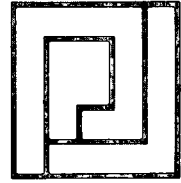# /CURRENT FERTILITY: A FIRST GLIMPSE FROM THE 1983 NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights initial findings from the 1983 NDS based on a 25 percent sub-sample of the survey respondents. The discussion focuses on measures of current fertility as well as on selected fertility "predictors" for the three major island groups — Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Owing to the restrictive nature of the data set, no statistical tests are performed to measure the influence on fertility of these explanatory variables. Instead, inferences are drawn from a descriptive analysis of the patterns exhibited. Findings point to a continuation of fertility decline as evidenced by the estimated CBR of 33.6 births per thousand.

INTRODUCTION

Efforts at establishing fertility parameters and at explaining differentials and changes in fertility in the Philippines have increasingly been recognized as important in national policy-making, target-setting and development planning. At the same time, there is the continuing challenge to researchers to produce reliable and accurate demographic measurements and to interpret these empirical observations within the Philippine's socio-cultural and economic setting.

It is within this context of obligation and challenge that the series of National Demographic Surveys (NDS) has been conducted and analyzed. Beginning in 1968, four such surveys have been conducted at five-year intervals.[1] The task of the first survey was to provide baseline data that could help define and clarify the nature of the population problem. The research findings based on the 1968 NDS helped launch a new phase of population policy in the Philippines characterized by the formulation of programs based on a broad framework of empirical research.

Fertility, mortality, and migration estimates at the national and regional levels were generated from the 1973 NDS. In addition to the estimation of basic demographic parameters, inquiries were made on some aspects of the operationalization of the existing population program. The survey was conducted while the thrust adopted by the Philippine population program was clinic-based services. The NDS revealed the inadequacy of this strategy. It was noted that beyond a three-kilometer radius, clinic performance dropped as demonstrated by the

low rates of contraceptive use among couples who did not reside near clinics. With this finding, it became imperative to design strategies that could extend the reach of clinic services.

The pattern of declining fertility in the early 60s brought about by changes in age structure and delay in marriage became even more visible in the 70s. The role of various socio-economic factors in explaining this decline like education, income, employment, and place of residence were highlighted in these past surveys. With the conduct of the Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey (RPFS) in 1978, a more focused and thorough examination of fertility was made feasible using improved measures of fertility as well as a more comprehensive set of explanatory variables. In addition to the above socio-economic characteristics that have proven to be useful predictors, this 1978 data set contains information on contraceptive behavior and factors pertaining to the biological aspects of fertility such as breastfeeding, menstrual pattern and resumption of sexual intercourse after childbirth. The quality of the researches that have resulted from this data set attests to the significance of this effort.

The experience accumulated through the years of data collection and analysis has helped in the design of the 1983 NDS. The inclusion of questions similar to those covered in the 1968 and 1973 rounds of the NDS and the 1978 RPFS ensured comparability of the data. In addition to the measurement of the levels and tempo of change of various demographic events, trends can now be traced with the data from the four surveys.

The sample of the 1983 NDS was designed to yield stable estimates at the stratum (urban and rural) and regional level, thus making possible examination of variations across regions and between strata. With some program indicators such as those on family planning information, education and communication (IEC) activities like the extent of coverage of radio broadcast and the distribution of published materials on family planning, and data on the outreach structure, it will be possible to highlight the relative advantages or disadvantages that target clientele have had depending on their areas of residence. Consequently, deficiencies in approaches and needed services could be ameliorated.

The 1983 NDS also addressed new issues not covered previously on a national scale. For the first time, attention was devoted to measuring mortality of both children and adults. While in the past, migration information mainly consisted of data on lifetime and period moves across geographic areas, this 1983 data set made available individual migration histories. Detailed occupational changes were also collected for selected life stages. For the first time too, information are available on the economic activity, spatial mobility, nuptiality, and extent of family planning know-

ledge of a sample of males and never-married women, 15 years old and over.

With this wealth of information, it is expected that findings from the 1983 NDS will contribute greatly to a deeper understanding of various demographic patterns. If exploited to the fullest, these findings could serve as the building blocks for an integrated set of policy alternatives.

This paper will present some of the initial findings from the 1983 NDS. Since processing of the complete data set has not been completed as of this writing, we shall be presenting only some indicators derived from a 25 percent sub-sample of the survey respondents. The restrictive nature of the data set imposes limitations on the type of analysis that could be undertaken and necessarily requires that the estimates derived therefrom be interpreted with caution.

We shall be focusing on the latest estimated crude birth rate and measures of children ever-born in our attempt to highlight survey findings on current fertility. To supplement these statistics is an indirect indicator of fertility performance, the household size. Fertility trends will likewise be established as these new figures are compared with estimates from past surveys.

