocco Ministere de la Sante Publique (MSP). 1984. *Enquete Nationale Sur la Fecondite et la, Rapport National*. Rabat.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1985. *Planification Familiale Fecondite et Sante Familiale Au Maroc 1983-84*. Rabat.

Morocco Ministere de la Sante Publique and Institute for Resource Development. (MSP and IRD). 1989. *Enquete Nationale sur la Planification et la Sante de la Population au Maroc (ENPS) 1987*. Rabat.

Morocco Ministere de la Sante Publique and Macro International Inc. (MSP and MI). 1992. *Enquete Nationale Sur la Population et la Sante Maroc 1992, Rapport Preliminaire*. Rabat.

United Nations. 1992 (forthcoming). *World Urbanization Prospects*. New York.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 1991. *Statistical Yearbook 1991*. Paris.

This report was prepared by Arjun Adlakha, with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development. More detailed information can be obtained on request from the Chief, Center for International Research, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington DC 20233-3700.

Figure 5.  
**Unmet Need for Family Planning Among Currently Married Women, by Age: 1992**

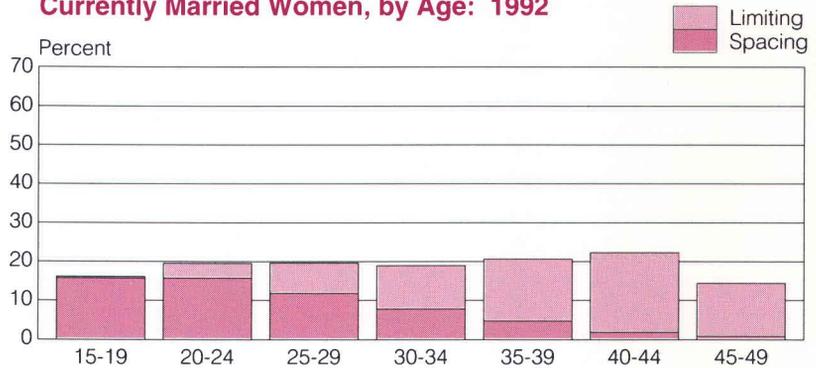


Figure 6.  
**Literacy Rate Among Persons Age 15 Years and Over, by Sex: 1971, 1982, and 1990**

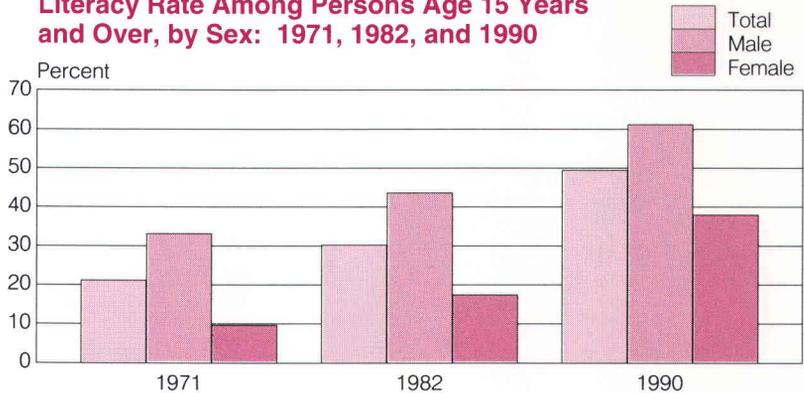


Figure 7.  
**Trend in Urbanization: 1950 to 2020**

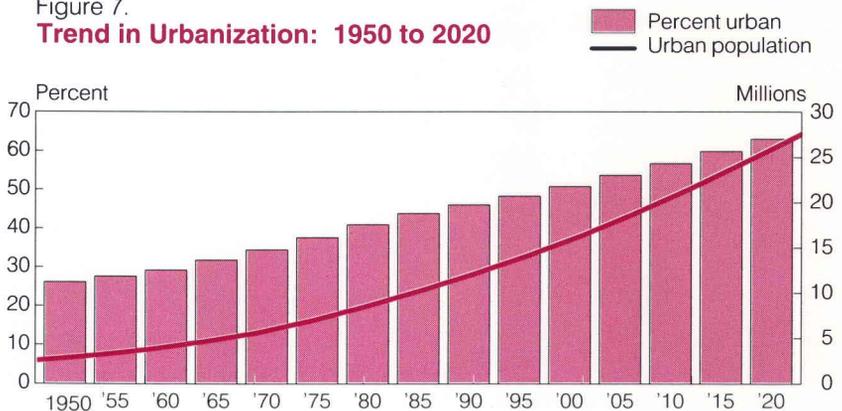


Table 1.  
**Population Indicators for Morocco:  
1982 to 2020**  
(Population in thousands)

