

Family Building Patterns of Young Manila Couples

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Introduction

World population explosion is a well-known fact. The story of the Philippines, as a case in point, whose population grew from less than 8 million at the start of this century to an estimated 36 million at present, is familiar. What is not so familiar are the reasons underlying this development.

Many attempts have been made to discover the dynamics of population growth. Earlier theorists have thought of a "law" of population in causal terms and have searched for a particular factor which directly affects and determines population growth.¹ Research in recent decades, utilizing a variety of population variables and characteristics and finding significant interactions between these factors and population movements, has made it evident that there is no single causal factor or

a single clearly defined causal chain capable of explaining population phenomena. What can be observed are "structural" effects.

Fifteen years ago, Mackenroth pointed out that the growth of every individual population unit has to be viewed within the particular historical context which determines its growth behavior. Population growth patterns are embedded in the totality of social processes and related with these via intermediary sociological elements like mortality, fertility, age at and frequency of marriage, to name only a few. The fashion in which these sociological elements are combined is dependent upon the historical sociological structure. Whenever this structure is altered through political, technological, or economic intervention, the growth patterns adjust themselves to the newly emerging constellation.²

Following the line of thought outlined by Mackenroth, social scientists in recent years have proposed three types of theoretical frameworks, in the context of

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¹ Cf. United Nations, *The Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends*. New York: United Nations, 1953, Chapter III: "Histories of Population Theories." pp. 21-43.

² Gerhard Mackenroth, *Bevölkerungslehre: Theorie, Soziologie und Statistik der Bevölkerung*. Springer Verlag: Berlin — Heidelberg — Göttingen, 1953.

which the interaction between demographic phenomena like birth, death, and migration, and population characteristics as age, sex, and marital composition can be explained. Davis and Blake have emphasized an "institutional" framework centered around the family;³ Freedman has proposed a "normative" framework,⁴ and Hill, Stycos, and Back in their study of fertility in the West Indies have utilized an "interactional" kind of framework.⁵

Recognizing the importance of the family structure and its cultural context which shapes and guides the thinking and activities of married couples, a number of studies at local levels have been and are being undertaken in the Philippines, attempting to shed some light on the interrelationships between socio-cultural elements and population growth phenomena.⁶

³ Kingsley Davis and Judith Blake, "Social Structure and Fertility: An Analytical Framework," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. IV (April, 1956), pp. 211-235.

⁴ Ronald Freedman "Norms for Family Size in Underdeveloped Areas," *Proceedings of the Royal Society, B*, Vol. 159, (1963), pp. 220-45.

⁵ Kurt W. Back, Reuben Hill, and J. Mayone Stycos, "Population Control in Puerto Rico: The Formal and Informal Framework," in Melvin G. Shimm and Robinson O. Everett, eds., *Population Control: The Imminent World Crisis*. Oceanea Publications, Inc., 1961, pp. 182 ff.

⁶ The Population Institute of the University of the Philippines has devoted most of its research efforts in past years to pilot studies on fertility in Manila and other selected areas of the Philippines. Cf. Edmund M. Murphy, ed., *Four Fertility Surveys*. Quezon City: J.M.C. Press, 1968.

The University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, USA, in conjunction with the University of San Carlos, Cebu City, and the Cebu Institute of Medicine is presently engaged in a study of "Family Health" in Cebu. Preliminary results are summarized in the article by William T. Liu and Siok-hue Yu, "The Lower-Class Cebuano Family: A Preliminary Profile Analysis," published in the *PSR*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 3-4 (July-October 1968). Similar studies on a smaller scale, have originated in Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro City.

Most recently, family planning movements in the country have started to evaluate their strategies in view of cultural factors underlying

So far, most endeavors to unravel the intricacies of population dynamics in the Philippines have been hampered by a lack of basic information. Extremely little is available in terms of demographic data which will permit the charging of existing patterns and which will make possible realistic population and family planning. To date, most studies have had to concern themselves with the task of crystallizing prevailing patterns rather than explaining them. Censuses that have been taken in the country can at best be labeled "rough guesses" and have had to be adjusted by means of various demographic techniques to be at least usable. However, no one can ascertain exactly the extent to which the assumptions underlying these techniques meet reality. The problem is worse as far as vital registration is concerned, which for certain areas in the country attains a level of only 35 percent completeness. Omissions do not occur in a random fashion but relate to particular segments of the society, notably the poor and the minority groups. Sample surveys undertaken by governmental or private agencies often suffer from deficiencies which are difficult to discern. Their execution in the field is hard to control, and checks applied after the surveys, where undertaken, have more than once revealed gross inaccuracies in reporting.⁷ In addition, survey methods utilized are patterned after American experience, and it is doubtful to what extent

fertility behavior, with Silliman University and the Population Institute serving as research centers.

⁷ A post-enumeration survey performed in Manila and some Luzon provinces one month after the National Demographic Survey of Households (NDS) in May 1968 revealed that a good number of "respondents" for whom completed questionnaires had been handed in, had never been visited, that 17% of the households had not been asked fertility questions, and that there were sizeable disagreements even in answers to rather simple questions, e.g.: Kind of cooking fuel used.

these are able to yield valid and reliable information in view of a number of incompatibilities existing between Filipino and American culture.⁸

Due to the scarcity of solid demographic data, refuge has often been sought in all kinds of "back alleys" in order to discover growth and vital patterns. This paper is another example of this type of study.