As a preliminary exploration into the possible explanation for the observed levels and trends in fertility, a set of variables loosely labeled as "predictors" are examined. Since it is statistically inadvisable to test or measure their influence on fertility due to the limited number of

cases, what is presented instead is a discussion of the patterns exhibited by each predictor. From these patterns, inferences of their potential effect on fertility can be drawn.

DATA

In order to provide the Commission on Population and other agencies with estimates of current demographic and contraceptive data as rapidly as possible, the members of the 1983 NDS research consortium, composed of the University of the Philippines Population Institute (UPPI), Office of Population Studies of San Carlos University (OPS/USC) and the Research Institute for Mindanao Culture of Xavier University (RIMCU/XU), decided to prepare a first report based on a sub-sample of the ever-married women (EMW) respondents who comprised one half of the total sample. The sub-sample consists of one-half of such EMW respondents thus constituting a quarter of all those interviewed during the survey. The number of households and EMW in this sub-sample are presented below:

	No. of Households	No. of EMW
Philippines	3641	2830
Luzon	1674	1365
Visayas	823	534
Mindanao	1144	931

Since the size of the sub-sample precludes estimates at the regional level, the analysis will be confined to the three main island groups: Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao.

FINDINGS

Current Fertility

The 1983 NDS sub-sample yielded a crude birth rate (CBR) estimate of 33.6 births per 1,000 population. This indicates a continuation of the decline in reproductive performance which has been documented during previous time periods. From a level in excess of 50 births per thousand at the turn of the century, the CBR remained fairly constant in° the first half of the twentieth century, gradually declining to around 45 per thousand in 1960 and to about 40 per thousand in 1970. Faster declines occurred in the mid-70s as evident from estimates referring to this period from the RPFS (1970-75: 37.4; 1973-77: 34.8). The most recent NDS figure of 33.6 births per 1,000 therefore represents a drop of a little more than three percent from the last estimate.

Direct information on fertility is provided by the number of children ever born (CEB) to ever-married women of specified ages. Table 1 shows the average number of children ever born per ever-married woman in the reproductive ages, 15-49, for selected years. Since the number of children born to women by specified age groups is cumulative, this measure is expected to increase with increasing age of the woman. A cursory look at the table reveals that the data for 1978 and 1983 conform to expectation. It will be noted that in 1968 and 1973, women aged 45-49 reported lower numbers of children ever born than those aged 40-44. This may be due to recall problem among the older women especially those with children who may have died earlier.

A comparison of the 1983 data with those of 1978 shows that the mean CEB for all age groups declined by as much as 16-22 percent. Assuming that the cumulative fertility at age group 40-44 or 45-49 is equal or nearly equal to the completed level of fertility, then there is reason to sus-

Table 1. Average Number of Children Ever Born Per Ever-Married Woman: Philippines, Selected Periods

Age Group (Years)	Year			
	1968	1973	1978	1983
15-19	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.7
20-24	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.7
25-29	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9
30-34	4.6	4.5	4.3	3.9
35-39	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.1
40-44	6.3	6.5	6.7	5.6
45-49	6.2	6.4	7.0	6.7
Total	4.6*	4.6*	4.6	4.0

*For ages 15-44 only.

Sources: 1968, 1973, 1983 National Demographic Survey; 1978 Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey

Table 2. Children Ever Born Per Ever-Married Woman by Major Island Grouping: Philippines, 1983

Age Group (Years)	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
15 – 19	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7
20 – 24	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7
25 – 29	2.8	3.3	2.9	2.9
30 – 34	3.8	4.2	3.8	3.9
35 – 39	5.1	5.8	5.1	5.1
40 – 44	5.5	6.4	6.6	5.6
45 – 49	6.7	7.6	6.2	6.7
All Ages	3.9	4.7	3.8	4.0

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

pect a decline of fertility among married women in recent years, supporting the downward trend reflected by the CBRs over time.

The fertility profiles of the three island groups are presented in Table 2. It will be seen that the fertility ratios for Luzon and Visayas correspond to the expected configuration in relation to age. Those for Mindanao deviate somewhat with the oldest women reporting lower mean numbers of children than their slightly younger counterparts. Hence, the overall figure for Mindanao should be interpreted with caution. The Luzon data correspond more closely with those of the country as a whole owing to the island group's overrepresentation in the sample with Metro Manila forming one region in addition to the other five regions located in Luzon.

If one were to utilize the cumulative fertility ratios for the women aged 40-44 as indicative of the fertility level of women who have reached the end of their reproductive period, the expected pattern by geographic area emerges, with Luzon manifesting the lowest fertility (5.5) among the three island groups. This tends to suggest that ratios are associated with the pace and stage of development obtaining in these areas.

