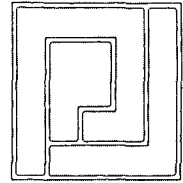


POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF THE PHILIPPINES



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The Philippine Government has long recognized the need to more fully integrate population concerns into the development planning process. However, until 1980, the approach towards such integration had always been made on an *ad hoc* rather than on an organized and systematic basis.¹ With the implementation of the Population and Development Planning and Research project (PDPR) beginning in June 1981, the Government has been able to pursue population-development planning integration in a more coordinated and sustained fashion.

The experience of the Philippines in population-development planning integration during the first three and a half years of the PDPR project is the subject of this paper. It discusses the issues which had to be resolved in the planning of the project, including questions about the operational meaning of population-development planning integration and the

appropriate strategy as well as organization for integration; cites the gains made towards integration and indicates a number of gaps and issues which need further resolution; and argues that, despite the inability to quantify population-development interactions at this time, opportunities exist for population-development planning integration at various stages and levels of planning. Examples of how such integration can take place in actual planning work are given.

ISSUES FACED IN PLANNING THE PDPR PROJECT

Objective

One of the questions that had to be clarified before the start of project implementation was the operational meaning of population-development planning integration. What specifically are envisioned to be accomplished?

To simply say that the idea is to incorporate population factors into development planning is certainly not enough. Population concerns inevitably enter into planning at some point or another, implicitly or explicitly. Most planners would be hard put to accept that they have not in any way incorporated population considerations in their planning activities. Accordingly, the manner, extent and level of integration that is desirable had to be further defined. Along this line, population-development planning integration was taken to mean the more explicit, more systematic and more substantive consideration of population concerns in the planning process. The "planning process" in this context would refer to the modalities by which national, regional and subregional development plans, policies and programs are formulated, implemented, evaluated and modified. "Population concerns" would include not only the fertility aspects of population, but also those of mortality and migration. Moreover, "consideration" would require that account be taken not only of the question of how proposed plans, policies and programs could accommodate a given population situation, but also of how the former may in turn affect the population configuration.

Obviously, population-development planning integration should not be looked on as an end in itself. Rather, it should only be conceived as a means by which consistency and complementarity between development policies and programs and population goals can be ensured.

Strategy

Having clarified the operational meaning of population-development planning integration, the next question was how such integration could be achieved.