The Philippines has one of the highest population growth rates in the world. It stands at an estimated average of 3.3 per cent for the decade 1965-1970, which is some 60 per cent above world average. The high growth rate is the result of the wide gap between the birth and death rates, producing a large excess of births over deaths year after year. The crude death rate for the country as whole, which hovers around an annual level of 12 deaths per thousand population, still stands some chances of improvements, especially in view of the efforts of the government to cover all rural districts with health units. The most probable consequence of expanded health services is a decline in infant mortality. Of a thousand babies born in the country, well over a hundred die before completing their first year of life—a figure that is relatively elevated when compared with 27 in the US and only 10 in Sweden.⁹ While these improvements can be forecast with some confidence, little can be said about the future trend of the birth rate. Even though Pratt was unable to discover any measurable change in the fertility of Manila women between 1956 and 1966, he has nevertheless ventured the

guess that in Manila a "small family norm" may be emerging. This optimism is based on the comparatively favorable response which family planning has found among the urban population, and which ultimately may result in families with an average of four children instead of the present six.¹⁰

Whatever the future trends may be, an important first task in any study of the factors accounting for large family size is to look at the timing and spacing by which couples achieve the number of children they actually have during their married life. If norms regarding family size exist—and Freedman contends that they are present in every society¹¹—then the couples which reach a given family size early in the childbearing period will have a larger time span during which they may have an "accidental", unwanted pregnancy, which places them beyond their previously expected number of children. On the other hand, the larger the interval since the last birth, the more likely it is that the couple may not go on to have another child, or it may revise previous expectations downward. In addition, variations in the timing of marriage and of births among different strata in the society are likely to have important economic and social consequences, even if the ultimate number of children differs little.

Aside from being indicators of possible economic and social consequences for the families themselves, recent trends concerning timing of marriage and birth can also help to answer queries as to what path the population as a whole may follow in its level of fertility. In the latter half of the past century and the first three decades of the present, western

⁸ Cf. Gerry E. Hendershot, "Characteristics of the Interview Situation in a Manila Survey." Published in the *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 3-4 (July-October 1968).

⁹ Cf. Nathan Keyfitz and Wilhelm Flieger, *World Population: An Analysis of Vital Data*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, pp. 28, 36, 40.

¹⁰ William F. Pratt, "Family Size and Expectations in Manila" *Saint Louis Quarterly*, vol. 5, nos. 1-2 (March-June 1967), pp. 153-184.

¹¹ Ronald E. Freedman, *op. cit.*

countries displayed a number of distinct patterns in the course of substantial fertility curtailments. A shift took place in the mean age of childbearing toward the younger ages, i.e., women started to have children earlier in life. While such a move in itself will tend to enhance fertility potentials by shortening the average time needed for a mother to replace herself with a baby girl, this tendency was counteracted by first a wider spacing of children and then a sharp curtailment of age-specific fertility for the age groups 35 years and over. In addition, the sharp drop in the overall birth rate due to earlier termination of childbearing started a process of population aging, which helped to increase the proportion of older women in favor of the younger ones, the main

agents of fertility, thereby reducing the overall birth rate even further. The generally well-taken objection that western patterns are not necessarily relevant to presently developing areas, since social and cultural patterns underlying these movements are either not acceptable or applicable to non-western cultures, can be countered by ample evidence from a number of developing countries with records that permit trend analysis. Those among them which have already achieved impressive fertility reduction, like Japan and Taiwan, have displayed identical patterns, differing from the West only in the greater speed of their occurrence. By contrast, countries with continuously high or rising fertility, display radically different trends, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Trend Patterns of Various Demographic Parameters
For Selected Countries With Declining or Rising
Birth Rates

DEMOGRAPHIC PARAMETERS	COUNTRY AND PERIOD			
	Sweden 1875-1935	Japan 1940-1960	Taiwan 1956-1964	Honduras 1957-1965
Total fertility				
rates	Declining	Declining	Declining	Rising
Start of period	4.5	4.1	6.5	5.9
End of period	1.9	2.0	4.8	6.3
Mean Age of				
Mothers at	Declining	Declining	Declining	Rising
Childbirth				
Variance Around				
Mean Age of				
Childbirth ¹²	Rising	Declining	Declining	Rising
Age-Specific				
Fertility for	Declining	Declining	Declining	Rising
Ages 35 and				
Over				

Source: Wilhelm Flieger, "A Re-Examination of the Demographic Transition in the Light of Newly Collected Data." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1967.

¹² Indicator of Length of Actual Childbearing Period.

Against the background sketched above this paper attempts some preliminary answers to the following questions:

Are Manila women now marrying earlier or later than women 15 to 20 years ago? Is the first baby coming earlier in life, the second closer to the first, the third closer to the second, and so on? Are there indications that today's women terminate their childbearing earlier than their predecessors? If so, how large are the changes that have occurred?

This study draws upon data obtained from Manila women, but Manila as yet is not typical of the Philippines as a whole. Since it is from urban centers where ideas, attitudes, and practices radiate into the countryside, however, Manila may be a fairly good barometer of what the country may expect in the future.

