

CHAPTER 2



Characteristics of Households and Women

Characteristics of Households

The availability of basic services such as piped water, electricity, and sanitation are indicators of the standard of living of a family and their risk of contracting disease. This section of the report discusses some of the services available to households, according to the last survey conducted in each country, and trends in the percentage of households that possess them.

Tables 2.1 and 2.3 show trends in the percentage of households in each country that possess selected services and goods related to the health of the population, while Tables 2.2 and 2.4 show rural/urban differentials for these same services and goods, according to the most recent survey in each country. Focusing on the last survey conducted in each country, almost 3 out of every 4 households in Honduras have piped water inside the house or on the property compared to 6 out of every 10 households in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and almost 5 out of every 10 households in Guatemala. In El Salvador and

Guatemala, approximately 90 percent of the households have a flush toilet or latrine, while in Honduras and Nicaragua approximately 80 percent of the household have these services. The percentage of households which adequately dispose their garbage ranges from a low of 64.9 percent in Guatemala to a high of 84.2 percent in El Salvador. With respect to the energy used to cook food, 2 out of every 3 households in El Salvador use propane gas or electricity for cooking, while less than 40 percent of the households in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua use these energy sources.

Table 2.1
Trends in the Availability of Basic Services in the Household that are Related to Health

Country	Year of Survey	Faucet in House or on Property	Flush Toilet or Latrine	Adequate Disposal of Garbage*	Cooks with Gas or Electricity	Dirt Floor
El Salvador	1993	49.0	85.8	na	48.1	35.6
El Salvador	1998	59.9	88.4	74.6	59.4	31.5
El Salvador	2002/03	63.4	90.5	84.2	66.6	26.8
Guatemala	1995	49.4	82.9	na	na	49.5
Guatemala	1998/99	54.7	79.9	na	na	38.3
Guatemala	2002	46.6	87.6	64.9	32.5	35.9
Honduras	1991/92	65.7	63.0	68.6	na	46.9
Honduras	1996	69.2	73.8	68.0	20.4	40.6
Honduras	2001	74.3	78.0	74.8	31.1	32.1
Nicaragua	1992/93	58.8	79.6	na	26.8	na
Nicaragua	1998	64.1	83.2	na	na	44.3
Nicaragua	2001	63.1	79.1	80.0	39.9	43.4

* Consists of municipal and private garbage collection, and the burning and burying of garbage.

na: Not available.

Still focusing on the last survey conducted in each country, it can be seen at a glance that in all four countries the rural population is less likely than the urban population to have access to the services presented in Table 2.2. For example, in Nicaragua, while 87.1 percent of urban households have piped water, only 27.6 percent of rural households do, for a 60 percentage point difference. The urban/rural differentials vary by service: the largest urban/rural differential with regards to piped water is found in Nicaragua; the

largest differential with regards to flush toilets and latrines and the adequate disposal of garbage is found in Honduras; and the largest differential with regards to cooking with propane gas or electricity is found in Nicaragua. Comparing rural areas across countries, Honduras stands out as having the highest percentage of rural households with piped water (60.5 percent) and El Salvador as having the highest percentage of rural households with adequate garbage disposal (73.8 percent).

Table 2.2
Availability of Basic Services in the Household that are Related to Health, According to Area of Residence (Most Recent Survey)

Country/Area	Year of Survey	Faucet in House or on Property	Flush Toilet or Latrine	Adequate Disposal of Garbage*	Cooks with Gas or Electricity	Dirt Floor
El Salvador	2002/03					
Total		63.4	90.5	84.2	66.6	26.8
Urban		83.0	97.6	92.1	89.4	10.7
Rural		37.8	81.2	73.8	36.8	47.9
Guatemala	2002					
Total		46.6	87.6	64.9	32.5	35.9
Urban		49.8	95.7	81.6	55.4	17.0
Rural		44.2	81.3	52.0	14.7	50.5
Honduras	2001					
Total		74.3	78.0	74.8	31.1	32.1
Urban		89.0	94.7	90.8	53.5	11.2
Rural		60.5	62.1	59.6	9.9	51.8
Nicaragua	2001					
Total		63.1	79.1	80.0	39.9	43.4
Urban		87.1	87.5	88.7	61.8	27.8
Rural		27.6	66.8	67.1	7.7	66.5

* Consists of municipal and private garbage collection, and the burning and burying of garbage.