The level of fertility reported for Mindanao as shown by the overall mean CEB and most of the age-specific ratios appears questionable. It seems unlikely that this frontier region had lower fertility overall than either Luzon or the Visayas, which are long settled and more established regions. One is inclined to suspect that many of the rural and less educated women failed to report all their live births, perhaps omitting children who died at infancy in greater degree than the Luzon and Visayas women.

Household size

The declining trend of the Philippine birth rate is to some extent mirrored by the gradually changing size of the average Filipino household. This is so because as gleaned from past NDS, more than three quarters of all Philippine households are composed of one nuclear family unit, i.e., father, mother and unmarried children, and family extension is much rarer than is commonly assumed (Nartatez, 1975).

Placed at an average of 6.3 persons per household in 1968, household size gradually but continuously declined to a level of 6.1 in 1973 and 5.7 a decade later. As Table 3 shows, the decline has come about through the increasing proportions of households with five or less members with a concomitant decline of those with six or more.

The decline in mean household size observed in the Philippines at large is echoed more prominently in Luzon and the Visayas, and to a lesser extent in Mindanao. The fact that average household size in Mindanao tends to be larger than in Luzon or the Philippines in general is consistent with an earlier observation that Mindanao women have relatively greater numbers of children at ages 40-44 than their Luzon or Visayan counterparts (Table 4).

Owing to the reason stated previously, Luzon figures approximated the size and distribution of households at the national level. Urban households, however, are slightly smaller than the rural ones, 5.5 vs. 5.8, the difference reflecting a preponderance of small-sized households in the urban as compared to the rural. From the 1983 NDS, it is shown that close to 20 percent of the urban households have less than four mem-

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Philippine Households by Size, 1968-1983

Household Size	Survey Year		
	1968	1973	1983
1	0.6	1.4	2.0
2	4.6	5.1	7.0
3	8.9	9.2	11.0
4	13.5	13.2	15.2
5	14.7	14.0	16.4
6	15.2	14.6	14.0
7	12.0	12.9	12.2
8	11.3	11.2	8.3
9	6.9	7.4	5.7
10 and over	12.3	10.9	7.8
All Households	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean Household Size	6.3	6.2	5.7

Source: 1968, 1973, 1983 National Demographic Survey

Table 4. Mean Household Size by Island Group and Stratum, 1983

Stratum	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
Urban	5.5	5.4	6.1	5.7
Rural	5.8	5.4	5.9	5.6
Total	5.6	5.4	6.0	5.7

Source: 1983 National Demographic Surveys

bers while the corresponding figure for rural households is 17.7 percent.

Average household size in the Visayas in 1983 was slightly below the national average: 5.4 members with no variation between urban and rural households. This lack of size differentials between urban and rural households is brought about by unrelated factors. In the rural areas where a larger proportion of all households consists of one nuclear family unit only, the main determinant of household size is fertility; in the urban areas, by contrast, with fertility levels below the rural ones, average household size is kept large by a more frequently occurring family extension.

Unlike in Luzon, urban households do not tend to be smaller than rural households in Mindanao. Possibly, Mindanao cities reflect larger household populations because of the peace and order situation. Many barangays have lost population to municipal poblaciones and to chartered cities because of the security problems in the rural areas. Additionally, most high schools and colleges are situated in urban areas where students often lodge with relatives or close family friends.

Owing to the limitations imposed by the sub-sample, the statistics that have been presented so far are predominantly in the form of summary measures. Even with such broad groupings, variations by main island are evident. With the availability of the complete NDS data, regional analysis can be undertaken in greater detail. Fertility levels and trends will likewise be available for other subgroups of the population.

Establishing differentials by various social groups help pinpoint which sub-groups exhibit high fertility and are therefore potential targets for program activities. These could also be helpful in clarifying certain issues which could redound to better program design and strategies.

Determinants of Fertility

Parallel to this initial attempt at measuring current level of fertility and showing trends given some data points from previous studies is a somewhat restricted examination of selected indicators demonstrated to be closely associated with fertility behavior in past studies.

Taking off from the classic Davis-Blake framework (1956), we focus on "intermediate variables," or those through which environmental and socio-economic factors are hypothesized to affect fertility. These are composed of "intercourse," "conception" and "gestation" variables. Available in the sub-sample are indicators for only the first two of these three sets of variables. Nuptiality represents the first of the three as marriage ˙is interpreted to reflect entry to sexual union, while contraceptive use and breastfeeding are examined as factors affecting exposure to conception.

An attitudinal indicator relating to family size is likewise presented. Finally, new ground for fertility analysis is broken with the incorporation of responses to questions on support flows within families.