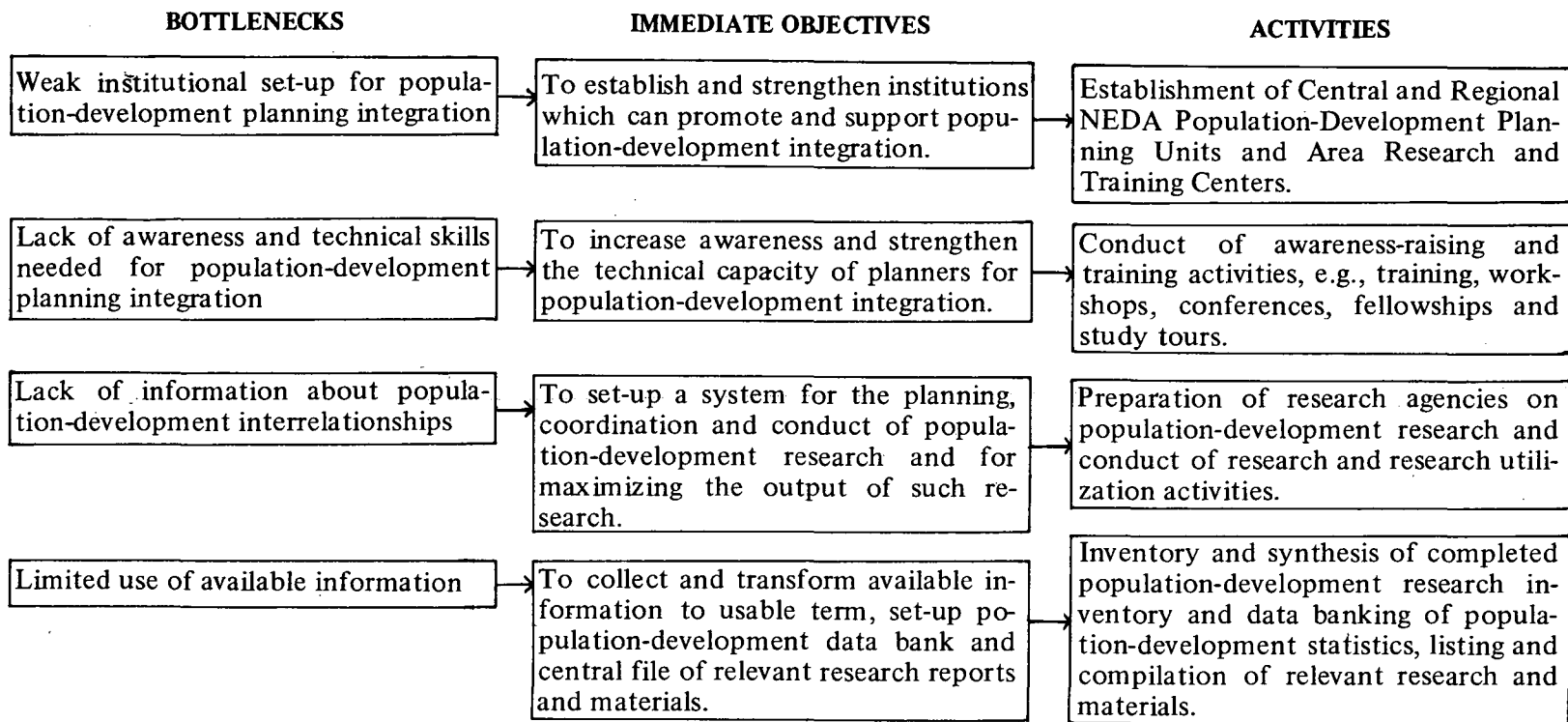
In essence, the strategy adopted to attain population-development planning integration involved a set of actions directed towards eliminating the barriers to integration. What are these barriers? Four major reasons which could explain the inadequate linkage between population and development planning in the Philippines were identified, namely: (1) the weak institutional set-up for promoting population-development planning integration; (2) the lack of awareness and technical skills needed for population-development planning integration; (3) the lack of operationally useful information on population-development interrelationships; and (4) the limited use of available population-development information. The proximate objectives and activities in the project were designed to directly address these bottlenecks.

Chart 1 shows the Philippine Government's approach to population-development planning integration schematically. It indicates how each bottleneck was proposed to be addressed.

Organization and Management

The next set of issues that had to be dealt with involved questions of organization and management. Who should be responsible for the promotion and coordination of population-

CHART I
**APPROACH TO POPULATION-
DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATION**



development planning integration efforts? How should such responsibilities be carried out? Should a population-development planning (PDP) unit be established? If so, what should be its role and functions? Should PDP units be created in sectoral ministries in addition to a centrally located PDP unit? Should PDP units be created at subnational planning levels?

The answers to these questions depended on a number of factors, the most important of which were, namely: (a) the existing institutional set-up for development planning; and (b) the amount of resources that could be made available to support population-development planning activities.

On the institutional set-up for planning, it was important to bear in mind that planning functions in the Philippines are dispersed among a large number of ministries and agencies at both the national and subnational levels of government. Planning is decentralized, with the Planning Ministry (National Economic and Development Authority or NEDA for short) serving as the coordinator of all planning activities. The problem of organizing for population-development planning integration is, therefore, more complex in this case than in one where planning is highly centralized in one agency or ministry. The approach is simpler in the latter case, since one has to work only within his own organization. This is not so in the Philippine case.