Table 2.3
Trends in the Availability of Goods and Services in the Household

Country	Year of Survey	Electricity	Radio	Television	Refrigerator	Telephone	Car or Truck	Computer
El Salvador	1993	75.8	na	64.5	39.8	11.5	12.4	na
El Salvador	1998	80.3	na	74.5	50.7	23.4	18.2	na
El Salvador	2002/03	86.9	na	80.9	54.9	46.0	17.4	na
Guatemala	1995	60.8	78.6	50.4	26.8	11.2	14.6	na
Guatemala	1998/99	70.9	79.5	55.6	30.6	15.6	16.7	na
Guatemala	2002	81.6	85.7	63.9	37.5	34.0	21.1	8.1
Honduras	1991/92	47.0	65.2	36.3	23.5	na	na	na
Honduras	1996	53.4	73.9	44.0	27.7	10.3	10.6	na
Honduras	2001	60.6	85.2	53.4	35.4	16.6	14.5	3.1
Nicaragua	1992/93	66.4	76.6	52.4	22.6	6.1	9.2	na
Nicaragua	1998	70.3	78.4	55.5	23.3	10.6	9.2	na
Nicaragua	2001	72.6	81.0	59.4	25.7	12.4	10.0	3.1

na: Not available.

Table 2.4
Availability of Goods and Services in the Household,
According to Area of Residence

Country/ Area	Year of Survey	Electricity	Radio	Television	Refrigerator	Telephone	Car or Truck	Computer
El Salvador	2002/03							
Total		86.9	na	80.9	54.9	46.0	17.4	na
Urban		96.3	na	91.8	70.8	61.2	23.8	na
Rural		74.6	na	66.6	34.1	26.0	9.0	na
Guatemala	2002							
Total		81.6	85.7	63.9	37.5	34.0	21.1	8.1
Urban		94.6	91.6	83.6	57.8	53.8	32.1	14.6
Rural		71.5	81.2	48.6	21.8	18.6	12.6	3.1
Honduras	2001							
Total		60.6	85.2	53.4	35.4	16.6	14.5	3.1
Urban		91.2	88.6	79.7	56.1	32.4	22.5	6.0
Rural		31.8	81.9	28.6	15.9	1.8	6.8	0.3
Nicaragua	2001							
Total		72.6	81.0	59.4	25.7	12.4	10.0	3.1
Urban		94.5	85.4	80.2	37.8	20.2	14.4	5.0
Rural		40.1	74.4	28.6	7.6	1.0	3.5	0.3

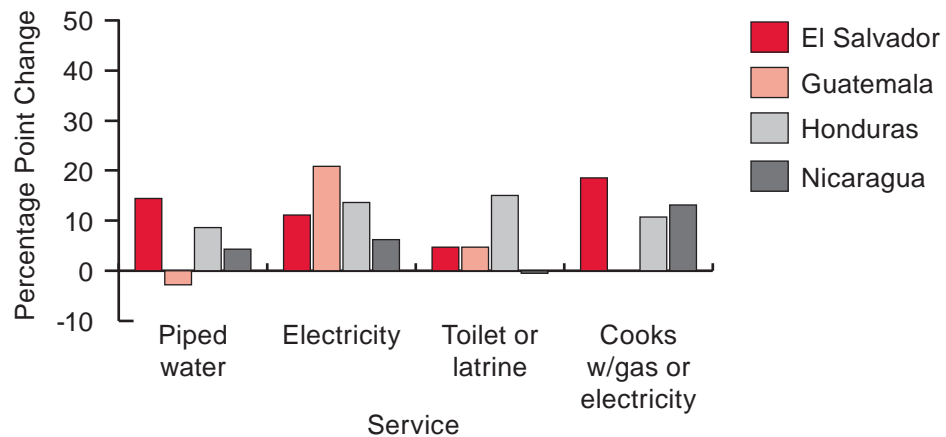
na: Not available.

