Laggards in the Global Fertility Transition

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Outline

• Introduction: the end of the fertility transition
• Timing of peak fertility and the pace of fertility transition
• The laggards (last seven countries)
• Fertility in the laggard countries, 1950-2015
  – Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Mali, Niger, Somalia
  – Comparison with all developing countries and all of sub-Saharan Africa
• Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of laggard countries
• Prospects for fertility decline in the laggard countries
The end of the fertility transition

• Fertility transition started in France in 1790s
• > 200 years on it is still incomplete
Quinquennium of peak fertility by world region

Weighted by population size

Quinquennium of peak fertility by world region

- Latin America
- Asia
- Northern Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Percentage of region's population

Quinquennium

1950-1955
1955-1960
1960-1965
1965-1970
1970-1975
1975-1980
1980-1985
1985-1990
1990-1995
1995-2000
Pace of fertility decline in world regions

![Graph showing the pace of fertility decline in different world regions. The graph illustrates the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) as a percentage of value at start, over years since the start of transition, for SSA (blue), NA (red), ASIA (grey), and LAC (yellow).]
Total fertility rate in sub-Saharan Africa
1984-2016

• Population weighted averages from DHS data
• Interpolated between DHSs for each country
Identification of the laggards

• Paper focuses on the 7 countries that are the last in the world to initiate fertility transition
• Fertility has not declined by 10% since its peak (Democratic Republic of the Congo and Niger)
• Fertility declined by 10% from its peak only in 2010-2015 (Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Somalia and The Gambia)
Total fertility rates in 1950-1955, 2010-2015, and at peak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>1995-2000</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>1990-2000(^a)</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>1985-1990</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>1975-1980</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>1970-1995(^b)</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>1980-1985</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>1995-2000</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) The TFR estimates were identical for 1990-95 and 1995-2000.

\(^b\) The estimated peak TFR was constant for 25 years.
Fertility history in the laggards

- Larger than average increases in fertility before the peak in some countries (21% in Chad, 20% in The Gambia)
- Duration of pre-transitional rise in fertility was longer than elsewhere
- Declines from peak fertility have been very slow (even compared with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa) and continue to be so

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>TFR 2010-2015</th>
<th>TFR 2018 World Population Data Sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total fertility rates, 1950-1955 to 2010-2015
Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of laggard countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Average of laggard countries (excl. Somalia)</th>
<th>Average of rest of sub-Saharan Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of schooling for women</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women with no education</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality per 1,000 births</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean ideal number of children</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per head (excluding Equatorial Guinea)</td>
<td>$1,174</td>
<td>$3,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in GDP per head in five years before most recent DHS</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age at first marriage</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage using modern contraception</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of laggard countries

• Compared to elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, these countries typically have
  – lower women’s schooling
  – higher infant and child mortality
  – higher ideal number of children
  – lower real GDP/capita
  – more frequent and earlier entry into union
  – much lower use of modern contraception
  – fertility that on average, was 35 percent higher

• Also have high percentage Muslim, though care needed in interpretation of this

• Some, *but not all*, have a history of conflict
Discussion points

• Laggard countries are not qualitatively different from countries with earlier decline
  – not a different category of country
  – they each have a combination of characteristics which is unfavourable to fertility decline

• Prospects for rapid fertility decline in these seven countries
  – based on combinations of demographic and socio-economic covariates, do not look good
  – but United Nations projections show declining fertility
Further analysis

• Analysis so far at the country level
• Many countries have ‘laggard regions’ – some are large (e.g. north-east and north-west Nigeria, TFRs of 6.3 and 6.7 in 2013 DHS)
• Implications for future population growth in Africa and globally
Thank you for listening

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