

# Population as Public Interest

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# Population issue as conundrum

- Majority of Filipinos regard rapid population growth as hindrance to economic development, requiring policy intervention.
- But government appears immobilized owing to opposition from Catholic Church hierarchy and other conservative groups.
- Yet the influence of the Church on fate of political leaders seems overrated: surveys say sizeable majority favors politicians who support FP programs.
- *Hard Church* and *soft State* at root of RP's inability to achieve demographic transition *cum* economic development.

# Population as conundrum

- Reality seems to be that a well-organized vocal opposition is tamping the silent majority of Filipinos.
- Filipinos typically don't want to talk openly about sex which intimately relates to population.
- Thus, e.g., parents try to maintain “reticent dignity” re. their kids' sexual behavior (even if they want them not involved in pregnancy so they can finish their education!).

# Conundrum

- The “squeaky wheel” phenomenon.
- Isn't the State to blame, even more so than the Church, for not properly addressing the population issue?
- In other Catholic countries, the State has not allowed itself to be kept hostage by the Church.
- Only in the Philippines!

## Negative externalities of sustained high fertility and rapid population growth (RPG)

- **Economic growth:** RPG constrains investments in physical and human capital → low productivity, hence, social cost of slow economic growth & poverty reduction.
- **Environment:** RPG strains the environment, incl. sources (forests, water) and sinks (air that's polluted) → climate change, though developed countries contribute more to global climate change.

## Negative externalities (cont'd)

- **Poverty and inequality:** RPG raises supply of labor relative to land and physical capital → lower wages (esp. for less skilled), hence, greater inequality and poverty.
- Poverty headcount falls 33% with 5/1000 drop in crude birth rate (Eastwood and Lipton 1999).
- In RP, poorest quintile increases close to double overall average growth rate.
- Inequality adversely → economic growth directly.

## Contrarian views

- Foremost was Julian Simon (1977, 1981, 1986) who pointed out positive externalities, in the (very) long-run context.
- Traditional views: production, consumption and old-age security utilities of children; and insurance against low survival probability of children.
- Some economists also argue that negative growth externality should not be a concern, as parents may be fully aware of private and social costs of children, yet would prefer more children to higher consumption of goods (R. D. Lee 1991).

## Contrarian views (cont'd)

- To bemoan parental preference for children to goods consumption would be like bemoaning people's preference not to work on Sundays because it reduces their incomes (P. Demeny 1972).
- UPSE Discussion Paper 0415 "Population and Poverty: The Real Score" (2004) catalogues principal studies on population, economic growth and poverty.

**Table A: Population and Poverty Statistics – Selected Asian Countries**

	Population		Poverty		
	Annual growth rate (%) 2005-2007	Total fertility rate 2006	% below poverty line ca. 2004		% share of the poorest quintile in national income or consumption 2004
			National 2004	PPP \$/day 2004	
<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>40.0<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>36.3<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>8.6<sup>5</sup></b>
<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>16.6<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>7.7<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>8.4<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Malaysia</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>5.1<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>6.1</b>
<b>Nepal</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>24.7<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>2.1<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>33.0<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>13.2<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>5.5<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Thailand</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>9.8<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.0<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>6.4<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>7.2</b>

# Population growth and economic growth

- In 1970s-80s, pop growth of 2% or higher in poor countries was already considered high and a hindrance to econ growth [NAS 1971; WB 1984) via reduced human capital investment, unfavorable saving and capital-shallowing effects, etc.
- Echoed more recently by Mapa & Balisacan (2004) and Mapa (2006) who also highlight the “demographic dividend” from demographic transition (work force rising faster than dependents).
- Demographic transition must be early and rapid to result in significant dividends (higher saving rate, HRD, productivity, etc.).

## Growth rates (%), 2006

<u>Country</u>	<u>GDP</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>GDP p.c.</u>
China	11.1	0.6	10.5
Indonesia	5.5	1.3	4.2
Malaysia	5.9	2.1	3.8
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Thailand	5.0	0.9	4.1
Vietnam	8.2	1.3	6.9
Bangladesh	6.7	1.3	5.4
India	9.2	1.5	7.7
Pakistan	6.6	1.9	4.7

Source: ADB, Basic Statistics 2007 (May 2007)

# Fertility and poverty

- Consistent and close link between poverty incidence and number of children (Table 1).
- Family size also directly related to likelihood of falling into poverty owing to exogenous shocks (e.g., typhoons, droughts, inflation) [Reyes 2002].
- Mean per capita income, expenditure and savings fall monotonically as family size rises (Table 2).
- Mean education spending per student drops from P5,558 for family size 1 to P682 for family size 9+; as well, mean health spending per capita falls from P1,700 to P150 (Table 3).