With regard to other household amenities related to health and communication, the data in Table 2.3 indicate that over 80 percent of households in El Salvador and Guatemala have electricity, compared to 72.6 and 60.6 percent of households in Nicaragua and Honduras. In Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, over 80 percent of the households have a radio, while the percentage of households in all four countries that have television ranges from a low of 53.4 percent in Honduras to a high of 80.9 percent in El Salvador. The likelihood of possessing a refrigerator is greatest in El Salvador (54.9 percent) and lowest in Nicaragua (25.7 percent). In all of the countries, the probability of having a telephone in the household or of owning a vehicle is relatively low. Similarly, very few households have a computer.

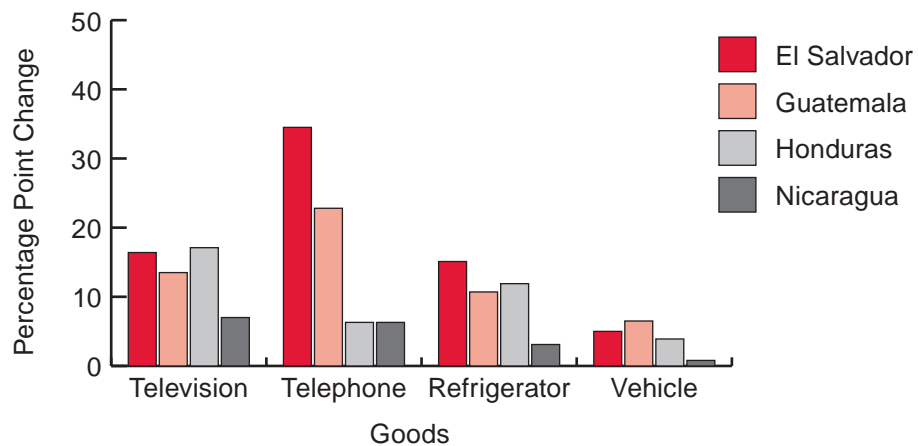
Graphs 2.1 and 2.2 highlight trends in the possession of selected goods and services between the early 1990s and the most recent survey conducted since 2000. With few exceptions, there has been a general increase in the availability of these services in each country. The most notable increase is of the telephone, likely due to increased availability of cell phone services. El Salvador witnessed a 35 percentage point increase between 1993 and 2003.

Nicaragua has the lowest percentage of households with TVs (televisions), telephones, refrigerators and automobiles. It also had the smallest percentage point increase in possession of these three goods between the first survey and the most recent survey.

Graph 2.1
Change Between Early 1990s and Early 2000s in Percent of Households With Piped Water, Electricity, Flush Toilet or Latrine and That Cook With Gas or Electricity (First and Third Surveys)