Who should be responsible for promoting and coordinating population-development planning integration? As

indicated above, one of the reasons for the weak linkage between population and development planning in the Philippines was the absence of sustained and coordinated efforts to improve the state of population-development planning integration. There were a number of attempts in the past in this direction, but the activities organized for the purpose were largely sporadic and uncoordinated.

This was due to the fact that it was not quite clear at the time which institution had the primary responsibility for promoting population-development planning integration. There were two government agencies which could have performed this role, namely: the Planning Ministry and the Commission on Population (POPCOM). The POPCOM is the Philippine Government agency whose mandate encompasses all population activities, while the Planning Ministry is the agency responsible for the coordination of development planning efforts in the country. Both had been involved in population-development planning activities, but neither considered these its primary responsibility. The Population Commission was too heavily occupied with the family planning program and related activities, while the Planning Ministry still considered population not only as a separate sector but also as an exogenous factor.

The very first action that was taken, therefore, was for the agencies concerned to agree that population-development planning integration efforts would be the primary responsibility of the Planning Ministry. It was but logical for the said Ministry

to assume the task of promoting and coordinating population-development planning integration activities. It is centrally located in the complex of agencies and ministries involved in the development planning process. As such, it has both access to and a certain degree of influence on these agencies and ministries.

1. Central PDP Unit

Having clarified institutional responsibilities, the project then faced the question of how to get organized within the Planning Ministry. It was clear that a population development planning (PDP) unit had to be organized, but how it was to be organized and what role and functions it should perform had to be considered carefully. These questions were critical because there was the danger that, by setting up a PDP unit, population would continue to be perceived as a separate planning sector by the various staffs of the Planning Ministry. There is even the possibility that the dichotomy might widen. Aside from this problem, there is, of course, the budget constraint.

It was decided that the PDP unit should be small, staffed with only three full-time technical personnel but supplemented by a number of the regular technical staff of the Planning Ministry who would be assisting in the work of the unit on a part-time basis. The unit itself would be located within the division in the Planning Ministry which has an overall view of development planning activities at various sectors and levels. The unit would be responsible for the promotion of

population-development planning integration and the coordination of activities to be implemented for this purpose.

The unit itself is not envisioned to do the integration. The nature of the existing machinery and process of planning does not make this possible. The unit's role is that of a *facilitator* of population-development planning integration. The unit's more specific functions include: (a) preparation of syntheses of completed population-development research, emphasizing the policy implications of said research, and dissemination of this information to planners in various sectors; (b) organization of conferences, workshops and seminars in order to raise awareness of population-development planning integration and to help in developing and expanding technical capacity for such integration; (c) institution of a system for identifying, developing and managing research for population-development planning integration; and (d) setting-up of a data base for population-development planning integration.

A question was raised in connection with the research function of the unit. Should the PDP unit conduct research of its own? The PDP unit would not be precluded from doing so, but in view of personnel constraints, it would be engaged primarily in research management, in drawing out and analyzing the policy implications of the findings and recommendations of available population-development research, and in identifying ways and means as well as opportunities for the greater integration of population con-

siderations in the development planning process. The use of available research manpower in the country would be maximized.

2. Sectoral PDP Units

Should PDP units be established in sectoral agencies and ministries? A sectoral PDP unit would perform the role of facilitator of population-development planning integration within a particular sector. Thus, a central PDP unit operating with a network of PDP units in sectoral ministries and agencies appears to be an attractive idea. However, for practical reasons, this arrangement is not feasible. There are budget constraints, for example. Moreover, sectoral ministries and agencies have their own work priorities; hence, unless they see a compelling reason to organize a PDP unit, they would probably not do so. Nevertheless, if there is any sectoral ministry which is interested in setting up a PDP unit, it would not be discouraged from establishing one.