Source of Data

The data used for this paper were obtained from a sample survey of Manila households conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute in April and May 1966. The list of households which served as a sampling frame was obtained from the May 1965 round of the Bureau of the Census Statistical Survey of Households. A sample of 74 electoral precincts was first selected out of a total of some 500 precincts. All the households in these sample precincts were then listed and a sample of one in five households (systematically selected with a random start) was drawn for interview. The total number of households so selected numbered 1,710. Since the sampling frame referred to households existing in 1965, households in new dwelling units constructed between May 1965 and May

1966 were omitted. No replacement was made for households in dwelling units that had been destroyed or vacated during the 12-months period. Thus, the sample is representative of Manila households still abiding in the area in May 1966 among those listed a year earlier. This number constitutes the greater majority of Manila households.

Among the 1,710 households in the sample, 727 wives of household heads who were below 40 years of age furnished information on their pregnancy histories. An additional 190 wives, also under 40 years, living in sub-families, were interviewed. Of the total 917 Manila housewives in the age groups 15-39 years inclusive, only 772 were included in the tabulations presented in this paper. Inconsistencies in the data relating to 145 respondents rendered them ineligible for inclusion in the study.

Problems of Measurement

Census and survey data have been used to compute cumulated fertility ratios for different cohorts of women, but much less is known about the trends and differentials in age at marriage and the timing of births. Not only are there fewer data regarding age at child-bearing and the spacing of births, but those that are available for younger women are harder to evaluate. For example, comparing the average age at marriage of wives 20-24 in 1966 (1940-44 birth cohorts) and those 35-39 (1925-29 birth cohorts) obviously would be biased because some of the older women married at ages not yet attained by any of the younger ones. Considering only the wives in the earlier cohorts who married by age 20-24 removes this bias, and shows that the average age at marriage of wives aged 20-24 in 1966 was 19.4 years for

those in the 1940-44 cohorts and 20.4 for the 1925-29 group. To conclude that there has been a small decrease (or that the decrease is real) in age at marriage is incorrect, however, since the proportion of the recent cohorts who had married by ages 20-24 will have to be compared with the earlier groups. Unfortunately, the survey data do not provide this information.

Taking marriage cohorts and computing the median age of marriage for those women who had entered the married state by age 20-24 years shows exactly the opposite trend. While the earlier marriage cohorts (1946-50) reported a median age at marriage of 18.6 years, half

of the women who were already married by age 20-24 in 1961-65, had married at age 20.2 years. Though the difference in medians amounted to one-and-a-half years, the increase (which may be spurious) was marked only for the 1946-50 and 1951-55 cohorts. The median age remained almost stationary from then on. At this juncture the reader is reminded that the data were derived from a truncated distribution. The only cohort that represents ages at marriage up to 40 years is the most recent one. Women who belonged to earlier marriage cohorts, whose present age is 40 and above, were excluded. Also excluded were women who had married earlier but who have since died.

Table 2: Median Age-at-Marriage of Women Who Were Reported Married By Ages 20-24 Years, Manila, 1966

Birth Cohort	Age-at-Marriage (Median Years)	Marriage Cohort	Age-at-Marriage (Median Years)
1925-1929	20.4	1946-1950	18.6
1930-1934	20.0	1951-1955	20.4
1935-1939	20.8	1956-1960	20.4
1940-1944	19.4	1961-1965	20.2

A similar problem arises with the length of birth intervals. The mean number of months from marriage to first birth is much shorter for wives 20-24 in 1966 (16.3 months) than for those aged 35-39 (21.0 months), primarily because the latter had been married much longer (the averages differ by nearly 13 years, 4.4 vs. 17.2). Consequently there was much greater opportunity for child-bearing to be delayed. If the comparison is restricted to experience by ages 20-24 (i.e., wives in the 1940-44 birth cohorts

by 1966 and those in the earlier group by 1951) there is no significant difference in the spacing of the first births that occurred by these ages. This fact may be misleading unless it is remembered that the proportion of all women having a first birth by ages 20-24 is much higher for the recent cohorts than the earlier groups (about 59 per cent instead of 37). The data that will be available when the 1940-44 birth cohorts complete their families may show that their first births occurred sooner after marriage than those of the 1925-29 women.

Age at Marriage

The age at which women marry is related to fertility in two ways. First, it is more likely that women who marry at younger ages belong to socio-economic groups with high fertility. Second, the earlier the age at marriage, the longer is the period during which women can bear children before the onset of menopause or the development of premature fecundity impairments. By far the most important of these two relationships is the first one since the influence of age at marriage on family size depends chiefly on the number of children couples want and their willingness and ability to prevent unwanted births. Women do not necessarily have more children simply because they spend more childbearing years in marriage.

That the trend in age at marriage in this country is difficult to establish was clearly shown by Smith in a study of Philippine marriage patterns.¹³ Using the data on registered marriages, Smith found that the proportion of females marrying under age 20 declined from 1956 until 1960, thus resulting in a rising median age at marriage. However, since 1960, the proportion marrying under age 20 shows a rise with the median age at marriage levelling off.

