

## COMMENTARY

## FAMILY SIZE, 1961-71

The tables cover a total of 502,853 married women with a corresponding total of 1,733,715 children born alive. This gives an overall average of 345 children per 100 families as compared with the overall average figure of 353 for the corresponding 1961 analysis. However, the difference between averages derived in this way reflects not only changes in specific fertility levels but also changes in structure which affect average fertility levels, such as age of wife at marriage, duration of marriage, etc. Comparisons must therefore be made at a more detailed level. This is done in Table A which shows the average number of children born per 100 families in each duration of marriage group by age group of wife at marriage.

**TABLE A:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN PER 100 FAMILIES IN EACH DURATION OF MARRIAGE BY AGE GROUP OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE - 1961 AND 1971.**

Duration of marriage (in years)		Age group of wife at marriage							
		All Ages	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 and over
0 - 4	1961	107 (109)	136	117	112	103	72	29	2
	1971	105	131	108	104	102	72	31	4
5 - 9	1961	263 (278)	341	303	281	242	144	39	2
	1971	265	318	282	275	246	152	47	5
10-14	1961	350 (366)	487	425	373	291	152	41	6
	1971	356	453	402	374	297	165	50	6
15-19	1961	403 (404)	576	499	410	300	160	49	5
	1971	403	575	488	414	309	162	48	5
20-24	1961	416 (418)	636	527	412	298	161	50	9
	1971	424	654	527	421	304	172	48	5
25-29	1961	438 (443)	672	547	419	304	177	60	16
	1971	440	662	536	421	314	173	61	9
30-34	1961	457 (456)	686	555	434	327	195	96	31
	1971	437	658	530	420	411	183	64	11
35-39	1961	484 (490)	689	574	463	350	219	90	47
	1971	460	670	548	422	320	195	83	52
40-44	1961	528 (530)	703	602	494	381	244	125	48
	1971	489	688	561	437	344	214	144	85
45 and over	1961	581 (592)	727	647	524	418	298	175	33
	1971	553	701	600	482	392	296	254	43*
All Durations	1961	353 (354)	532 (484)	422 (395)	353 (358)	273 (284)	154 (160)	50 (50)	7 (6)
	1971	345	471	378	352	283	161	51	6

\*Based on 10 families or less.

NOTE - Standardised rates for 1961 are shown in brackets. For a particular duration group the 1961 fertility rate in each age group was multiplied by the number of married women in the corresponding duration and age group in 1971, the products aggregated for all ages and divided by the number of married women in the duration group in 1971. For duration 0-4 years figures for separate single years of duration were used in deriving standardised rates. The standardised rates for the age groups were found in a similar manner.

In general, the average rates for 1971 are below the 1961 levels. For example, for every 100 marriages in the five years preceding the 1971 Census, where the bride was in the 20-24 year age group, the average number of children born was 108 compared with the corresponding 1961 rate of 117; for the 25-29 age-at-marriage group the drop was from 112 in 1961 to 104 in 1971.

Standardised rates for 1961 are also shown in brackets in Table A in the first column for all ages and in the final row for all durations of marriage. These standardised rates show what the corresponding average 1961 rates would have been if the distribution by age of wife at marriage and duration of marriage of married women in 1961 had been the same as in 1971 and thus removes the effect of any changes in this distribution on comparisons between 1961 and 1971.

When the 1961 and 1971 rates for different duration of marriage groups are compared using the standardised rates, decreases in fertility are shown in all except the 20-24 years duration group where there was an increase from 418 to 424. The largest decreases were in the marriages of longest duration with the duration groups 35-39, 40-44 and 45 years and over showing falls of 6.1 percent, 7.7 percent and 6.6 percent respectively. The standardised 1961 rates were higher than the actual 1961 rates for almost every duration group which shows that a comparison by duration of the actual rates understates the 1961-71 changes.

When different age of wife at marriage groups are considered, there were reductions in fertility in the younger groups, those whose age at marriage was under 30 years, while for those married at over this age, fertility showed almost no change. The reductions in the under 20, 20-24 and 25-29 groups were 2.7 percent, 4.3 percent and 1.7 percent respectively. In the case of the groups with age at marriage under 25 the standardised 1961 rates are lower than the actual 1961 rates. The latter rates thus overstate the difference when compared with 1971.

