

Media Influence and Differential Fertility Preference Formation of Couples in Sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates determinants of differential ideal family size of couples in two sub-Saharan African countries, Ghana and Kenya. Whilst the theory of positive assortative mating and prior empirical evidence suggest that couples agree on ideal family size, cross-country means are found to mask the extent to which couples disagree. Using data on the percentage of couples whose ideal family sizes do not coincide, substantially more disagreement emerges. The paper examines what observable factors have the greatest apparent differential impact on ideal family size between couples. The analysis pinpoints exposure to radio broadcasts as a major determinant of ideal family size, with the apparent effects greater for husbands than wives. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 1998;2 (2):66–81)

RÉSUMÉ

L'influence des médias et la formation du différentiel dans le choix de fertilité des couples d'Afrique subsaharienne. Ce document analyse les déterminants du différentiel dans la taille idéale du ménage parmi les couples de deux pays d'Afrique subsaharienne, à savoir le Ghana et le Kenya. Bien que la théorie pure de l'accouplement assorti ainsi que d'anciennes données empiriques suggèrent que les couples s'entendent sur la taille idéale de leur ménage, il s'est avéré en réalité que les moyennes à travers les pays masquent le degré de désaccord de ces couples. Lorsque l'on se penche sur des données relatives au pourcentage de couples dont les tailles idéales de famille ne coïncident pas, des divergences encore plus marquées émergent. Ce document étudie donc les facteurs observables qui créent le plus grand différentiel sur la taille idéale du ménage, entre les couples. L'analyse désigne l'écoute d'émissions radiophoniques comme étant le déterminant majeur de la taille idéale du ménage. Les effets de ces émissions radiophoniques semblent être plus marqués chez les maris que chez les femmes. (*Rev Afr Santé Reprod* 1998;2 (2):66–81)

KEY WORDS: *Fertility, family size, gender, Ghana, Kenya*

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