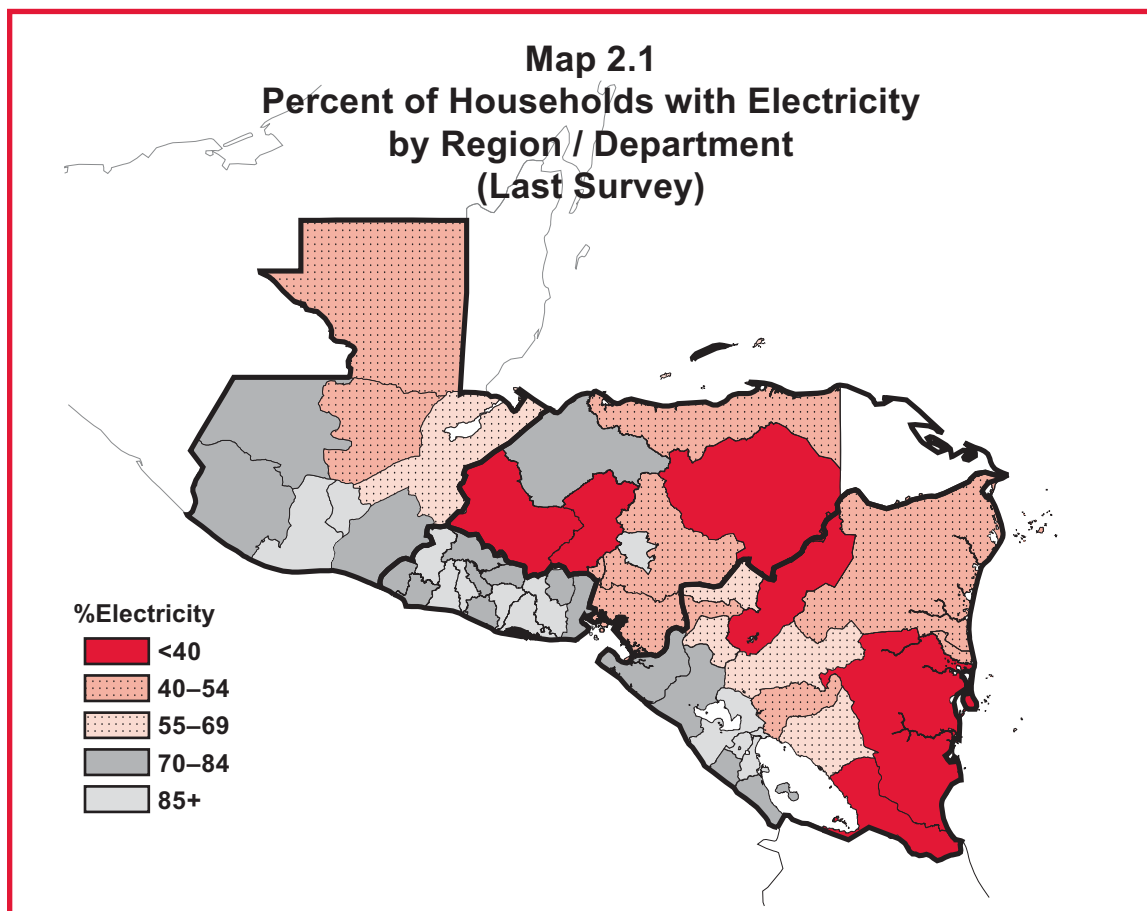


Graph 2.2
Change Between Early 1990s and Early 2000s in Percent of Households With Television, Telephone, Refrigerator and Automobile (First and Third Surveys)