The difference between the actual 1961 rates and those standardised using the 1971 structure are explained by the fact that this (1971) structure reflects rising marriage rates and younger marriage ages.

A comparison between the results of the two Censuses may be made in another way as set out in Table B which shows the distribution in 1961 and 1971 of families in the various duration of marriage groups according to the number of children born. The distribution by number of children in 1961 has also been standardised using the 1971 structure by age of wife at marriage within each duration of marriage group. It thus shows what the distribution by number of children would have been in 1961 if the latter structure had been the same in 1961 as in 1971. Although, as mentioned above, for each duration group there was a decline in average level of fertility, Table B shows there was also a slight decline, in each of the duration of marriage groups from 5-34 years, in the percentage of child-less marriages. However, in the 0-4 years duration of marriage group child-less families formed 34.1 percent of the total in 1971 as compared with 33.6 per cent ten years earlier. In this group the percentage of families with three or more children decreased from 9.0 percent in 1961 to 7.2 percent in 1971.

**TABLE B:- PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES IN 1961 AND 1971 CLASSIFIED BY NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE, 1961 DISTRIBUTION STANDARDISED FOR AGE OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE.**

Number of children born	Duration of marriage (in years)													
	0 - 4		5 - 9		10 - 14		15 - 24		25 - 34		35 and over		All durations	
	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971
0	33.6	34.1	11.3	10.1	11.1	10.3	11.2	10.9	10.4	9.6	8.1	8.5	14.5	14.1
1	34.2	35.6	9.9	9.4	7.7	6.7	8.1	7.4	7.9	7.4	5.8	6.5	12.4	12.3
2	23.1	23.1	21.5	25.8	13.1	13.1	12.2	11.9	11.2	11.9	8.6	9.8	15.0	15.8
3	7.6	6.1	25.4	28.2	16.4	18.8	13.9	13.9	12.5	13.7	9.9	11.8	14.2	15.1
4	1.3	1.0	18.1	16.6	17.0	20.0	14.3	14.8	13.1	14.4	11.6	12.7	12.5	13.1
5	0.1	0.1	8.9	6.8	13.9	14.3	12.0	13.0	11.6	11.9	11.1	11.7	9.6	9.7
6	0.0	0.0	3.6	2.3	9.3	8.6	9.3	9.6	9.7	9.4	11.0	10.6	7.1	6.8
7	-	-	1.1	0.6	5.8	4.4	6.7	6.7	7.2	6.9	8.9	8.0	4.9	4.5
8	-	-	0.3	0.1	3.2	2.2	4.6	4.5	5.4	4.8	7.8	6.2	3.5	3.0
9	-	-	0.1	0.0	1.5	1.0	3.1	2.8	3.8	3.4	5.7	4.7	2.3	2.0
10+	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.6	4.6	4.5	7.3	6.5	11.6	9.6	3.9	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>	<b>100.-</b>

NOTE - For a particular duration group, the 1961 distribution by number of children born for each age of wife at marriage group was multiplied by the number of wives in this age group and duration of marriage group in 1971. The resultant products were summed and the standardised 1961 distribution thus obtained. For duration 0-4 years figures for separate single years of duration were used in deriving a standardised distribution.

In the 5-9 years duration of marriage group, the proportion of child-less families decreased from 11.3 percent in 1961 to 10.1 percent in 1971. A more striking feature of this duration group is that families with two or three children formed 54.0 percent of the total in 1971 as compared with 46.9 percent ten years earlier, whereas the percentage of families with four or more children decreased from 32.1 percent in 1961 to 26.4 percent in 1971.

In marriages of duration 15 to 24 years there was an increase in the percentage of families having from 4 to 6 children from 35.6 percent in 1961 to 37.4 percent in 1971 with the percentage of families of other sizes staying the same or showing comparable small decreases.

There was a slight reduction over the ten years period in the percentage of all families having ten or more children, from 3.9 percent in 1961 to 3.5 percent in 1971. Over the same period the percentage of families with 1-4 children rose from 54.1 percent to 56.3 percent with the percentage of child-less families falling from 14.5 percent to 14.1 percent.

