IPC / POPCOM 1971 MASS MEDIA STUDY

FINAL REPORT

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Final report submitted to the Commission on Population
by the Institute of Philippine Culture
on September 15, 1971

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Frank Lynch, S.J.

This report begins with an introductory statement, in which is found a description of the mass media program with the results of which the study was concerned. One must read this section to know what the mass media people intended to accomplish, and by what means. Following the introduction there are sections on the plan of the survey, its limitations, findings, and conclusions.

INTRODUCTION

Family Planning (FP) has been promoted by private Philippine organizations for the last 15 years, but it was only in 1968 that the government became formally involved. This occurred with the creation, within the Department of Health, of the Project Office for Maternal and Child Health (POMCH). In 1970, the Commission on Population (POPCOM) was created by presidential order to perform the task of formulating population policy and program recommendations. It took over the functions of POMCH in May of that year and is presently the highest coordinating body of our population-control program. With the state's recognition of population control as a national goal, a more coordinated and comprehensive FP program can be envisioned.

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*The survey reported here was completed in fulfillment of a contract between the Commission on Population (POPCOM) and the Institute of Philippine Culture, signed on February 20, 1971. Project director was Aurora Silayan Go. Frank Lynch acted as consultant and edited the final report.

Communications and family planning programs. Social scientists hope to understand the behavioral problems that accompany the introduction of the family-planning innovation. As in other countries, initial researches in this area, begun as early as 1963, have used the KAP (knowledge, attitudes, practice) framework. Related subjects such as the modernization process, rural health practices, the Filipino family, problems of measuring attitudes, and the like, have also received considerable attention. Moreover, with the intensification of programs promoting family limitation, we can expect a parallel development of research activities.

A relatively new interest within FP research, at least in the Philippines, is the area of communications. According to Berelson, cited in Smith (1965:71-72), there are three clusters of factors involved in the effective spread of FP; namely, the nature of the society, the nature of contraceptive methods, and the communications media. Some sociologists, in fact, have viewed FP programs as an ideal situation in which to experiment with various theories earlier developed by communications research in relation to voting behavior, marketing, consumer choices, adoption of innovations, and the like.

Offhand, the prospects of mass media's carrying the FP message directly to the bulk of Filipinos do not seem particularly bright, because while most of the population lives in the barrios, the greatest mass-media exposure occurs in the cities and towns (Arnaldo 1969:70-71). Nonetheless the radio and, to a smaller extent, the printed word do manage to reach considerable numbers of the rural population. Furthermore, if the "two-step" model of communication fits the rural Philippine reality, then it is enough if those in positions of opinion leadership receive the family-planning message.

The grimness of the picture is further relieved by the 1970 finding that "converts" to family planning come in great numbers from those who earlier took a "Don't Know" stance. Since literature on the subject offers the common suggestion that the mass media should accept that their basic role is that of a source of information, its position in the spread of conscious family limitation may be assured.

The present study attempts to answer the question: What sort of observable changes are traceable to the ongoing FP information and education program initiated in 1970 by the Social Communications Center (SCC).[1] Specific as the purpose of the study is, we have placed our inquiry within the broader framework of who is reached by what form of communications and with what effect. Thus, although our ultimate goal is to trace the role of SCC in the acceptance of family planning, the process of analysis will be guided by such generally applicable questions as the following: Who are the persons most receptive to what type of FP communications? What key characteristics identify individuals who can be expected to change upon exposure to various channels of communications? What particular changes in FP awareness, knowledge, and attitudes are associated with the mass communications approach?

The program of the Social Communications Center. According to the terms of a contract which they signed with the POMCH on December 12, 1969, the SCC agreed to develop and increase through periodicals and radio "public awareness of the need for responsible parenthood and family/population planning."[2] In particular, they agreed to accomplish the following goals (from the Sub-Agreement, page 2):

(a) Through periodicals and radio broadcasts, to acquaint the public with the concept of family planning and responsible parenthood;

(b) To promote awareness of the benefits of family planning with respect to health, sociological implications, and economic status through these periodicals and radio broadcasts.

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1. The Social Communications Center, Inc., is directed by Cornelio Lagerwey, M.S.C. Main offices are at Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard, corner of Santol Road, Santa Mesa, Manila.

2. From the Sub-Agreement between the POMCH and the SCC, signed December 12, 1969, and given final approval by the National Economic Council and the U.S. Agency for International Development on January 20, 1970.