Because of the statistical limitation discussed earlier and our inadequate set of predictors, these factors are not integrated into a cohesive determinants framework. It is hoped, however, that these findings would help identify some of the issues that can be examined in succeeding analyses.

Nuptiality

Age at entry into first sexual union is one of the more important determinants of a woman's fertility. For most women in the Philippines, this coincides with marriage. Studies have shown that the average age at first marriage for Filipino women has been on a gradual but steady rise since the beginning of this century and has continued to rise slowly until very recently (Smith, et. al., 1984).

The fact that this changing marriage pattern has contributed significantly to fertility reduction has been documented in various studies. Decomposing the 4.4 percent decline in the Philippine CBR for the period 1960-68, Cho and Retherford (1973) attributed the significant proportion of the decline to a change in marital pattern. Similar conclusions were reached by Smith (1975) and Concepcion (1980) in their analyses of independent data sets. Referring to the period after the 70s, Concepcion suggested that declining marital fertility rate was the more important explanation for fertility decline between 1970 and 1975. This increased role of marital fertility effect on fertility changes is confirmed by Raymundo (1984) but she states that the absolute contribution of nuptiality in the overall fertility change is stable on the basis of the 1978 RPFS.

This tendency for the average Filipino women to marry late is once again supported by the 1983 data. The computed mean age at marriage for all ever-married women in the sample is slightly over 20 years.[2] Table 5 shows the very close correspondence between the Luzon and Visayan women while those from Mindanao report a slightly younger mean age of 20.3.

A pattern which is consistent among these areas is the tendency of rural women to get married earlier

Table 5. Mean Age at Marriage by Island Group and Stratum, 1983

Stratum	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
Urban	21.3	21.0	20.7	21.1
Rural	20.0	20.4	19.8	20.0
Total	20.7	20.7	20.3	20.6

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

Table 6. Percent of Ever-Married Women 15-49 Who Eloped Before their First Marriage: 1983

Stratum	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
Urban	32.3	17.7	10.3	22.8
Rural	22.4	12.6	9.8	16.1
Total	27.8	15.2	10.1	19.6

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

than their urban counterparts. The relatively large difference of 1.3 years between the urban and rural women in Luzon is most likely caused by women in Metro Manila who, as the 1978 RPFS data documented, have the highest mean age at marriage (20.2 years)[3] anywhere else in the country.

Previous studies on Philippine nuptiality have focused on the socioeconomic characteristics of women to explain the variations in age at marriage. Though such attempts have led to significant findings, it is recognized that background characteristics

and indicators of achievement and activities do not explain sufficiently the complex issue of when women marry. An important aspect which is often missed or not adequately dealt with in these studies is what may be called the "cultural" determinants of marriage. The 1983 NDS nuptiality section was designed with the objective of highlighting some of these factors.

Traditionally, Filipino parents have strictly monitored the interaction of their daughters with young men, employing various persons as chaperons inside as well as outside of their

homes for that purpose, and have often exercised their veto power in their children's choice of spouse. Since a good proportion of Filipino women get married at an age when the country's laws require parental consent (if below 18) or advice (if below 23), a not infrequently used technique in the past on the part of the couples to circumvent this has been to elope. That this strategy of avoiding parental control has survived until the present time is illustrated in Table 6. Approximately every fifth EMW 15-49 questioned in the course of the 1983 NDS "admitted" to having eloped before the first marriage.

If elopement rates are interpreted as indicators of the weakening of parental influence, then Table 6 clearly points out that this is evident in urban areas where elopement rates are higher. A gradient is likewise observed as we move from Luzon down to Mindanao suggesting that parental influence tends to be weaker in the more developed regions (Luzon) than in the less developed ones.

On the basis of past behavior patterns, elopement in the Philippines can be compared as a "traditional mechanism" for escaping from parental control in matters related to marriage. A recent increase in its incidence, taken by itself, could signify a weakening of parental influence but does not necessarily have to mean a fundamental shift in the courtship and marriage-related behavior of young women. However, the fact that not only a weakening parental influence but also a change of values

and norms related to sexual relationship and marriage appear to be in process is suggested in information on premarital sex that the 1983 NDS and previous surveys in the Philippines provide.

Information on premarital sex can be elicited in various ways: directly, by outrightly asking pertinent questions, and indirectly, by looking at the time interval between a woman's first marriage and the birth of her first child. For the Philippines, information of this indirect type is available from all fertility surveys that have collected pregnancy histories. For example, the RPFS indicates that of all EMW who had been married for at least five years in 1978, 2.8 percent had had their first child before their first marriage, and an additional 5.8 percent had given birth to their first child within the first seven months of their marriage. The RPFS data likewise showed that the likelihood of giving birth before marriage or very soon after the wedding date increases with the age at which a woman enters into her first union (RPFS, 1978). While not all births that occur in or around the seventh month after marriage connote premarital sex, those that occur earlier do. But whatever the exact proportion is of women with early births discovered by the RPFS who engaged in premarital sex, it does not include all those women whose premarital relations did not result in a live birth. That their number was considerable in 1983 is documented by the NDS, which asked all EMW

respondents the direct question: "Did you have sexual relations with your first husband before you began living together?" The answers to this question are summarized in Table 7. The incidence rates of premarital sex shown for women residing in various parts of the country are not only consistently higher than the corresponding elopement rates, they also exhibit a strong "more developed, less developed" area differential.