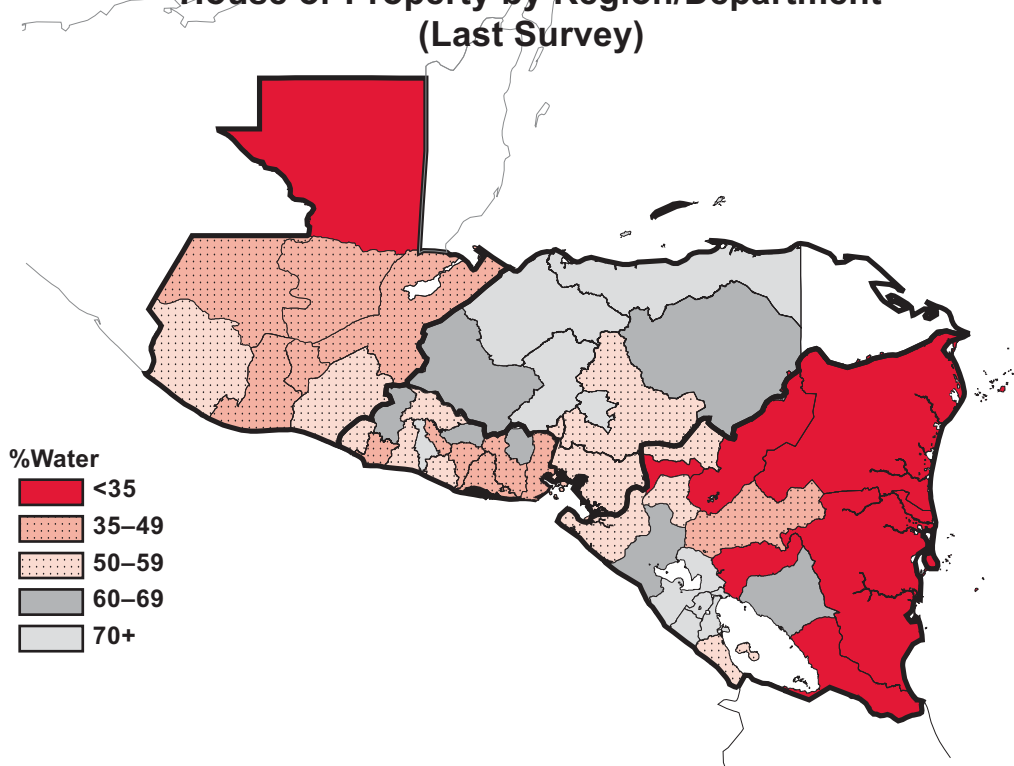


Maps 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 illustrate subnational variations in the percentage of households with electricity, piped water and a refrigerator, according to the most recent survey in each country. It is notable that electrification is most advanced (70 percent or more of households) along the Pacific coasts of Guatemala and Nicaragua and in all departments of El Salvador. Honduras stands out as having the broadest

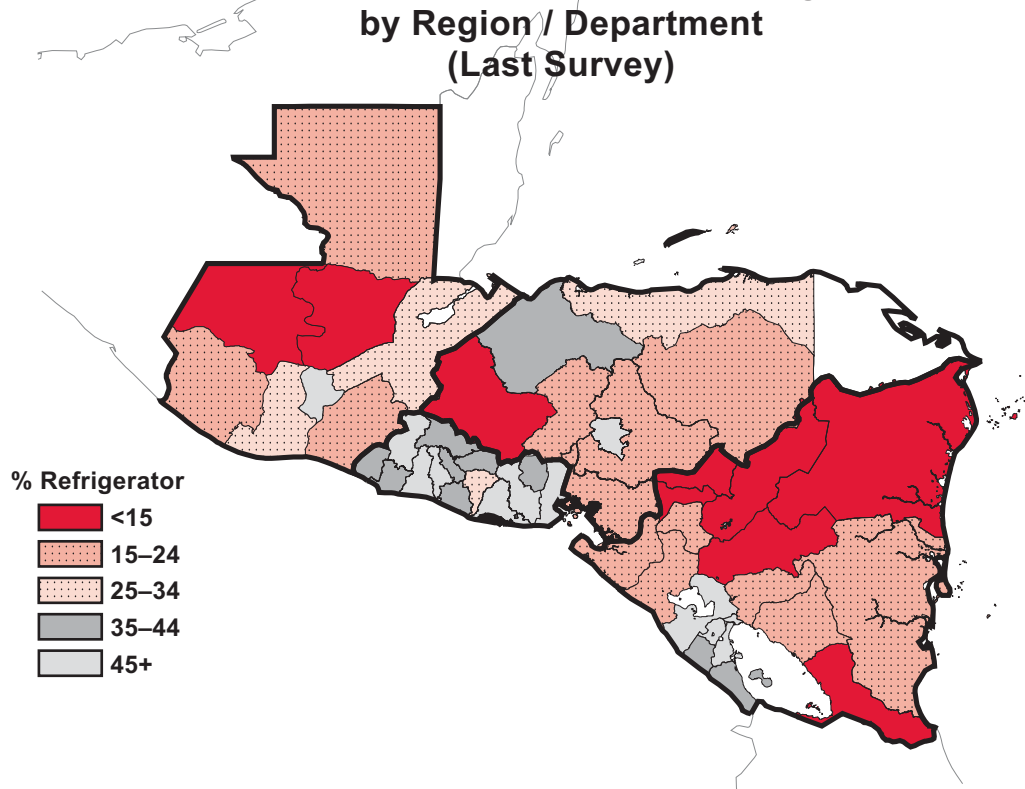
coverage of households with piped water (more than 60 percent of households in all but one of its health regions). Possession of a refrigerator is fairly widespread throughout El Salvador, but in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua it is common only in the regions (or departments) containing Guatemala City, San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa and Managua.