**Table 1: Poverty Incidence by Family Size**

Family Size	Poverty Incidence					
	1985	1888	1991	1994	1997	2000
1	19.0	12.8	12.7	14.9	9.8	9.8
2	20.0	18.4	21.8	19.0	14.3	15.7
3	26.6	23.2	22.9	20.7	17.8	18.6
4	36.6	31.6	30.1	25.3	23.7	23.8
5	42.9	38.9	38.3	31.8	30.4	31.1
6	48.8	45.9	46.3	40.8	38.2	40.5
7	55.3	54.0	52.3	47.1	45.3	48.7
8	59.8	57.2	59.2	55.3	50.0	54.9
9 or more	59.9	59.0	60.0	56.6	52.6	57.3
National	44.2	40.2	39.9	35.5	31.8	33.7

Source: Orbeta (2004) based on NSO, Family Income and Expenditure Surveys, 1985-2000.

## Fertility and poverty

- Clear negative impact of additional child on HH welfare, esp. in low-income HHs (Orbeta 2005a).
- Adverse impact is regressive, i.e., the poorer the HH, the larger the impact.
- Association between large family size, poverty incidence, and vulnerability to shocks is robust and persistent.

# Family size and hunger

- Strong association between family size (FS) and poverty further substantiated by link between FS and hunger (Mangahas 2009)
- Hunger rates tend to rise monotonically with number of family members, especially for severe hunger.
- Average hunger incidence for RP is about the rate for families of 5-6 members.

**Table 2: Hunger Incidence by Number of Family Members**

<b>Family members (number)</b>	<b>Total hungry (%)</b>	<b>Moderately hungry (%)</b>	<b>Severely hungry (%)</b>
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>
1-2	10.0	8.0	2.0
3-4	17.6	15.5	2.1
<b>5-6</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>
7-8	23.9	18.5	5.4
9+	25.2	17.9	7.3

Source: Mangahas (2009) based on SWS September 2008 Survey.

## **Economic crisis, population & poverty**

- Poverty rate rose from 30% (20.5%) in 2003 to 33% (22.1%) in 2006 despite GDP growth of 4.2-5.4%.
- Ongoing economic downturn very likely to lead to sharp upticks in unemployment, poverty and hunger.
- Persistent high fertility rates owing to lack of access to effective FP information and services can only further exacerbate the poverty and hunger problems.

# Access to FP services

- Actual and desired fertility fall consistently from poorest to richest quintile and from no education to higher education. Actual-desired fertility gaps are 2.1 for poorest quintile, 0.9 for middle, and 0.3 for richest quintile (Table 4).
- Large gap among the poor due to high unmet need for family planning services; hence, low contraceptive prevalence rate.
- Poor mostly depend on government sources for modern (effective) family planning methods. USAID has been phasing out contraceptive supplies; complete pull-out by 2008.

**Table 4: Actual and Wanted Fertility (Number of Children) by Wealth Quintile, Education, and Urban/Rural Location**

	<b>Total Actual Fertility Rate</b>	<b>Total Wanted Fertility Rate</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Wealth quintile</b>			
Lowest	5.9	3.8	2.1
Second	4.6	3.1	1.5
Middle	3.5	2.6	0.9
Fourth	2.8	2.2	0.6
Highest	2.0	1.7	0.3
<b>Women's education</b>			
No education	5.3	4.1	1.2
Elementary	5.0	3.3	1.7
High school	3.5	2.5	1.0
College or higher	2.7	2.2	0.5
<b>Urban/Rural location</b>			
Urban	3.0	2.2	0.8
Rural	4.3	3.0	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Source: National Demographic and Health Survey 2003			

# Access to FP services

- Demand for additional children is lower among poorer women than richer ones (Orbeta 2005b).
- Lack of access to FP leads to unwanted pregnancies → induced and illegal abortions, estimated close to 500K in 2000 (Juarez, Cabigon et al. 2005). Current estimates range 700K-900K.
- Also, lack of effective contraception may be responsible for 3,500 maternal deaths each year.
- Maternal mortality at 162 per 100,000 live births in 2006 projected to drop to just **140** by 2015 – miles away from the MDG target is **52!**

# Rationale for population policy and FP

- Negative externalities ...
- Imperfect information: low-income or less educated couples often ill-informed re. health risks of high fertility to both mothers and children.
- Even those sufficiently informed often have no access to suitable FP services.
- Women in poor HHs want fewer children than they are having (NDHS).
- People's views on the population issue ... (Pulse Asia and SWS surveys).