3. Regional PDP Units

Should regional PDP units be established? Although population-development planning integration efforts were started at the national level, there was no presumption that efforts at the subnational level are less important than those at the national level. On the contrary, the manner and extent of integration of population considerations in development planning becomes more critical as one moves down from the highly aggregative macroeconomic planning to the location-specific subnational

program and project planning. Accordingly, population development planning integration efforts at the regional level formed part of the plans for pursuing integration right from the very beginning of the PDPR project. It was decided, however, to proceed gradually, focusing on only two regional planning offices of the Planning Ministry on a pilot basis, rather than on all regional planning offices at the same time.²

The regional PDP unit performs a role similar to the central PDP unit, acting as the facilitator of population-development planning integration within a particular region. However, to speak of a PDP "unit" at the level of the regional planning office may be misleading, because this involves only one additional full-time staff, again complemented by a number of regular technical personnel of the regional planning office. NEDA's regional planning offices are relatively small, and they operate under strict budget constraints. Thus, to think of a larger regional PDP unit is out of the question, at least for the moment.

One other aspect of the approach to population-development planning integration at the regional level which was made part of the PDP project is the concern for strengthening the capacity for population-development research and training at that level. In a nutshell, the idea adopted was to extend assistance to an existing research institution (usually academic) within a region in order to develop or strengthen its capacity for population-development training and research. This institution, which has been called

“Area Research and Training Center” (ARTC), would provide training and research services to the regional planning office or offices in a given area.³

GAINS

What has been accomplished so far? Obviously, it is too early to speak of impact in terms of actual effects on population variables. However, the more immediate gains made by the PDPR project can be cited. On the whole, the project has enabled the Philippine Government to pursue a deliberate, cumulative and coordinated effort towards population and development planning integration. Without the project, the approach to population and development planning integration would have remained dif-fused and piecemeal. Among the major accomplishments of the project are the following:

1. Establishment and strengthening of national and regional institutions which can promote and facilitate population-development planning integration.
2. Raising the awareness of national and regional planners⁴ about the importance of more fully integrating population concerns in the planning and decision making process.
3. Broadening the knowledge of national and regional planners about population-development interrelationships and improving their technical skills for population-development planning integration.
4. Development of a core group of

national and regional trainers for population-development planning integration.

5. Development of instructional materials for population-development planning integration.
6. Formulation and implementation of national and regional research agenda on population and development planning.
7. Strengthening of linkages between planners and researchers involved in population-development research at the national and regional levels.
8. Provision of direct inputs in the preparation of the Updated Philippine Development Plan, 1984-1987, such as national and regional population and manpower projections and the results of population development research which are relevant to macro and sectoral plans and programs.
9. Incorporation of population development topics into the curricula of existing training programs for government executives and technical personnel.

GAPS AND ISSUES

While the project has made progress towards population development planning integration, a number of gaps and issues still remain. The most important of these is the need to specify more clearly how a planner can actually integrate population factors into his planning activities. In many workshops and conferences, the question often asked by planners is: “We are convinced that we have to integrate population factors into the planning

process, but how do we do it?"

The question has been only partly answered, the reason being that, while planners would like to be able to quantify the demographic impact of their proposed programs and projects, only the possible direction of the impact could be provided to them. In this connection, it has been suggested that perhaps some measure of "population rate of return" could be derived and used as a guide to the selection of development projects. Although the idea is a useful one, the state of population-development research at this time would not make this suggestion feasible. In fact, the prospects are not that bright that this approach will be possible in the near future. A major problem is the difficulty of project impact assessment, a problem which is true even in cases where the interest is on the more immediate impact on incomes, employment and output of development projects like feeder roads, rural electrification, etc.⁵

This is not to say that perhaps efforts towards population-development planning integration are futile because the "technology" for operationalizing it is still underdeveloped. While the generation of more quantitative information about population-development interrelationships is no doubt important for population-development planning integration, there are many opportunities for enhancing integration even under the present state of knowledge about population-development interactions.

The Philippine experience shows that the mere provision of knowledge to planners about demographic pat-

terns and trends and generally observed population-development interrelationships can be useful. Firstly, this activity is generating a wider support to the country's population goals, particularly at the regional and subregional levels where the role of local leaders is critical to the achievement of both population and development objectives. Secondly, planners at national and regional levels who have been reached by the project are now beginning to show adeptness at "handling" demographic data and to explicitly determine, at least in terms of probable direction, the demographic impact of the policies and programs that they formulate.