A closer examination of the 1983 NDS shows that the proportions reporting premarital sex are inversely related with age. Nearly two-fifths of the respondents less than 30 years of age (38 percent) reported to have engaged in sex before marriage. The corresponding fractions for women below 40 and 40 and above were 28 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

The mean age at marriage for these groups of women was calculated in an attempt to link such behavior with the timing of marriage.

	Mean Age at Marriage (Years)
Had sex before marriage	20.8
Did not have sex before marriage	20.5
Eloped	20.2
Did not elope	20.7

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

It is interesting to note that there is indication of a slight delay in the age of entry into marriage among those who engaged in sexual relations with their spouse prior to the union. Re-lating these patterns with other information like background characteristics and contraceptive practice could help our inquiry into these processes of change affecting nuptiality in the Philippines and consequently, fertility.

This discussion illustrates the complexity of the issue of marriage. With the availability of the complete NDS data, it will be possible to look into the effects of other "cultural" issues such as the extent of parental influence on choice of spouse, attitudes about assuming multiple roles, and the system of support that exists within families on nuptiality. It is hoped that with this new dimension added to our analysis, we will be a step closer to developing a more comprehensive framework for nuptiality analysis.

Contraceptive Use

A basic question that is probably topmost in the planners' minds is to what extent the observed fertility decline is accounted for by program activities. While the extent of independent effects is difficult to determine, a juxtaposition of measures of contraceptive use and fertility levels over time allows an inference on their relationship. One indicator that is available in this sub-sample is the so-called contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR), a crude but nevertheless succinct indicator of program performance. This gives a measure of the proportion of contraceptive users among currently married women (CMW) aged 15-44.

Table 7. Percent of Ever-Married Women 15-49 Who Had Engaged in Premarital Sex
with their (First) Husbands: 1983

Stratum	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
Urban	40.3	37.4	29.6	36.5
Rural	27.6	22.4	17.7	23.2
Total	34.6	30.1	23.6	30.1

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

For the Philippines as a whole, the overall rate gleaned from the 1983 NDS is 33.4 percent.

One disturbing aspect of this finding is that this rate represents a decline during the interval between 1978 and 1983 from a level of 37.2 percent calculated from the 1978 RPFS. Table 8 shows that this resulted from decreases in contraceptive prevalence in Luzon and Mindanao by as much as six percentage points. Apparently, the Visayas registered an increase (5.8 percent) during the interval. The most plausible explanation that can be advanced at this time for the opposite trends in the Visayas from the rest of the country is that, five years ago, the Visayas lagged behind the other regions in contraceptive practice. Many of its rural women who were ready to accept family planning had not yet been reached.

However, it is encouraging to note that while overall contraceptive prevalence in Luzon and Mindanao as well as the country in general had declined, the drop was primarily caused by a fall in the number of users of less effective methods (Table 9). The proportion of users of the more effective methods rose by five percentage points (from 12.5 percent to 17.5 percent), with most of the increase being accounted for by sterilization.

Table 8. Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rates
for Currently Married Women 15-44:
1978 and 1983

Island Group	1978	1983	% Chance 1978-83
Luzon	39.5	33.0	– 6.5
Visayas	30.3	36.1	+ 5.8
Mindanao	38.9	32.4	– 6.5
Philippines	37.2	33.4	– 3.8

Sources: 1978 Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey;
1983 National Demographic Survey

The proportion of users of the less-effective methods declined by almost nine percentage points.

The method-specific distributions for a larger sub-sample composed of CMW 15-49 by major island groups are contained in Table 10. Female sterilization appears to be the most popular of all more effective methods in all island groups, with Luzon registering the highest percentage of users (10.6 percent). It should be borne in mind, however, that these figures as well as those pertaining to vasectomy are cumulative in nature and are therefore not directly comparable with measures of current use of other methods.

The major difference between Luzon and the other areas is in the proportion practising rhythm. While only 3.5 percent of the women in the former are practising rhythm, this figure more than' doubled in the Visayas and almost two and a half times larger in Mindanao (8.5 percent). The disparity in facilities available and in the number of doctors in Mindanao has been advanced as underlying these differences in acceptance of more effective methods and the resulting popularity of rhythm.