Indicator	1982	1990	1992	2000	2020
<b>POPULATION</b>					
Total country . . .	21,433	26,164	27,355	32,189	43,701
Urban . . . . .	9,036	12,062	12,862	16,384	27,619
Rural . . . . .	12,397	14,102	14,493	15,805	16,082
<b>Male, total country</b>					
All ages . . . . .	10,729	13,090	13,682	16,083	21,777
0 to 14 . . . . .	4,671	5,404	5,518	5,786	5,970
6 to 12 . . . . .	2,052	2,463	2,545	2,667	2,794
13 to 18 . . . . .	1,454	1,813	1,904	2,211	2,368
15 to 44 . . . . .	4,410	5,807	6,218	7,862	10,587
15 to 49 . . . . .	4,773	6,213	6,634	8,500	11,844
15 to 64 . . . . .	5,583	7,157	7,610	9,617	14,539
65+ . . . . .	475	529	554	680	1,268
<b>Female, total country</b>					
All ages . . . . .	10,705	13,075	13,672	16,106	21,924
0 to 14 . . . . .	4,508	5,214	5,338	5,599	5,728
6 to 12 . . . . .	1,981	2,381	2,471	2,587	2,684
13 to 18 . . . . .	1,449	1,736	1,816	2,155	2,285
15 to 44 . . . . .	4,536	5,817	6,193	7,771	10,442
15 to 49 . . . . .	4,946	6,270	6,647	8,431	11,708
15 to 64 . . . . .	5,752	7,331	7,764	9,713	14,552
65+ . . . . .	444	530	570	794	1,644
<b>Married females</b>					
15 to 49 . . . . .	3,052	3,935	4,196	5,413	7,982
15 to 19 . . . . .	196	236	247	298	321
20 to 24 . . . . .	553	678	712	849	1,024
25 to 29 . . . . .	635	822	863	1,045	1,389
30 to 34 . . . . .	502	789	838	1,030	1,510
35 to 39 . . . . .	432	618	700	912	1,478
40 to 44 . . . . .	401	424	466	742	1,231
45 to 49 . . . . .	333	368	370	537	1,029
<b>DEPENDENCY RATIO</b>					
Both sexes . . . . .	89.1	80.6	77.9	66.5	50.2
<b>LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)</b>					
Both sexes . . . . .	59.4	65.4	66.8	71.8	79.2
Male . . . . .	58.4	63.8	65.1	69.6	76.4
Female . . . . .	60.5	67.1	68.6	74.1	82.1
<b>INFANT MORTALITY RATE (per 1,000 births)</b>					
Both sexes . . . . .	92.4	64.6	57.1	32.9	9.9
Male . . . . .	98.5	70.0	62.3	37.1	11.6
Female . . . . .	85.9	59.0	51.7	28.6	8.1
<b>TOTAL FERTILITY RATE</b>					
Fertility rate per woman	5.6	4.4	4.1	3.1	2.2

Note: Dependency ratio is the ratio of persons under age 15 and over age 65 per 100 of those age 15 to 64 years.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Center for International Research, International Data Base.

Table 2.  
**Contraceptive Prevalence Among Married  
Women 15 to 49 Years of Age, by Method:  
Selected Years**

Method	Percent current users			Percent distribution of users		
	1983-84	1987	1992	1983-84	1987	1992
All . . . . .	25.5	35.9	41.5	100	100	100
Pill . . . . .	16.5	23.0	28.1	65	64	68
Condom . . . . .	0.4	0.5	0.9	2	1	2
IUD . . . . .	2.5	2.9	3.2	10	8	8
Female sterilization . . . . .	1.7	2.2	3.0	7	6	7
Other modern . . . . .	0.3	0.4	0.3	1	1	1
Traditional . . . . .	4.2	6.9	6.0	17	19	14

CHILDLESS WOMEN: 1992  
Percent of ever-married women  
age 45 to 49 . . . . . 3.8

AVERAGE DURATION OF  
POSTPARTUM INFECUNDABILITY: 1992  
Number of months . . . . . 7.8

Source: MSP, 1985, table 5.2.1; MSP & IRD, 1989, table 4.7; MSP & MI, 1992, table 6.

Table 3.  
**Average Age of  
Users of Selected  
Methods: 1992**  
(Married women age  
15 to 49)

Method	Average age
Pill . . . . .	32.8
Condom . . . . .	35.1
IUD . . . . .	34.7
Female sterilization* . . . . .	32.2
Traditional . . . . .	35.9

Note: Average age of users is calculated at the U.S. Bureau of the Census using the 1992 MDHS data on contraceptive prevalence by age.

\*Median age at which women adopted sterilization.

Source: MSP & MI, 1992, table 6.

Table 4.  
**Fertility Rates**  
(Per 1,000 women)

Age	1984	1987	1992
15 to 19 . . . . .	68	49	44
20 to 24 . . . . .	218	183	142
25 to 29 . . . . .	260	233	196
30 to 34 . . . . .	215	210	182
35 to 39 . . . . .	168	161	138
40 to 44 . . . . .	92	87	81
45 to 49 . . . . .	38	44	36
Total fertility rate per woman	5.3	4.8	4.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Center for International Research, International Data Base.