Opportunities for population-development planning integration can be further illustrated by considering some of the stages of planning, namely: (1) analysis of the situation; (2) determination of objectives; (3) formulation of strategy, and (4) translation of strategy into specific policies, programs and projects. Under each of these planning activities, greater population-development planning integration can be practised.

The gap in situational analysis need not be elaborated on. Suffice it to say that, in many instances, there is a tendency to gloss over the population factor and to focus more on economic and financial issues. This can be partly explained by what has been mentioned above as the tendency to perceive population as an exogenous factor which is reinforced by the medium-term time horizon of Philippine Development Plans.⁶ During a period of five years, the impact of develop-

ment policies and programs on population variables may be considered too small to be an important concern, though this may not be true in the case of migration. The Government's announced intention to move towards longer-term planning will make it imperative to give adequate attention to population-development inter-relationships.

As regards target-setting, the following excerpts from the *Final Report of the Special Committee to Review the Philippine Population Program* (1978) can be cited as an example:

Population targets in the development plans have been usually set in terms of growth rates with very little linkage with resource availability. The implicit assumption is that a lower growth rate is always better than a higher one, since the former means a more rapid approach to the point where population growth levels off . . . there is a point in targeting population levels in such a way that the question of attainability is linked to the question of what level of population can be sustained at desirable levels of living at a certain point in time . . .

One of the noticeable omissions in the country's Development Plans is the continued lack of numerical targets for income redistribution. The estimation of these numerical targets would have rendered more precise the social and demographic objectives of the plans. It is widely recognized that in the long run, a general improvement in income distribution may lead to a decline in fertility . . .

In the formulation of strategies and policies, the concentration of population and development in Metro Manila may be mentioned as a case in point. Such concentration is largely the con-

sequence of an import substitution industrialization policy which created a bias against agriculture, rural development and more balanced regional development. The tendency towards large-scale, capital-intensive projects has also partly accounted for this. In the *Updated Philippine Development Plan 1984-1987*, a deliberate shift in strategy favoring agriculture and the rural sector is set forth. Aside from economic considerations, the potential demographic impact of this strategy is well recognized. About two-thirds of the Philippine population reside in the rural areas. Their average income is only one-half of the average income of their urban counterparts. Thus, policies and programs that could raise the incomes of the rural population would have a considerable impact on equity and welfare and "would help in bringing down the country's population growth rate. Moreover, the concentration of development in such centers as Metro Manila could be checked as migration patterns are altered by the transformation taking place in the rural areas" (NEDA, 1984). Certainly, this new focus on agriculture and rural development provides a good starting point for population-development planning integration.

At the program and project level, integration can take on many forms, involving decisions regarding the type, location, design and emphasis of programs and projects. Thus, in the case of the Philippines, greater integration could mean the implementation of more programs and projects directed towards raising agricultural producti-

vity, increasing farm incomes, expanding educational opportunities particularly in the rural areas, reducing infant mortality, and expanding employment opportunities for women in rural communities. As for location, integration would call for more rural-based projects as against urban-based projects and probably smaller scale labor-intensive projects as against large-scale capital-intensive projects. Integration would also call for the critical massing of resources where they are needed, e.g., more program inputs in areas with the highest infant mortality rates as compared to those with lower rates, etc. Integration could also take place in the design of specific projects. An agricultural or small-scale industry extension project, for instance, could be designed in such a way as to include women's participation in a meaningful way.