The observed decline in contraceptive prevalence indicates a need for the national family planning program to undertake new initiatives to increase contraceptive prevalence and to accelerate increases in the use of modern methods. Better understanding of the reasons for such a decline will help in designing new strategies needed to achieve these objectives.

Table 9. Percentage Distribution of Currently Married Women Aged 15-44 by Current Contraceptive Practice: 1978 and 1983

Method	1978	1983
More Effective Methods	12.5	17.5
Ligation	4.7	8.9
Vasectomy	0.6	0.6
IUD	2.4	2.6
Pills	4.8	5.5
Less Effective Methods	24.6	15.9
Rhythm (R)	8.9	6.4
Condom (C)	3.8	1.5
Withdrawal (W)	9.5	3.9
Abstinence	1.8	0.8
R + W	a/	1.9
R + C	a/	0.8
C + W	a/	0.2
Others	0.5	0.4
All Methods	37.1	33.4

[a]In 1978, users of two methods in combination were classified as users of one of the methods; condoms took precedence over rhythm, which took precedence over withdrawal.

Source: 1978 Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey; 1983 National Demographic Survey

This will require not only the evaluation of program-related issues such as the delivery system and motivational efforts but also an understanding of and an appreciation of the complex set of factors that affect people's contraceptive decisions.

Breastfeeding

During recent years, strong movements promoting breastfeeding have emerged in many parts of the world, including the Philippines. The arguments which different proponents of these movements advance are of two kinds: the first is related to infant nutrition and health, and the second,

Table 10. Percentage Distribution of Currently Married Women 15-49
by Current Contraceptive Practice: 1983

Method	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
More Effective Methods	19.1	16.3	11.7	14.5
Ligation	10.6	7.5	5.4	8.5
Vasectomy	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.6
IUD	2.5	3.4	1.7	2.4
Pills	5.7	4.6	3.9	5.0
Less Effective Methods	12.3	17.5	16.1	16.9
Rhythm (R)	3.5	7.4	8.5	6.0
Condoms (C)	1.2	2.0	1.5	1.4
Withdrawal (W)	4.5	2.6	2.6	3.6
Abstinence	0.7	1.4	0.7	0.9
R + W	1.7	2.6	1.2	1.9
R + C	0.5	1.2	0.7	0.7
C + W	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.2
Others	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.3
All Methods	31.4	33.9	27.8	31.4

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

which particularly interests family planners, centers on the notion that breastfeeding suppresses ovulation for a certain period of time and thereby protects a woman from the risk of conception.

In this analysis, a rough estimate of levels in breastfeeding practice is based on information about the last birth. The fact that breastfeeding is still the most commonly used method of infant feeding practised by mothers in the Philippines is reflected in the NDS results. Eight in 10 EMW 15-49 in the country who had delivered a live birth since 1978 had breastfed their infant child.

Data for the three island groups show that breastfeeding was practised by slightly larger proportions among women in the Visayas (83.2 percent) than the two other areas (Luzon, 80.8 percent; Mindanao, 80.0 percent). A comparison of these figures with similar ones from previous surveys, however, indicates that breastfeeding in the Philippines has declined somewhat during the past decade — from a level of 86.8 percent in the early 70s (1973 NDS) to 82.6 percent in the mid-70s (1978 RPFS) and further to 80.9 percent (1983 NDS). Given the benefits that can be derived from breastfeeding, this decline has become a cause for concern, especially if the protection it provides is not substituted with the use of some forms of contraception or its health effects not compensated for by consumption of nutritious food.

Studies have related this phenomenon of declining levels and dura-

tion to increasing modernization (Raymundo, 1980; Zablan, 1981). Modernizing factors (such as job opportunities that take mothers away from their homes and increasing availability of commercial milk substitutes) have facilitated decisions of mothers to refrain from or shorten breastfeeding. With the continuing pace of modernization and as women take on more roles in addition to motherhood, the practice of breastfeeding may further be eroded.

While program personnel are finding ways to promote the practice of breastfeeding, researchers can contribute in the campaign by helping clarify issues such as the relative impact of breastfeeding on fertility and by pinpointing sub-groups in the population where breastfeeding practices are adversely affecting child health and anti-fertility effects of breastfeeding are significantly reduced. With a whole block devoted to information on births in the last five years, the 1983 NDS can allow better specification of analytical constructs that can be used for this purpose. Together with detailed data on amenorrhea, separation from spouse and sexual intercourse, breastfeeding information can also help enhance the analysis involving the socio-biological determinants of fertility.