In question-and-answer form, the SCC's program guidelines have been expressed in these terms:[3]

1. What is the concept of family planning and responsible parenthood?

   a. All parents have the duty of responsible parenthood, i.e., the duty to beget and rear children with consciousness of the responsibilities involved, and therefore, negatively, not to beget more children than they properly bring up.

   b. Hence, family planning in the sense of consciously avoiding conception, is for many couples in our country a part of their responsibility as parents.

   c. Family planning is not to be identified with any one method. Couples should have the freedom to choose the method that suits them in the light of their conscience (which includes seeking the necessary moral guidance and advice).

2. What specific benefits result from family planning?

   a. Parents will be able to give more attention to and take better care of the children they already have.

   b. Proper spacing of children makes for healthier mothers and babies, also helps the breadwinner make necessary financial adjustments.

3. What is the relation of family planning to economic status?

   a. From the economic viewpoint, the rule is not to have more children than the family can afford to bring up properly.

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3. Personal communication from Genero Ong, SCC.

b. Violation of this rule leads to financial and other problems, including tensions in the family, sickness, juvenile delinquency, etc.

It is important to note that the SCC program, as designed, does not include direct encouragement of the practice of family planning. It certainly was designed even less to promote the adoption of any particular technique.

In periodicals, the SCC agreed to research, write, and illustrate population and family planning articles in keeping with the above objectives, and to publish them in English and four-five major Philippine languages in the following magazines: the monthly Ang Tao, Halina (which they later ceased publishing), and Philippine Digest, and the fortnightly Action Now (later called Now). Ang Tao Komiks, published irregularly, were a later addition to the list. These magazines, or reprints of their FP articles, were to be widely distributed through the usual commercial and subscription channels, as well as through 350 FP clinics. School populations, mostly public, figured prominently in the subscription list of Ang Tao.

In radio, the SCC agreed to prepare scripts for 15-minute soap operas (later called the "Mirror of Life," or Salamin ng Buhay) and for spot announcements in four Philippine languages. Further it was to produce these scripts, reproduce the tapes, and contribute them to about 100 local radio stations throughout the Philippines. A total of 130 installments of Salamin ng Buhay and 48 spot announcements were promised, and the means taken to see that they were produced and used. Mr. Genaro Ong of SCC reports that the drama series was in fact aired five times a week in Tagalog, Cebuano, Iloko, and Ilongo for a period of at least six months.[4]

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4. Personal communication, September 15, 1971.

PLAN OF THE STUDY

Purpose and design. The research aimed principally to discover the extent to which the programmed activities of the SCC in the period April 1970 to January 1971 accounted for changes in the target population's knowledge and attitudes about family planning. This was the main thrust of the SCC campaign, with practice a secondary consideration for the promotion of which they took no direct steps.

There are several ways in which a study of this kind might be planned. No matter which one is chosen, however, one must start by defining the population under study. In the present case, as in two earlier surveys in the IPC series, this will be residents of the so-called lowland Christian areas of the Philippines, but excluding chartered cities and provincial capitals. Some 37 provinces are involved, within which a total of 100 municipalities were studied in 1967, a randomly chosen 20 of the 100 in 1970, and the same 20 again in 1971. We shall describe the 1971 sample in greater detail below.

We are dealing throughout with the comparison of related samples, since 1970 includes a part of 1967 and 1971 is, in its entirety, a portion of 1970. In view of this reality, and to capitalize on it, when comparing the 1970 responses to those of 1967, Lynch and Makil (1971:40) employed two approaches. In the first, which is reflected in their Tables 6-10, the entire 1967 sample was compared with the entire 1970 sample. In the second, seen in Tables 11 and 12, they compared the responses of only those people who had been interviewed in both surveys.

The latter approach controls, in effect, for all those variables which are relatively stable characteristics of the individual panelist, those likely to be the same from interview to interview. In this way it makes less difficult the establishing of a link between any observed change and the experimental variable. On the other hand, a weakness inherent in both designs is their reliance on the respondent's memory (and honesty) regarding exposure to a number of important variables such as mass-media messages about family planning. Indeed, in the present study, though we do know whether SCC radio programs and spot announcements

could have been heard in a particular municipality, we have only the respondent's word for it that he personally did in fact listen to them on one or more occasions. But this is, after all, one of the calculated risks we take in doing a survey, or indeed in dealing with any fellow human being whom we must trust.

Unlike the report on the IPC/POMCH 1970 National Survey, the emphasis here will not be on aggregate comparisons of the 1970 and 1971 samples (the first approach described above) but on a comparison of the same 753 individuals at two points in time, April-May 1970 and January-March 1971. This is a strength of the present study.