#### AGE OF HUSBAND

In the detailed tables the average number of children born per 100 families is shown in Table 7A for each duration of marriage class sub-divided not only by age of wife at marriage but also by age of husband at marriage. These results have already been given in summarised form in Table A above which shows the strong relationship between age of wife at marriage and the average fertility rate. This must be allowed for in assessing the influence of the age of husband at marriage on fertility which is the objective of Table C which shows the average number of children born per 100 families in each age of husband at marriage group for the various duration of marriage categories. These rates have been standardised for age of wife at marriage within a duration class thus removing the effect of the age of wife at marriage. Thus the rates shown for the various age of husband at marriage groups for a given duration would be those actually existing if the age pattern of wives had been identical for each age of husband at marriage group in that duration.

**TABLE C:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN PER 100 FAMILIES, CLASSIFIED BY AGE OF HUSBAND AT MARRIAGE AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE, STANDARDISED FOR AGE OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE.**

Age of husband at marriage	Duration of marriage (in years)									
	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 and over	All durations†
Under 20	292	362	409	484	513	463	528	435	588	371
20 - 24	265	362	432	455	467	467	486	516	575	361
25 - 29	269	361	407	426	442	436	456	483	552	346
30 - 34	278	365	407	427	438	434	450	486	547	348
35 - 39	278	369	406	416	437	432	468	493	533	348
40 - 44	263	341	375	383	430	423	461	482	571	333
45 - 49	255	315	348	368	405	398	428	516	534	315
50 - 54	240	277	291	333	390	362	489	364	65*	276
55 and over	194	250	251	296	328	381	472	421*	-	249

\*Based on 10 families or less.

NOTE - For a particular duration and age of husband group, the standardised rate was obtained by multiplying the rate for each age of wife at marriage group by the number of wives in this age group and duration of marriage group in the State, summing the resultant products and dividing by the total number of wives in the duration group in the State.

†For the rate for all durations for a particular age of husband at marriage group, the rate for each age of wife at marriage and duration of marriage group was multiplied by the number of wives in the age of wife at marriage and duration of marriage group in the State, the resultant products summed and divided by the total number of wives in the State.

The results show that the age of husband at marriage has little effect on fertility for husbands whose age at marriage was under 40 except for marriages of longer duration where fertility was somewhat higher for those married before the age of 25. The age groups 40-44 and 45-49 years show declines of 4.3 percent and 5.4 percent respectively over the rates for the preceding age groups with the 50-54 years and 55 years and over age groups showing more pronounced declines of 12.4 percent and 9.8 percent respectively.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

Standardised fertility rates are shown in Table D for each socio-economic group. The rates are shown for each duration of marriage group and are again standardised for age of wife at marriage within each duration class. The socio-economic groups are, therefore, compared as if the structure by age of wife at marriage within each duration of marriage group had been identical for each socio-economic group.

**TABLE D:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN PER 100 FAMILIES IN EACH DURATION OF MARRIAGE GROUP, CLASSIFIED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP STANDARDISED† FOR AGE OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE.**

Socio-economic group	Duration of marriage (in years)										
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 and over	All durations
Farmers, farmers' relatives and farm managers	123	301	404	447	463	492	496	521	543	614	387
Other agricultural occupations and fishermen	115	277	375	421	447	464	462	498	566	642	367
Higher professional	107	250	341	367	368	359	352	335	343	401	299
Lower professional	90	257	348	378	398	404	383	427	473	520	323
Employers and managers	112	252	332	363	371	367	354	361	402	447	304
Salaried employees	111	250	322	359	370	363	367	362	419	512	305
Intermediate non-manual workers	79	247	329	368	380	405	396	434	477	538	315
Other non-manual workers	109	255	341	394	408	421	424	467	528	591	339
Skilled manual workers	111	259	347	398	427	433	438	486	526	608	347
Semi-skilled manual workers	86	246	334	386	418	437	462	502	542	622	340
Unskilled manual workers	121	281	376	432	464	482	493	531	585	651	380
Unknown	106	267	332	347	323	311	315	331	393	475	288
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>345</b>

† See footnote, Table C.