Desired Family Size

Another approach to understanding fertility decision-making involves an evaluation of the level of consistency between fertility preferences and

behavior. The 1983 NDS data on desired family size was collected through the question, "If you could choose exactly the number of children to have in your whole life, how many children would that be? " The obvious intent of this question was to remove from consideration in the respondents' mind the possible influence of their actual family circumstances. From the results of RPFS where this same question was asked, there is evidence that this question only partially succeeded in this regard. Response varied consistently with the number of living children and other family characteristics (Pullum et. al., 1983).

To what extent this positive association between actual and desired numbers is present in the 1983 data still needs in-depth analysis. For a preliminary examination, we present the response on desired number of children obtained from currently married women in the three areas together with the mean CEB which has been presented earlier.

	Desired number of children		Mean CEB
	Mean	Median	
Philippines	4.1	3.8	4.0
Luzon	4.2	3.7	3.9
Visayas	4.2	3.8	4.7
Mindanao	4.1	3.5	3.8

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

Controls need to be added before one can speculate whether, for example, "rationalization" is evident, that is, whether women are adjusting their stated ideal to take account of the

children already born who were not actually planned at the time of conception.

One potential clue to the nature of this response is deduced from the Visayan data where it was noted that the ideal number of 4.2 is almost one child smaller than the figure that results from the addition of the average number of living children already born plus the average number of children wanted in the future (0.6). It is also approximately one-half child smaller than the average number of children the respondents currently have. Perhaps the explanation for this discrepancy is that the respondents, when confronted with the question of ideal family size, did not entirely consider it in terms of their already existing family but in terms of what they might be doing if given a chance of starting their families all over again today and under presently prevailing circumstances. One may therefore say that "rationalization" may not have clouded the response of this sub-group.

To probe further into this response are two questions on communication with husbands on the matter of number of children. From Table 11, it appears that the majority of the CMW claimed ever having discussed the number of children they would have with their spouses. Notable is the fact that Visayan women more often than other women in the country did not discuss family-size matters with their spouses. This is consistent with the observation that the proportion of couples making joint decision is smaller in the Visayas than anywhere else.

In cases where only one of the spouses had the last word, husbands are observed to predominate. This authoritative role of husbands is especially evident in Mindanao where 31 percent claimed that the husbands had the most say on the number of children they should have.

Overall, the Luzon couples are seen to have the most exchange and consultation on the issue of family size.

Table 11. Percent of Currently Married Women 15-49, by Discussion with Husband of Number of Children Wanted: 1983

Discussion with husband	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
No discussion with husband	22.6	27.8	20.9	23.2
Husband has most say	17.6	19.4	31.0	22.4
Wife has most say	7.6	13.3	10.1	9.5
Husband and wife have equal say	52.2	37.5	38.0	44.8
All Responses	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

That they are likewise observed to have relatively lower fertility suggests a close connection between communication and eventual completed fertility.

Flow of Wealth:
A Preliminary Look

The most time-honored but rather general theory used in the past to explain declining fertility is the theory of demographic transition. One of the many shortcomings of this theory is its origin in Western societies, the fertility decline of which is claimed to have been concomitant with the process of industrialization. During the past decade and with a view to typifying non-Western developing societies, a number of alternative theories have been formulated. One of these, originally proposed by Caldwell (1976), links the initiation of a society's fertility decline to social conditions, primarily the "threshold" at which the inter-generational flow of wealth begins to move from parents to children in contrast to the traditional situation in which families rise socially and economically through their children by receiving support from them. In the latter situation, children constitute wealth, and they lose this quality only once the flow of wealth is reversed.

To date, no attempt has been made to test this theory empirically in the Philippines mainly because of unavailability of data required for such analysis. As a first step, the 1983 NDS collected data which will enable researchers to do some preliminary exploration of the relationship between net wealth flows and demographic behavior.

The preliminary nature of the analysis that could be done stems from the "simplification" of the concepts implied by the theory to facilitate their operationalization. This has had to be done because of the restrictions imposed by the survey (e.g., limited time, length of the questionnaire).

A series of questions directed towards ever-married women aged 15-49 attempts to ascertain whether, in traditional settings with relatively high fertility (as characterized by rural barangays), the flow of wealth is predominantly moving from children to parents and, by contrast, in more modernized settings (characterized by urban barangays, where fertility tends to be below the rural level), a reversal of the traditional flow of wealth is becoming more common. In this paper, we present answers to three of the questions namely:

1. (EMW with children over 18): At present, are you regularly receiving any forms of support from any of your own children?
2. (EMW with all children below 18): Do you expect to receive regular support from your children later after they have grown up?
3. (EMW with no own children yet): If you should have children sometime in the future, would you expect support from them after they have grown up?

At the time of the 1983 NDS, one-third of all families in the sample with

children aged 18 and above, regardless of region of residence or type of residence (i.e., urban versus rural), were receiving regular economic support from their older children (Table 12). Actual support is highest in urban Mindanao and urban Luzon (37 percent).