Some planners have commented that the only implication of population-development planning integration is perhaps the need to have "more of the same" development programs. While correct to a certain extent, this is an oversimplification because there are many programs competing for scarce resources. Expenditures for education and health services, for example, must compete with expenditures for power, highways, ports, airports, a number of industrial projects, and national defense. Some programs facilitate the achievement of population and development goals simultaneously; others do not and sometimes work at cross purposes with each other. Thus, depending on the existing policy and program mix, "more

of the same" can either hinder or enhance the attainment of population and development objectives. Even if the existing policy and program mix is assumed to be the appropriate one, their continued implementation may not take place automatically, in view of the political processes involved in decision making. Finally, the "more of the same" prescription ignores the qualitative changes that must be made in on-going development programs and projects to make them more effective.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has reviewed the experience of the Philippines in population-development planning integration over the last three and a half years. It began with a discussion of the issues which had to be resolved in the planning of the PDPR project. These include questions about the operational meaning of population-development planning integration and the appropriate strategy as well as organization for such integration. Subsequently, the paper cited the gains made towards integration and indicated a number of gaps and issues which remain.

On the whole, it can be said that population-development planning integration efforts in the Philippines have made some headway, particularly after 1980 when the PDPR project enabled the Philippine Government to pursue a deliberate, cumulative and coordinated effort towards integration. To a certain extent, the Philippine case demonstrates that much more can be done with a plan-

ned program for promoting integration than by simply allowing matters to "take their own course."

However, it cannot be claimed that the Philippines has succeeded in fully integrating population concerns into the development planning process. A number of gaps and issues remain, including the lack of "hard" information about population-development interrelationships and the skepticism about the ability to operationalize the concept of integration. Can it be done?

Despite the lack of quantified population-development interactions, opportunities do exist for greater population-development planning integration at various stages and levels of planning. But to be able to seize these opportunities, a process of internalization of generally observed and accepted population-development interactions must occur among planners. In many respects, efforts towards population-development planning integration can be looked at as the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) program for integration. And just like the IEC component of family planning programs, the ultimate test of success is effective practice.

A paragraph or two in the development plan document about population-development dynamics do not mean that integration has been achieved. The real test of integration is rather the set of development strategies, policies, programs and projects that actually get adopted and implemented.

NOTES

¹For a discussion of how population factors have been incorporated in Philippine Development Plans prior to 1980, see Pante and Morales, "Population Policy and Development Planning: The Philippine Experience," *Journal of Philippine Development* (Vol. VII, No. 1), First Semester 1980.

²There are presently 12 administrative regions in the country, excluding Metro Manila, the National Capital Region. NEDA has a regional office in each of the twelve regions headed by a regional executive director. Responsibility for regional planning rests with the Regional Development Council which is composed of provincial governors, city mayors and members of parliament from the region. The NEDA regional office (NRO) serves as the secretariat of the Regional Development Council. As of December 1984, the PDPR project has covered two additional regions, bringing the total number of regions covered by the project to four.

³The Philippines has three major island groupings, namely: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The scheme is to establish an ARTC in each of these island groupings. Eventually, it is envisioned that the research and training needs of regional planners for population-development planning integration can be primarily accommodated by the ARTCs.

⁴The term "planner" refers not only to those who formulate plans, but also to key officials involved in the decision making process. Thus, the target market of the PDPR project includes Cabinet ministers, members of the legislative assembly, provincial governors, and city and town mayors, in addition to the technical planning personnel of national, sectoral and regional agencies.

⁵The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) commissioned a series of impact studies for a number of development projects through the Economic and Social Impact Analysis/Women in Development (ESIA/WID) project. Among the lessons learned were: (1) the difficulty of impact attribution in view of the multiplicity of development projects going on in a given locality; and (2) the relatively high cost involved in impact assessment studies. See "Economic and Social Impact of Development Projects", Philip-

pine Center for Economic Development (mimeographed), 1982.

⁶The first long-term development plan prepared by the Philippine Government was the perspective plan for the period 1978-2000. Population development integration in that plan was, however, limited because the level of awareness and skills for such integration was still quite low when it was being formulated. The next Five-Year Development Plan covering 1988-1992 will be accompanied by a long-term plan up to the year 2020. A number of studies have been initiated to assist in the preparation of the latter. One of these is a study on the implications on basic needs (food, housing, education, jobs, health services) of alternative population projections.

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