The fertility rates for socio-economic groups for all durations of marriage varied from a maximum of 387 in the case of the Farmers, farmers' relatives and farm managers group to 299 for the Higher professional group (excluding the Unknown socio-economic group where the rate was 288). Other groups with rates in excess of 360 (compared with the rate of 345 for all groups) were Unskilled manual workers and Other agricultural occupations and fishermen. Groups with rates of less than 320 were Employers and managers, Salaried employees and Intermediate non-manual workers.



## RELIGION

Table E shows standardised fertility rates for different religious denominations. These are shown, as in Table D, for each duration of marriage group.

**TABLE E:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN PER 100 FAMILIES IN EACH DURATION OF MARRIAGE GROUP, CLASSIFIED BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION, STANDARDISED† FOR AGE OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE.**

Religious denomination	Duration of marriage (in years)										
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45 and over	All durations
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>345</b>
Catholic	106	268	361	410	434	450	450	474	506	572	352
Church of Ireland	83	210	262	271	263	270	265	269	293	324	229
Other stated religions	84	212	263	266	271	277	265	303	282	349	233
Others*	88	248	322	390	393	412	380	430	396	475	315

† See footnote, Table C.

\* Includes "no religion" and no information supplied.

The fertility rates for Catholics are, of course, very close to those for all religions in view of the fact that 93 percent of married women included in this analysis were Catholics. In fact, in each duration of marriage group, the rates for Catholics were slightly above those for the total population, being 352 as compared with 345 in the case of marriages of all durations. The corresponding figures for members of the Church of Ireland and for other specified religions were 229 and 233, respectively. There are, however, variations in the differences between religions for different duration of marriage groups. For the duration groups 0-4 years and 5-9 years, the average number of children born per 100 families is approximately 25 percent higher for Catholics than it is for other religions but this average is from one-half to three-quarters larger for durations of twenty years or more.

## COUNTIES AND COUNTY BOROUGHs

Tables A - E have shown the influence on the fertility rates of various factors such as age of wife at marriage, duration of marriage, age of husband at marriage, socio-economic group and religion. The combinations of these factors explain, to a large extent, the different fertility rates for Counties which are given in Table F. These differences remain even when standardised for age of wife at marriage and duration of marriage as can be seen from this table. The Counties have been ranked in this table in decreasing order of standardised fertility rate for all durations of marriage. Also shown are the rates for marriages of duration 25-29 years, when most families would have been completed.

**TABLE F:- AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN PER 100 FAMILIES IN EACH COUNTY AND COUNTY BOROUGH FOR ALL DURATIONS OF MARRIAGE AND DURATION 25-29 YEARS, STANDARDISED† FOR AGE OF WIFE AT MARRIAGE AND LISTED IN DECREASING ORDER OF AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN FOR ALL DURATIONS.**

County or County Borough	Duration of marriage 25-29 years	All durations	County or County Borough	Duration of marriage 25-29 years	All durations
Galway	512	387	Clare	462	360
Mayo	484	380	Kerry	446	360
Laoighis	489	373	Kildare	455	357
Donegal	470	373	Leitrim	444	357
Carlow	469	372	Wexford	448	355
Kilkenny	481	371	Sligo	448	351
Offaly	479	371	Waterford	428	344
Limerick	457	369	Limerick Co. Borough	432	342
Longford	473	368	Cork	421	339
Meath	484	368	Louth	421	337
Westmeath	468	366	Waterford Co. Borough	425	327
Tipperary, S.R.	456	366	Cork Co. Borough	396	326
Cavan	483	366	Wicklow	405	321
Monaghan	469	365	Dublin Co. Borough	404	318
Tipperary, N.R.	468	363	Dublin*	377	303
Roscommon	475	362	Dun Laoghaire Borough	353	281

\* Excluding Dun Laoghaire Borough

† See footnote, Table C.

The highest standardised rate for all durations was 387 in Galway with Mayo being next highest with 380. These rates compare with the national rate of 345. Other counties with rates in excess of 370 were Laoighis, Donegal, Carlow, Kilkenny and Offaly. The only rate below 300 was in Dun Laoghaire Borough where it was 281 with the next lowest being 318 and 303 in Dublin County Borough and the remainder of County Dublin, respectively. Other rates below 330 were in Wicklow and the County Boroughs of Cork and Waterford. When the rates for marriages of 25-29 years duration are considered, the order is very similar to that for all durations.