Retrospective data on the age at first marriage of ever married women interviewed in two separate surveys undertaken in 1956 and 1960 used by Smith suggest the absence of any trend in the marriage patterns experienced by successive birth cohorts of women.

On the other hand, other researchers examining the 1965 survey data and the

1960 Census results noted a trend toward a rising median age at marriage especially for the most recent marriage duration group.¹⁴ But the upward trend in median age at marriage observed for successive marriage groups may have resulted largely from the influence of mortality on the cohorts investigated.

Tabulations of the proportions single in successive age groups in the 1948 and 1960 censuses indicated that a large proportion of females married before age 20, and that most women were married by their early twenties.¹⁵ The movement into marriage was slower around 1960 than in 1948. These patterns of change were consistent with the shifts in the age distribution of marriages observed in the vital statistics data.

Following careful evaluation of the three sources of data: (1) marriage registration system, (2) census population by marital status, and (3) retrospective surveys of ever-married women, Smith was forced to conclude "that any recent rise in marriage, if indeed there has been a rise, has been so small as to make measurement difficult."

Smith's conclusion is supported by the data from the 1966 Manila survey. The reader is referred to the preceding section on problems of measurement which emphasizes the difficulty of basing any conclusion as to trends in age at marriage on truncated distributions. Information on the marital histories of women 40 years

¹⁴ See Mercedes B. Concepción, "Fertility Differences Among Married Women in the Philippines (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1963) and Adriana C. Regudo, "Fertility Patterns of Ever-Married Women in the Ilocos, Central Luzon and Bicol Regions: 1960" (unpublished M.A. Thesis, Statistical Center, University of the Philippines, 1965).

¹⁵ Peter Smith, *op. cit.*

¹³ Peter C. Smith, "Age at Marriage: Recent Trends and Prospects", *Philippine Sociological Review*, XVI, 1-2 (January-April, 1968), pp. 1-16.

and older is required before definitive conclusions can be drawn.

Husband and Wife Differences in Age at Marriage

While it is conventional in Filipino society for the bride to be younger than the groom at the time of marriage, the increasingly unfavorable sex ratio at the marriageable ages dictate otherwise. As a rule, most Filipina brides prefer to marry older men. In view of the growing scarcity of males in such age groups, however, single women in their late twenties and early thirties must now face

two alternatives: choose men who are younger or not marry at all. Since the latter alternative seems unacceptable to most of these women, they pair off with men of about the same age or younger.

A third of Manila brides who married between the ages of 30 and 34 years reportedly had younger husbands. Table 3 shows that the proportions of city women who have married younger men has been increasing significantly with increasing age at marriage. Thus, it appears that the later a woman marries, the more likely it is that she will marry a man younger than herself.

Table 3: Age Difference Between Husband and Wife, By Wife's Age at First Marriage¹⁶ Manila 1966

Age Difference Between Husband and Wife	Wife's Age at First Marriage (in years)			
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
All Ages	310	305	106	32
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wife older	3.4	10.0	19.3	31.4
About same age	13.5	20.9	28.1	22.9
Wife younger	81.9	68.2	49.1	42.8

¹⁶ Women who married below 15 years of age were omitted.

Table 4: Age Difference Between Husband and Wife, By Year of Wife's First Marriage¹⁷ Manila 1966

Age Difference Between Husband and Wife	Year of Wife's First Marriage			
	1946-50	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65
All Ages	114	160	232	236
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wife older	6.1	8.6	9.5	12.8
About same age	13.9	15.9	21.1	22.1
Wife younger	77.4	75.5	67.7	63.1
No information	2.6	—	1.7	2.0

^a One woman married at age 35.

¹⁷ Marriage cohort of 1941-45 omitted

The picture is very similar when year of marriage is taken into account (Table 4). Although at least two-thirds of the women who married had husbands who were older, there has been a growing tendency during the last two decades for marriage partners to be of approximately the same age. The proportion of women older than their husbands has increased (12.8 among 1961-65 brides vs. 6.1 among 1946-50 brides).

Type of Union

The rate of reproduction is influenced in many ways. One of the "intermediate variables", to use Davis' and Blake's scheme of classifying the channels through

which fertility can be directly affected, is that governing the formation and dissolution of unions. Studies in other cultures show the influence of stable unions on reproductive performance—the more stable the union, the greater the fertility and vice versa.¹⁸

That the majority of unions in Manila in 1966 were legal first marriages involving no prior consensual union can be seen in the following table. Except for those women who married below the age

¹⁸ Judith Blake, *Family Structure in Jamaica*, The Free Press of Glencoe, Ill., 1961, pp. 246 ff.; J.M. Stycos and K.W. Back, *The Control of Human Fertility in Jamaica*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964, pp. 147 ff., and G.W. Roberts, *The Population of Jamaica*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1957, p. 273.