It follows that we shall give only a selection of the aggregate data about the two samples, and without the elaborate crosstabulations found in the final report on the IPC/POMCH study (Lynch and Makil 1971). Our major interest will be in individual change between the baseline (1970) and follow-up (1971) surveys, and its possible relation to the SCC's effort at FP promotion. Those who were exposed to this influence in the interim will be our experimental group, and those who were not will be the control. Those characteristics which the SCC wished to change (chiefly awareness, knowledge, and attitudes) or was likely to affect (above all, the practice of family planning) constitute our dependent variables, reported first in 1970 and then again in 1971. Our primary task is to see if those who were exposed to the SCC message changed more in the intended direction than the unexposed did. Secondarily, we shall look for other likely reasons behind such changes.

Hypotheses. In keeping with the purposes for which the study was designed, numerous hypotheses were constructed to guide the research. They fall easily into four categories, as follows:

GROUP A. Hypotheses about the association, in 1971 alone, of selected dependent variables with selected background characteristics;

GROUP B. Hypotheses about the direction and significance of changes in selected independent and dependent variables between 1970 and 1971;

GROUP C. Hypotheses about the association between changes in the level of KAP (dependent) variables and exposure to SCC and non-SCC mass media programs (independent variables);

GROUP D. Hypotheses about the association between changes in the level of KAP variables and selected non-media variables.

The individual hypotheses included within each of the groups will be explicitated in the section on Findings, below.

Sample. To understand the IPC/POPCOM 1971 sample one must know its history, which begins in 1967. It was then that the Continuation Committee of the Baguio Religious Acculturation Conference suggested and sponsored a survey of lowland Christian family (Lynch and Makil 1968). In that study, 100 randomly selected municipalities were visited, and in each one of them about 24 people were interviewed--by final count, 2382 (see Lynch and Makil 1968:295-97).

According to the plan for the next, or IPC/POMCH 1970, study the respondents were supposed to be a randomly selected fifth of those who had been interviewed in the BRAC survey. This would have meant some 480 people living in 20 out of the 100 municipalities in the 1967 sample. However, there were two eleventh-hour changes. First, we were asked to include in the interview questions a number of items which anticipated a follow-up survey to evaluate the impact of the SCC's family-planning information and motivation program. The program was getting underway at the same time as the survey, in April 1970. Moreover, it was suggested we expand the sample to 1,000 respondents.

The additional respondents were located by means of the quota-sampling technique, but such was the mobility or evasiveness of the rural resident (this was an important finding) that of the 480 interviewed in 1967, only 310 could be located in 1970--a loss of about 35 percent in some 29 months. We had better luck with the new people we hoped to recruit: of the 772 we hoped to interview, we actually managed to get 743, only 29 short of the target number.

This made the 1970 total 1,043, and these were the people we tried to visit once more for the IPC/POPCOM 1971 survey, reported here. However, we again had trouble re-contacting the respondent panel, with more than one out of four of them (28 percent) eluding our interviewers. The resultant total for 1971 is 753.

In terms of sex, age, religion, mother tongue, social status, literacy, and kind of schools attended, and residence, the 1971 sample closely approximates those interviewed in 1970--all 753 were, after all, part of the earlier sample. However, in all characteristics except sex, the 1971 sample differs more or less from the lowland Christian population which it is supposed to represent. The details can be found in Table 1.

Interview schedule. The interview schedule employed in the 1971 survey sought two categories of information, namely, the answers to questions asked in the 1970 round, and additional data which we collected for the first time. Background information collected in 1970 but not recorded in 1971 included those items which were unlikely to have changed in the interim, such as educational attainment, social class, and religious affiliation.

Asked both in 1970 and 1971 were questions to elicit the following information.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

All respondents: Age, civil status, sex, occupational status, residence (barrio/población)

Married respondents: Present occupation of spouse, additional number of children since the previous interview.

KAP VARIABLES

All respondents: Awareness and approval of FP in general, reasons for approval and disapproval, awareness of specific FP methods, knowledge of use, desire to know about specific FP methods, preferred sources of information about FP, perception of community support of FP, approval of R's spouse, perception of Papal approval, communication with

friends/relatives about FP, specific methods of interest to R, knowledge of who the head of the Catholic Church is, knowledge of the Pope's name.

Married respondents: Preferred family size, ever tried any birth control method.

MASS MEDIA VARIABLES

All respondents: Frequency of reading newspapers and magazines, magazines most often read, ever reading about FP information from comics, newspaper, and magazines, first sources of information about specific methods, listening to the SCC radio drama ("Mirror of Life"), reading about FP information in SCC magazines and reprints.