Map 2.2
Percent of Households with a Water Faucet in House or Property by Region/Department (Last Survey)



Map 2.3
Percent of Households with a Refrigerator by Region / Department (Last Survey)



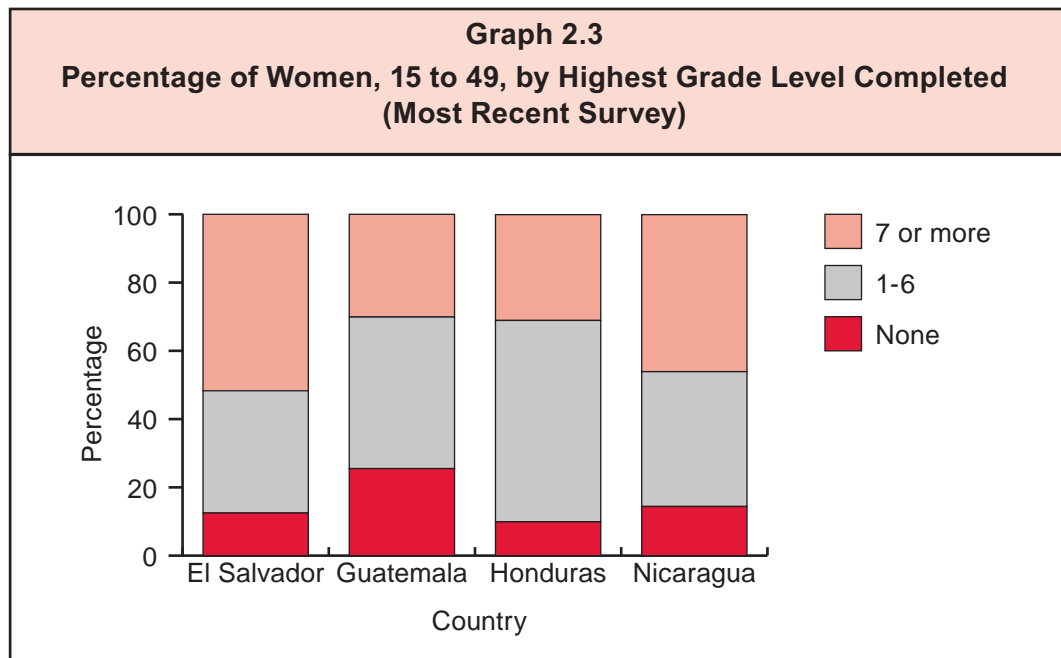
Characteristics of Reproductive Age Women

As a result of numerous education reforms in these countries, levels of education have different meanings at different ages in each country. To simplify the presentation, years of schooling have been calculated and regrouped into the following three categories: none or less than 1 year; primary including 1 through 6 years of schooling, and secondary having 7 years or more of schooling. Table 2.5 presents trends

in the percent distribution of reproductive age women by education level in the last three surveys conducted in each country. Table 2.6 shows differentials by area of residence for the most recent survey in each country. By focusing on the lowest and highest educational level presented in Table 2.5, one can generalize that the proportion of respondents with no schooling has decreased since the early 1990s, while the

Table 2.5
Trends in The Educational Level of Women Who Have Been
Interviewed, Women Aged 15–49

Country	Year of Survey	None	1–6	7 or more
El Salvador	1993	18.5	43.0	38.6
El Salvador	1998	15.5	40.3	44.2
El Salvador	2002/03	12.5	35.8	51.7
Guatemala	1995	28.3	47.2	24.5
Guatemala	1998/99	25.3	49.3	25.4
Guatemala	2002	25.5	44.4	30.1
Honduras	1991/92	15.2	59.9	24.9
Honduras	1996	12.4	61.0	26.7
Honduras	2001	9.9	59.0	31.0
Nicaragua	1992/93	16.1	45.6	38.3
Nicaragua	1998	15.5	40.4	44.0
Nicaragua	2001	14.4	39.5	46.0