Table 5: Number and Type of Union By Age at First Marriage: Manila, 1966

Type of Union	Total Women	Age at First Marriage (Years)				
		Under 15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
All types	771 ^a	18	310	305	106	32
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
First Marriage, no prior consensual union	710	72.2	92.6	92.8	93.4	87.5
First Marriage, lived together before	19	—	1.6	2.6	1.9	12.5
First Union, no formal marriage	19	5.6	2.6	2.0	3.8	—
Second Marriage, first husband died	20	22.2	3.2	1.6	0.9	—
Not reported	3	—	—	1.0	—	—

^a One woman married at age 35.

of 15 years, nine out of ten women in the primate city had no previous marriages. Two facts emerge upon inspection of Table 5. One, very early age of marriage

has led to a high degree of widowhood and consequently, second marriage. Two, one out of every six women who married in their early thirties had lived with their

spouses before contracting marriage. What this portends for future fertility is speculative since the cases in these two categories are too small for delineating trends.

The high rate of legal unions is again apparent when year of wife's first marriage is taken into account. From eight to over nine out of ten women in the sample

reported no consensual union prior to marriage. What the figures in Table 6 seem to suggest, however, is a slight increasing trend toward consensual unions without formal marriage as well as a "companionate" relationship before legalizing the union. But one must be cautious in drawing conclusions from these data because of the small sample size in these groups.

Table 6: Number and Type of Union By Marriage Cohorts:
Manila, 1966

Type of Union	Total Women	Year of Wife's First Marriage				
		1941-45	1946-50	1951-55	1950-60	1961-65
All types	772	30	114	160	232	236
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
First marriage, no prior consensual union	713	83.3	91.2	96.3	90.9	92.8
First marriage, lived together before	19	—	0.9	0.6	4.3	3.0
First union, no formal marriage	19	3.3	1.8	0.6	2.2	4.2
Second marriage, first husband died	20	13.3	6.1	2.5	2.2	—

Family Size in Manila

The high level of overall fertility in the Philippines is obvious from the average number of children born to women of completed fertility, which was estimated at 6.8 in 1960.¹⁹

Pratt, using the same figures on which this report is based, and comparing them

¹⁹ Frank W. Lorimer, "Analysis and Projections of the Population of the Philippines." in *First Conference on Population, 1965*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1966, p. 236.

with data of the 1966 round of the Philippine Statistical Survey of Households (PSSH) found that: (1) fertility of Manila women hardly differs from that of their rural counterparts, and (2) there was no indication of fertility decline between 1956 and 1966.²⁰

The data collected in the 1966 Manila survey do not permit the calculation of age-specific birth rates for subsequent cohorts of women, or total fertility rates,

²⁰ William F. Pratt, *op. cit.*

i.e. the average number of children born to women of completed fertility. However, the figures in Table 7 indicate clearly that a total fertility rate of almost seven children is no overestimation. Two thirds of the Manila women in 1966, who had married between 1941 and 1945 and who either had completed their reproductive activities or were nearing the end of their childbearing careers, had borne seven or more children. More than one half of the women who had married in

the five-year period from 1946 to 1950 had already the same number of children, while a little over three fourths of these same cohorts had 5 or more children. That younger marriage cohorts are apparently following suit can be guessed from the fact that 61 per cent of those married between 1951 and 1955 had already borne five or more children. Among the women who were married 10 years or less, the proportion with 5 or more children had already reached one sixth.

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Children Ever Born to Women of Marriage Cohorts 1941-45 to 1960-65, Manila, 1966

	MARRIAGE COHORT				
	1941-45	1946-50	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65
Total cases	30	114	160	232	236
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None	3.3	0.0	3.1	3.3	22.9
1 - 2	6.7	6.7	9.8	23.6	61.8
3 - 4	13.3	15.7	25.8	57.9	13.7
5 - 6	13.3	27.8	42.9	13.6	1.2
7 or more	63.4	50.4	18.4	1.6	0.4

The magnitude of a total fertility rate of six or more can best be assessed when compared with the average number of children raised by families in other cultures. Fertility decline in the West has often been related to industrialization, rationalization, and modernization. In the Sweden of 1830, long before the start of industrialization in that country, married women had an average of 4.5 children, the highest figure on record since 1780.²¹ By contrast, Manila women 136 years later, though living in the center of modernization in the Philippines, had 1.7

children more than their earlier Swedish counterparts. Ten years ago, Taiwan had a fertility level comparable to that of Manila and the Philippines today, but in the meantime has reduced her total fertility rate to 4.8. In the United States with its moderate birth rate, women had an average of 2.9 children in 1965, and in Hungary during the same period, women had still one child less.²²

Are Manila women going to continue to raise an average of six or seven children? Can they afford to do so in view of rising living costs and increasing ex-

²¹ Keyfitz and Flieger, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-509.

²² *Loc. cit.*, pp. 177, 373.

penses for education, or are there indications that Filipino wives prefer smaller families?

In the absence of data which permit utilization of standard fertility measures, an attempt will be made in the following pages to gather clues from various other demographic parameters as to the future composition of Manila families.

Average Age of Mothers at Childbirth and Spacing of Births

As stated earlier, countries with declining and rising birth rates have been

and are displaying distinctly different patterns in the age of mothers at childbirth and the spacing of subsequent children (see Table 1). Data collected in Manila indicate that women have been undergoing a shift in their childbearing patterns over the past 30 years. During the period indicated, the time interval between marriage and the arrival of the first baby has been shortened considerably.