Additional data, inquired after only in 1971, were the following:

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

All respondents: Knowledge of where to go for FP needs; R's awareness of clinics in the area; opinions on the effect of FP on one's standard of living; perceived advantages and disadvantages of FP; opinions on important responsibilities of parents and how these could be achieved; desire to practice birth control soon after marriage; ideal spacing of one's children; desired level of parity before practicing birth control; evaluation of one's own family size (single Rs refers to brothers and sisters; married Rs refers to one's children); ideal age of marriage; perception of what the Mayor and the barrio captain think about FP; awareness of whether R's religion approves FP; opinion on what particular techniques R's religion approves and what it disapproves; awareness about the practice of birth control by friends, neighbors, and relatives; frequency of communication about FP with friends, neighbors, or relatives; R's concept of what FP is.

Married respondents: Desire for any more children, reasons given for wanting or not wanting more children, specific method desired by R for some future need, first source of knowledge on how a FP method is used, opinion on whether abortion is a FP method.

At work, then among our respondents there seem to be just two significant forces: their level of living, or sophistication, and their knowledge and interest in FP. The two are separable.

Independent variables	R	NP	MZ	C	Any SCC	SCC printed
Non-FP-related variables						
Sex	-	M*	-	-	-	-
Age	-	-	-	-	-	-
Civil status	-	-	-	-	-	-
FP eligibility	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social class	-	-	-	L**	-	U***
Education	-	-	-	L***	-	H***
Religion	Pr**	-	-	-	-	-
Residence	-	-	-	-	-	P***
Reading frequency	-	-	-	-	-	H***
Regular mag. reader (1970)	-	-	-	-	-	Y***
FP-related variables						
Children ever born	-	-	-	-	-	-
Preferred family size	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aware of FP (1970)	-	-	A**	-	A***	-
Approves FP (1970)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Knows spec. techn. (1970)	-	-	K**	-	-	K*
Desires more info. (1970)	-	-	-	-	Y**	-
FP clinic in municipality	-	-	-	-	-	Yn**
SCC station received	Y***	-	-	N**	-	-

Abbreviations: R - radio; NP - newspapers; MZ - magazines; C - comis; Pr - Protestant; Y - Yes; Yn - Yes, newly established; M - male; A - aware; K - knowledge of one or more specific FP techniques; L - lower; N - No; U - upper; H - high, or higher; P - población; * - at the 0.05 level, by the Chi-square test; ** - 0.01 or 0.02 (Chi-square); *** - 0.001 (Chi-square). A hyphen (-) signifies a non-significant association between the variable (row) and the FP mass-media outlet (column).

Summary. The KAP cognitive variables of general awareness, recalling or recognizing the name of a listed technique, and knowing how to use a listed technique all increased significantly in the trial period (Table 26, A1-3). Those not exposed to SCC productions, as well as SCC readers, increased significantly in all three kinds of knowledge; SCC listeners and reader-listeners, only in knowledge of use.

Of the attitudinal variables, increased approval of FP in general is less clearly associated with SCC exposure (other than spot announcements) than is increased desire to know about specific techniques (Table 27, A4-E4 and A5-E5). Non-significant increases both in approval and in desire to know more are associated with thinking that an important other person or group disapproves of FP, while significant increases in these variables are associated equally with thinking others approve and not knowing what they think about FP (Table 27, H4-L4 and H5-L5). Presence of a FP clinic, but only if it was inaugurated in December 1970 or later, is related to increased approval of FP and a growing desire to know more about it--but the same is found where there is no FP clinic at all (Table 27, P4 and P5). Increased desire to know more about FP is more closely associated with visiting a FP clinic than is mere general approval (Table 27, 04 and 05); however, we again find that those who never visited a clinic have increased even more in approval and desire (ibid.).

An increase in the tendency to believe the Pope approves of family planning is especially strong among those not exposed to SCC productions, though SCC readers and those who have heard the spot announcements also manifest this upward shift (Table 28, col. 7). With few exceptions the percentage of FP discussants tends to stay uniformly level (Table 28, col. 8), regardless of SCC exposure or non-exposure.

Reading or listening to SCC productions does seem (as of 1971) to be associated, however, with a higher frequency of FP discussion (0.01) and increased likelihood of current FP practice (0.02; Table 29, A9 and A10), but not more than is the reading of other FP-information sources (n.s.; Table 29, C10). There is, nonetheless, a direct correlation between amount of SCC exposure (0.01 and frequency of hearing Salamin ng buhay (0.02), on the one hand, and the tendency to think one's religion approves of family planning, on the other (Table 30, A11). Those