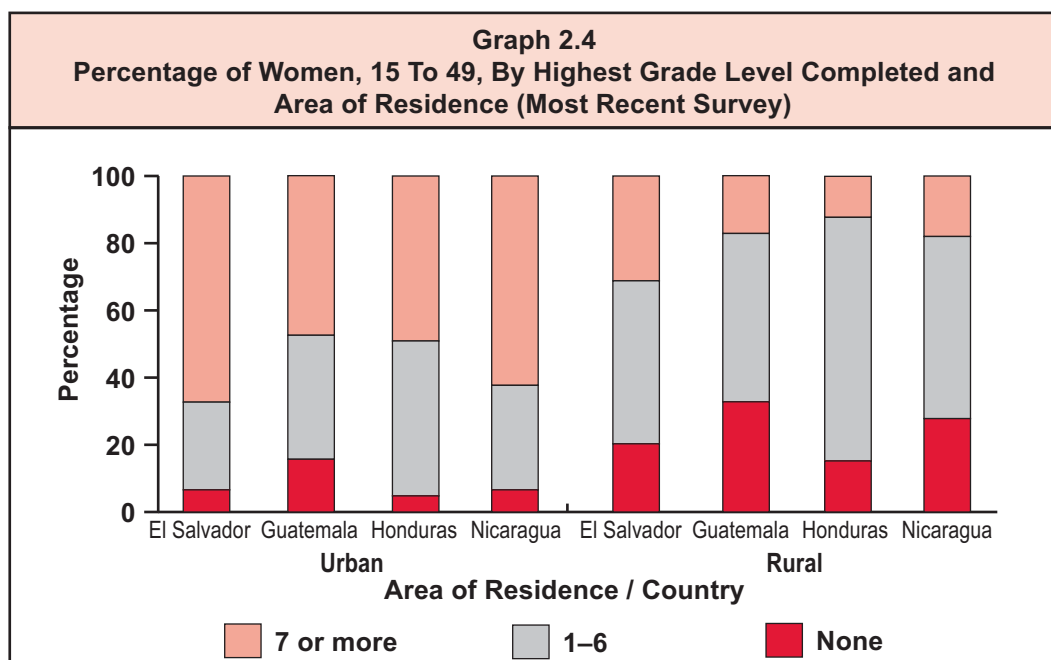
proportion of respondents with at least some secondary education (grades 7 or higher) has gradually increased. Comparing the countries (Graph 2.3), in both El Salvador and Nicaragua almost half of women have at least 7 years of education. In both Honduras and Guatemala

only about 30 percent of women had any secondary education and in Guatemala 25.5 percent of women report no formal education at all. Given the importance of education for many reproductive health indicators it will be helpful to keep the education differential in mind when comparing these four countries.

Table 2.6 and Graph 2.4 show rural/urban differentials in education for the four countries. Focusing on the percent with at least some secondary education, it can be seen that the urban areas have a considerable advantage over rural areas in all four countries. The urban/rural differentials range between 30 percentage points in Guatemala and 45 percentage points in Nicaragua. Within urban areas there are also

notable differences between the four countries. While in El Salvador and Nicaragua, 67.3 and 62.3 percent of urban women have at least some secondary education, in Guatemala and Honduras only 47.5 and 49.1 percent of urban women have some secondary education. The overall differential between countries in education level is therefore not explained by inter-country differences in the level of urbanization.

Country/Area	Year of Survey	None	1–6	7 or more
El Salvador	2002/03			
Total		12.5	35.8	51.7
Urban		6.6	26.1	67.3
Rural		20.3	48.5	31.2
Guatemala	2002			
Total		25.5	44.4	30.1
Urban		15.7	36.9	47.5
Rural		32.8	50.1	17.2
Honduras	2001			
Total		9.9	59.0	31.0
Urban		4.8	46.1	49.1
Rural		15.2	72.5	12.2
Nicaragua	2001			
Total		14.4	39.5	46.0
Urban		6.6	31.1	62.3
Rural		27.8	54.2	18.0



Graph 2.5 depicts, for the most recent survey, the percent of reproductive age women living in urban areas and the percent of live births in the five years before the survey occurring to urban women. There is a considerable range of more than 20 percentage points in the “percent urban” among the four countries. Nicaragua has the highest percent urban of the countries with 63.1 percent of women living in urban areas, followed by El Salvador (56.7 percent), Honduras (51.1 percent) and Guatemala (42.5 percent). For all four countries the percentage of

births occurring to urban women is considerably less than the percentage of women who are urban. This reflects the differences in fertility between urban and rural areas, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. Some of the indicators for maternal and child health presented in the report are based on births in the five years before the survey, so it is important to keep in mind that these indicators may be more strongly affected by area of residence than are indicators based on women.