Looking at the childbearing performance of women of various ages at the time they were 20-24 years old, Table 8 suggests that later-born cohorts are accele-

Table 8: Proportions of Women Who Had Their First, Second, Third and Fourth Births at Age 20-24 Years By Present Age, Manila 1966

Present Age (Years)	Number of Births at Age 20-24 Years			
	One	Two	Three	Four
35-39	36.6	35.8	33.5	20.9
30-34	46.7	47.4	40.6	19.8
25-29	58.7	57.6	46.9	50.8
20-24	44.1	67.6	91.9	100.0

rating their family building patterns in contrast to earlier born cohorts. Increasing proportions of younger women have borne 2, 3 or 4 children by the time they reached their middle twenties than did women born a decade earlier. For instance, all the women now aged 20-24 years have had four children as compared to one of every five women now in their late thirties who had this number at the time they were 20-24 years old.

The proportion of women who had their first child within one year after their nuptials increased from a little over one

fifth for the marriage cohort 1941-45 to approximately one half for women married 20 years later as shown in Table 9. Correspondingly, the percentage of mothers who delivered their first baby during the second year of marriage decreased from 37.7 to 21.8 for the same cohorts.

A confirmation that a shift in childbearing patterns has been taking place among Manila women is indicated in Table 10, which shows average intervals between successive live births for the same marriage cohorts.

Table 9: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With Different Intervals Between First Marriage and Birth of First Child For Marriage Cohorts 1941-45 to 1961-65, Manila 1966

Interval Between First Marriage and Birth of First Child	MARRIAGE COHORTS				
	1941-45	1946-50	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65
Total cases	30	114	160	232	236
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Birth before marriage	0.0	3.6	5.6	4.7	6.4
Under 6 months	3.6	3.4	3.7	6.4	5.1
6 to under 9 months	10.7	11.5	13.0	16.2	14.1
9 to under 12 months	7.1	24.8	22.8	23.0	20.5
12 to under 24 months	35.7	23.4	29.0	25.5	21.8
24 to under 36 months	14.3	14.2	8.6	5.5	5.6
3 years or more	10.7	8.5	5.6	3.0	4
No children	3.6	0.0	3.1	3.4	23.1
Not reported	14.3	9.7	8.6	12.3	3.0

Table 10: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With Different Average Intervals Between Successive Live Births, By Marriage Cohorts, Manila, 1966

Average Intervals Between Successive Live Births	MARRIAGE COHORTS				
	1941-45	1946-50	1951-55	1956-60	1961-65
Total cases	30	114	160	232	236
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 9 months	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.4	6.8
9 - 11 months	0.0	0.0	0.6	3.4	17.5
12 - 17 months	0.0	1.8	8.6	21.7	27.4
18 - 23 months	10.7	38.9	40.1	45.5	13.7
24 - 35 months	60.7	40.7	38.9	21.3	8.6
3 years or more	25.0	17.7	8.1	3.0	2.1
No children	3.6	0.0	3.1	3.4	23.1
Not reported	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.3	0.8

The medium length of birth intervals changed from 24 to 35 months for older marriage cohorts (1941-45) to 12 to 17 months for the youngest ones (1961-65). In assessing this trend it has to be borne in mind that fecundity decreases when women grow older, a tendency which

lengthens the average birth interval with rising age. But despite this bias present in the data it seems safe to conclude on the basis of the magnitudes favoring shorter intervals that a real shift in child-spacing is taking place. The proportion of women who bore children in average in-

tervals or less than one year and a half increased sharply when marriage cohorts of 1946-50 are compared with those of 1960-65.

A number of other trends become obvious when time periods between first marriage and first births and between successive births are related to age at marriage.

(1) The older the woman at the time of her nuptials, the shorter is the time span until the first birth occurs. Of females who got married between the ages of 15-19, 14.3 per cent had their first baby within 9 months after their wedding, while for brides aged 25-29 years, this number increased to 17.6.

(2) When average intervals between successive births are considered, data demonstrate that younger brides tend to be in less of a hurry to increase the size of their families than are older ones and apparently follow a policy of more deliberate childspacing. Only 2.9 per cent of the sample women who had married while still in their teens had their children in average intervals of less than one year (nine to eleven months). For brides past 30 years of age, who spaced their children within less than one year intervals, the percentage was almost five times as large, namely 14.3.

(3) Figures on the spacing of the first child reveal still another fact—an in-

Table 11: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With Different Intervals Between First Marriage of Wife and Birth of First Child, By Age of Wife at First Marriage, Manila, 1966

Interval Between First Marriage & Birth of First Child	AGE OF WIFE AT FIRST MARRIAGE (Years)			
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
Total cases ^a	310	305	106	32
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Birth before marriage	2.4	4.1	8.7	18.8
Under 6 months	4.7	4.8	4.9	0.0
6 to under 9 months	9.6	15.1	12.6	9.4
9 to under 12 months	23.9	22.5	17.5	25.0
12 to under 24 months	29.5	26.3	16.5	12.5
24 to under 36 months	8.1	7.4	11.7	9.5
3 years or more	4.7	7.0	1.0	0.0
No children	8.4	7.7	11.6	15.5
Not reported	8.7	7.1	15.5	9.4

^a Excludes women who married before their fifteenth birthday.