There are regional and urban-rural differentials in the expectation for support in the future by young families. More rural than urban families were looking forward to regular help from their presently still small children once they are grown up. Expectations appear to exceed actual support by a considerable margin. This is especially evident in Mindanao where 57.3 percent urban and 62.2 percent rural women expected support from their children when they come of age.

The regions in which these expectations were greatest, particularly with respect to still unborn children, are the Visayas and Mindanao. These are the regions where the urban (modern) lifestyle is much less in evidence than it is in large portions of Luzon and where, for that reason, traditional norms can be assumed to have retained considerable strength to this day. Furthermore, the prevailing depressed economic state in many of these areas may not yet have created conditions in which a substantial segment of parents can afford to forego economic help from their offspring. The rather striking difference between these areas and Luzon in terms of family expectations from grown-up children seems to point to the Caldwell hypothesis as a promising lead for further and more detailed investigation into the social mechanisms underlying the decline of fertility.

Table 12. Percent of Ever-Married Women 15-49 Who Are Receiving or Expecting Economic Support from their Children, by Type of Woman, Region and Urban-Rural Residence: 1983

Type of ever-married women	Luzon		Visayas		Mindanao		Philippines	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
EMW with children 18 or above currently receiving support	36.9	33.0	31.9	33.8	37.2	35.2	36.3	34.1
EMW with children under 18 expecting support in the future	40.4	54.3	52.2	58.8	57.3	62.2	47.8	59.9
EMW with no children expecting support from future children	33.3	37.2	69.2	63.3	42.4	57.6	47.9	47.3

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

This system of obligation and support within the woman's family of orientation may also be taken to represent the concept of "old age security." By relating these indicators to fertility, we have implicitly suggested the hypothesis that couples who believe larger numbers of children increase security in parental old age, are apt to marry earlier and to have more children. In the table below, some checks can be made on this hypothesis on the basis of data on female age at first marriage by support from children crosstabulated for the Philippines. The data appear consistent with the hypothesis because female parents who had received support or had expected to receive support married at earlier ages than those who had not received such support or do not expect to receive such support from their children. The data, however, represent only a first and preliminary look at this question, and need further analysis.

Ever-Married Women With:	Mean Age at Marriage of EMW (Years)
Children 18 or more years old:	
Contributing to parental support	19.0
No contribution	19.8
Children less than 18 years old:	
Expecting to receive support	20.6
Not expecting support	21.1

Source: 1983 National Demographic Survey

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

It can be deduced from this set of variables that while there are observable patterns from which can be inferred some depressing effects on fertility, there are those which suggest possible counter-effects. Specifically, while the decline in contraceptive prevalence implies, among other things, a lowering of the proportion of women protected from the risk of conception, the improved quality of use (as indicated by higher use of modern methods) is expected to have had some compensating effect on the overall fertility.

The sustained late entry to marriage among Filipino women recorded in this survey is consistent with the observed fertility decline. As has been shown in various studies, further analysis may likewise indicate measurable impact on fertility of delayed entry to marriage. What remains to be seen is the potential effect of continuing social transformation that bears upon nuptiality. The growing "liberalism" of the adolescents and the young adults, for example, seems to be reflected by the NDS figures on elopement and premarital sex. It would be instructive to determine how these would modify nuptiality and ultimately, fertility behavior.

Modernization also seems to have ushered in forces affecting traditional practices such as breastfeeding and traditional expectations such as support from children. The extent to which changes in fertility performance may be attributed to them will also provide important clues as to the future fertility pattern.

Finally, if reduced desired family size may be taken to represent effects of heightened awareness of the consequences of rapid population growth

and of large families, then our findings indicate that efforts to increase such awareness may help achieve the objective of continued fertility decline.

Specifying the role of these sets of factors and a host of others not covered in this paper vis-a-vis that of the population program in realizing our goal of a 2.2 percent population growth rate in 1987 is crucial. Present development efforts are geared towards a population of 57 million in 1987 based on the targetted rate of growth. The inability of the population program to reach its goal will mean readjustment of targets by the other sectors.

Even this restricted examination of selected indicators already gives the impression that the task of answering the "whys" of fertility decline is highly complicated. With the identification of more factors as well as the mechanisms and interactions that operate, a broad framework of analysis can be specified which can then help explain fertility behavior of the women of the Philippines and plot out its prospect in the near and distant future. The 1983 NDS offers such a potential.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

[1] This count includes the Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey (RPFS).

[2] A "refined" measure based on women who were 25 to 49 years of age and who married before age 25 results in a slightly lower estimated mean age of 19.5 years.

[3] Based on EMW aged 25-49 married before age 25.

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