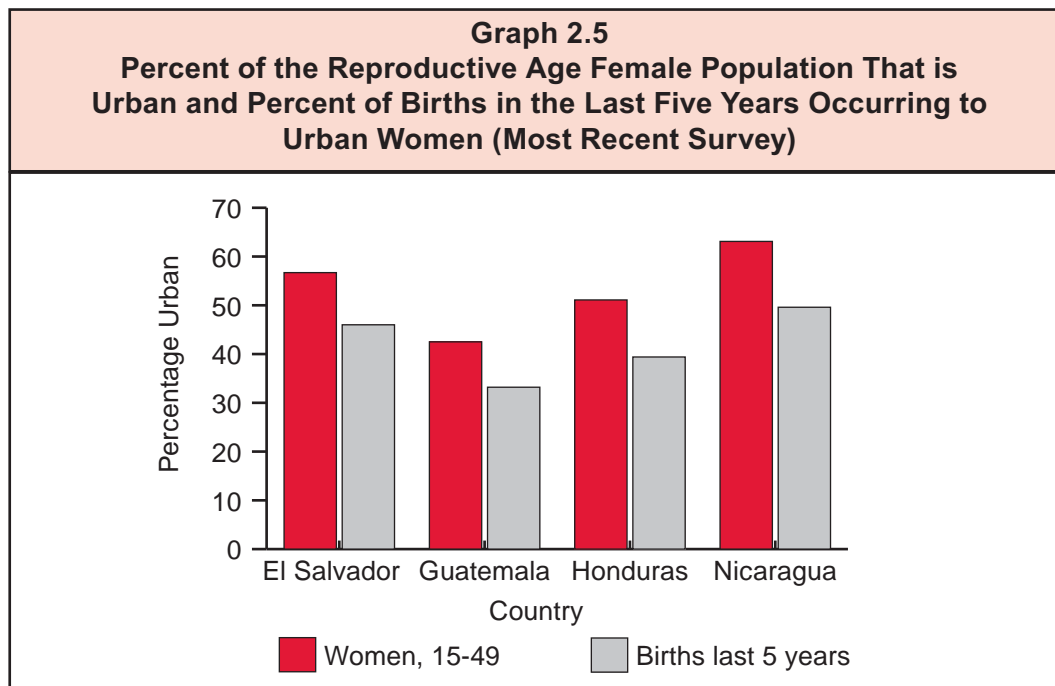


Table 2.7
Trends in the Religion Professed by Female Respondents:
Women Aged 15–49

Country	Year of Survey	Catholic	Protestant	Other	None
El Salvador	1993	na	na	na	na
El Salvador	1998	56.3	23.8	0.1	19.9
El Salvador	2002/03	50.2	31.1	0.3	18.4
Guatemala	1995*	60.7	25.9	2.2	11.2
Guatemala	1998/99	52.6	29.4	2.4	15.6
Guatemala	2002	51.2	35.8	1.5	11.5
Honduras	1991/92	65.3	21.3	0.4	13.0
Honduras	1996	56.8	26.0	0.1	17.1
Honduras	2001	53.0	34.1	0.4	12.5
Nicaragua	1992/93	na	na	na	na
Nicaragua	1998	na	na	na	na
Nicaragua	2001	na	na	na	na

* Women aged 15–44.
na: Not available.

Table 2.7 shows trends in the religion professed by reproductive age women for El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. For each country there is notable growth in the proportion of women claiming to be Protestants. The latest survey in each country shows more than a third of women to be Protestants in these traditionally Catholic societies.

Summary of Findings

- Since the early 1990s and in each country, there have been improvements in the proportion of households with goods and

services that could affect health conditions. However, in all four countries the rural population is considerably less likely than the urban population to have access to these services and goods.

- While there have been improvements in women's educational attainment for all four countries, there are also sizeable differentials between countries. In both El Salvador and Nicaragua about half of reproductive age women have at least some secondary level education, while in Honduras and Guatemala less than a third of women do.