crease in the number of pre-marital pregnancies and extra-marital births over the last few decades. (Cf. Tables 9 and 11).²³

²³ Births which occurred six months or earlier after first marriage were considered pre-marital

As far as the first age concerned, younger marriage cohorts show a slight increase over older ones (13.6 per cent for marriage cohorts of 1941-45 to 5.1 pregnancies. Extra-marital births are defined as those which occurred prior to the date of marriage.

per cent for brides of 1961-65). Age at marriage appears to make little difference; the percentage of women with premarital pregnancies is less than 5 per cent for all women who get married between the ages of 15 and 30. Much greater discrepancies appear for extra-marital births. The proportion of women who gave birth outside marriage from 3.6 per cent for wives married between 1946-50 to almost double that figure for brides of the first half of the 1960's, 6.4 per cent. While this may be considered a sizeable increase, the correlation between age at first marriage and extra-marital births was even stronger. Only 2.4 per cent of teenage brides had a child before they got married. The proportion among women who had married after their 30th birthday was almost eight times as large. This fact together with the more rapid childspacing of older brides seem to suggest that women who for some reason are unable to marry early nevertheless feel compelled to prove their reproductive abilities.

Foetal Losses, Child Mortality and Family Size

It has often been suggested that high fertility in countries with high mortality, especially among children under the age of five, is a device used by couples to insure survival of at least a few children, which also represent their 'social security' during old age.²⁴

Heer and Smith, using data from 41 countries collected during the 1950's, and after controlling for various socio-economic factors, have found a high correlation between fertility and infant mortality. They advanced the hypothesis that large-scale reduction in fertility may be improbable in developing countries unless

there is a substantial reduction in the level of mortality.²⁵

Freedman, in agreement with the above cited hypothesis, has postulated the existence everywhere of cultural regulations regarding family size. These 'norms' are not geared toward the largest possible number of children, but the survival of the 'necessary few'. Depending on prevailing economic conditions, "there is likely to be a delicate balance of pressures toward higher fertility to insure at least a certain minimum number of children, and counterpressures to minimize an intolerable surplus of children under difficult subsistence conditions."²⁶

Freedman, therefore, deems it necessary to distinguish "between norms for large numbers of births and large numbers of children."²⁷

The norms regulating family size and the type of pressures they exert are deeply embedded in the cultural setting and not likely to change independently of their framework. Culture change tends to be a slow process, and it is for this reason that high fertility pressures may continue for a long time even after mortality levels have shown substantial declines. In this connection, Freedman comments that people who have learned from their culture to depend on their children "for old age security and other essentials cannot be expected to extrapolate declining mortality with the demographer and to calculate a long-range need for fewer children."²⁸

²⁵ David M. Heer and Dean C. Smith, "Mortality Levels and Desired Family Size." Unpublished paper read at the Annual Convention of the Population Association of America, Cincinnati Ohio, April 28-29, 1967.

²⁶ Ronald Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Cf. Davis and Blake, *op. cit.*

Overall mortality in the Philippines has reached 'moderate' levels. Based on 1960 census returns and mortality and fertility estimates, average life expectancy at birth for the population of the entire Philippines is believed to be around 55 years for men and 58 years for women. Infant mortality was estimated at more than 100 per 1,000 live births, a relatively high figure.²⁹

However, among different areas of the country large mortality variations are known to exist, and it can safely be assumed that particularly for Manila with its concentration of medical facilities, infant mortality figures are below the national average.

²⁹ Keyfitz and Flieger, *op. cit.*, p. 663

The women included in the Manila sample reported a total of 2,830 live births and the subsequent deaths of 182 of these children. These deaths included not only those children under one year of age (infants), but children of all ages, so that the infant mortality rate for Manila would stand at less than 60 per 1,000 live births. A little over 81 per cent of the sample families reported no deaths among their children, 13.3 per cent had lost one child, 4 per cent two, and 1.1 per cent three or more. Table 12 shows that the death of a child in a family is related to the age of the mother at the time of her marriage. The younger the bride, the greater the likelihood that one or more of the children she is going to

Table 12: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With None, One or More Children Who Died, By Age at First Marriage, Manila, 1966

Number of children who died	All Mothers	Age of Mother at First Marriage (Years)				
		Under 15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
Total cases	772	18	310	305	106	32
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None	81.2	52.6	76.3	84.3	87.6	94.1
One	13.3	21.1	15.4	12.3	11.5	5.9
Two	4.0	15.8	6.8	1.9	0.9	—
Three	0.7	5.2	0.9	0.6	—	—
Four or more	0.4	5.2	0.3	0.3	—	—
Not reported	0.4	—	0.3	0.6	—	—

bear will not reach maturity. To what extent the data presented in the table confound the effect of marriage duration with that of marital age cannot be determined due to the relatively small number of families in the sample with deceased children.

If family size norms designed to insure the survival of the 'necessary' number of children exist, reproductive behavior should be dependent not only upon mortality, but also on the probable incidence of involuntary foetal losses. The proportion of Manila women who

reported abnormal pregnancy terminations exceeded the proportion of mothers with dead children by almost 10 per cent. Every fourth mother in the sample had either lost at least one child before birth or delivered a stillbirth. Of these, 91.7 per cent had suffered miscarriages, while stillbirths, amounting to 8.3 per cent, played only a minor role. It is unfortunate that available data do not permit

the determination of the exact number of involuntary miscarriages or abortions.