**Table 5: Pulse Asia Survey on FP, 2008\* & 2007\*\***

Views/Attitudes of Filipinos	Location				
	National	NCR	Rest of Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
% who think the ability to plan the family for its welfare is important*	93	98	94	89	92
% who think such planning is important for country's welfare*	90	92	92	84	89
% who think it is government's duty to provide knowledge, services and materials for modern FP methods, both "natural" and "artificial" *	82	86	80	78	84
% who say it is important for candidate to include FP in his/her program of action**	76	74	71	72	69
% who say they support candidates in favor of a government budget for FP**	75	74	79	67	73

**Table 6: Modern Contraceptives, Government Distribution, and Family Planning in School Curriculum**

**A: Usage of Legal Contraceptives (Condoms, IUDs, Pills) Can also Be Considered as Abortion**  
(numbers are percentages)

<u>Opinion</u>	<b>RP</b>	<b>Catholics</b>			<b>Non-Catholics</b>			<b>Trust in Catholic Church</b>		
		<u>All</u>	<u>&gt;Weekly</u>	<u>&lt;Weekly</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>&gt;Weekly</u>	<u>&lt;Weekly</u>	<u>Much</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Little</u>
<b>Agree</b>	33	32	34	31	37	36	40	33	34	37
<b>Undecided</b>	15	15	12	18	14	11	19	14	26	11
<b>Disagree</b>	50	51	53	49	48	52	40	52	40	50

Overall, regardless of religion, Filipinos who consider modern contraceptives as abortifacient are far fewer (33%) than those who do not (50%).

Even more revealing is that smaller proportion of Catholics (32%) than non-Catholics (37%) regard such a practice as abortion.

Among Catholics – incl. the more religious ones and those who have much trust in the Catholic Church– the majority disagree that modern contraceptives are abortifacient.

Which probably implies that while they may faithfully follow the Catholic doctrine in general, they are more discriminating on the choice in number of children they can decently provide for.

**Table 6: Modern Contraceptives, Government Distribution, and Family Planning in School Curriculum (cont'd)**

**B: Law Requiring Government to Distribute Legal Contraceptives to People Who Want to Avail of Them (numbers are percentages)**

<u>Opinion</u>	<b>RP</b>	<b>Catholics</b>			<b>Non-Catholics</b>			<b>Trust in Catholic Church</b>		
		<u>All</u>	<u>&gt;Weekly</u>	<u>&lt;Weekly</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>&gt;Weekly</u>	<u>&lt;Weekly</u>	<u>Much</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Little</u>
<b>Agree</b>	68	68	69	67	68	68	69	70	64	62
<b>Undecided</b>	16	16	14	17	16	15	18	16	17	12
<b>Disagree</b>	15	15	16	15	14	16	12	13	19	25

- Two of three of Filipinos agree, and this substantial majority opinion applies to both Catholics and non- Catholics, whether they are weekly church-goers (religious) or not.
- Moreover, the majority of Catholics (70%), who have much trust in the Catholic Church, feel that the government should provide these modern contraceptives.
- Which is consistent their view that these FP methods are not abortifacient.

**Table 6: Modern Contraceptives, Government Distribution, and Family Planning in School Curriculum (cont'd)**

**C: If Family Planning Would be Included in School Curriculum, Youth Would be Sexually Promiscuous (numbers are percentages)**

<u>Opinion</u>	<b>RP</b>	<b>Catholics</b>			<b>Non-Catholics</b>			<b>Trust in Catholic Church</b>		
		<u>All</u>	<u>&gt;Weekly</u>	<u>&lt;Weekly</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>&gt;Weekly</u>	<u>&lt;Weekly</u>	<u>Much</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Little</u>
<b>Agree</b>	25	24	27	22	31	29	32	25	28	24
<b>Undecided</b>	19	20	19	20	19	20	17	19	28	16
<b>Disagree</b>	54	55	53	57	50	50	49	55	44	60

Note: >weekly = church-goer at least once weekly; <weekly = church-goer less than once weekly.

Source: SWS Survey, September 2008.

- The majority (54%) of Filipinos disagree.
- This majority view is true of Catholics (55%) even more so than non-Catholics (50%), regardless of the Catholics' degree of religiousity and trust in their church.

## National population policy a *sine qua non*

Current gov't's approach is to leave pop policy & FP program to discretion of LGUs. However,

- local gov't leaders wait for directives from top insofar as major policies are concerned,
- worse population management at local level incentive-incompatible with IRA and political careers,
- negative spillover effects with people's mobility across LGU boundaries, and
- differences in fiscal resources and technical capabilities among LGUs.

Thus, such approach reflects poor governance (UPSE 2004).

## Conclusion

- Population issue has been a silent national crisis, not-so-palpable emergency, simply swept under the rug by the government and politicians.
- Worse, the government has been held at bay by the conservative Catholic Church hierarchy.
- Central to the issue are the negative externalities of sustained high fertility on economic growth, poverty and inequality, and environment.

## Conclusion (cont'd)

- More importantly, the preference of women, esp. in poor HHs, for fewer children besides people's views on the population issue are solid basis for an unambiguous population policy.
- Approval and implementation of the RH bill would represent a watershed in RP's development. Consider CCT for RH practice.
- Population is evidently a public interest issue that the national government must address squarely, despite opposition from conservative groups.
- Eminently foolish not to approve RH bill!

*Gloria Dei, vivens homo* → “The glory of God is a human being living a dignified and fulfilling life.”

(St. Irenaeus, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)

Thank you!