Unlike deaths of children, premature pregnancy terminations do not appear to form any regular patterns with ages of mothers at first marriages (see Table 13) or for different marriage cohorts. When tabulated against present age however, a correlation becomes obvious. Forty-one

Table 13: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With None, One or More Miscarriages or Stillbirths, By Age At First Marriage, Manila, 1966

Miscarriages or Stillbirths	All Mothers	Age of Mother at First Marriage (Years)				
		Under 15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34
Total cases	772	18	310	305	106	32
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
None	71.9	73.7	71.6	70.8	76.1	70.6
One	20.0	15.8	21.2	17.6	15.0	20.6
Two	5.4	—	3.7	7.5	5.3	5.9
Three	2.2	10.5	1.8	2.2	2.7	—
Four or more	1.0	—	1.2	1.3	—	—
Not reported	0.6	—	0.3	0.6	0.9	2.9

per cent of mothers who had passed their 35th birthday reported one foetal loss, against only 8.6 per cent of teenage mothers. This trend suggests that marriage duration has to be considered the major independent variable.

Assuming the correctness of the Freedman hypotheses that (1) a high incidence of infant and child mortality (as well as of foetal losses) will result in 'normative pressures' on couples to have a large number of births, (2) these pressures will persist for a time even after the mortality situation has improved, pending a change in social structure, and (3) assuming furthermore that the continued high fertility

level of Manila women is the result of such normative pressures, the expectation would be that those women who had lost either a foetus or a living child express a greater desire to have more children than do women whose reproductive activities have not been upset by unforeseen events.

The following two tables present percentage distributions of mothers with foetal losses or with one or more children who had died, according to their expectations of additional children, contrasted against the expectations of mothers who have thus far lost none. To eliminate biases which might arise from the number

of children still living, a control for this factor was introduced. Disregarding reservations which could be aired against the validity of answers elicited through questions concerning 'future expectations' tables 14 and 15 show the expected pattern. The greater the number of living

children a family has, the less likely are the parents to expect more. However, the surprising fact emerging from table 14 is that the proportion of mothers expecting more births in the future is consistently higher for those women who have not seen any of their children die.

Table 14: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With Different Expectations Concerning Future Children, By Children Still Living and By Deaths of Children, Manila, 1966

Expectation of Future Children	Children Still Living			
	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8
<i>Mothers With No Children Who Died</i>				
Total cases	212	186	99	41
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Expect more	74.9	60.3	43.3	55.8
Uncertain	8.5	12.2	16.3	14.0
Expect no more	13.5	26.0	39.4	30.2
Not reported	3.1	1.5	1.0	—
<i>Mothers With One or More Children Who Died</i>				
Total cases	22	51	35	25
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Expect more	70.8	58.5	43.2	46.2
Uncertain	4.2	13.2	21.6	15.4
Expect no more	25.0	28.3	35.2	38.4
Not reported	—	—	—	—

Uncertainty as to the future, which generally rises with family size, is most prevalent among families of medium size, i.e., with five or six children. Whether this contradicts Freedman's hypothesis that fertility is related to mortality levels, or whether it shows that Manila women are beginning to break with traditional norms, is conjectural.

The situation is different for women with miscarriages or stillbirths. Foetal losses appear to keep the expectation of additional pregnancies higher than do deaths of living children. With the ex-

ception of small families with two or less children, and in contrast to families with children who had died, the percentage of mothers who expect more children is higher throughout among women who have experienced difficulties in their childbearing than among those with no anomalies in their reproductive careers. At the same time, however, the proportion of mothers who definitely do not expect more children is also consistently higher for women with foetal losses. The number of those professing uncertainty as to their future family size is much lower for

Table 15: Percentage Distribution of Mothers With Different Expectations Concerning Future Children, By Children Still Living and Number of Miscarriages or Stillbirths, Manila, 1966

Future Children Expectation of	Children Still Living			
	1 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8
	<i>Mothers Without Miscarriages or Stillbirths</i>			
Total cases	179	175	91	38
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Expect more	76.6	61.4	49.5	50.0
Uncertain	8.5	15.2	15.8	17.5
Expect no more	11.7	22.8	33.7	32.5
Not reported	3.2	0.6	—	—
	<i>Mothers With One or More Miscarriages or Stillbirths</i>			
Total cases	60	64	46	29
Per cent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Expect more	68.3	68.3	57.3	55.2
Uncertain	6.7	6.7	4.7	10.3
Expect no more	25.0	23.3	38.0	34.5
Not reported	—	1.7	—	—

women with foetal losses than for others who have lost a living child. It is hard to say whether traumatic experiences, which foetal losses undoubtedly constitute for mothers who do not seek abortion, do make a woman feel incomplete or inadequate so that she decides to 'make up' for her failure, or whether it motivates her to avoid similar experiences in the future, a feat which can be achieved best by foregoing pregnancies altogether. The psychological and cultural reasons underlying the discrepancies in the reaction of women to the loss of a living or of an unborn child are unknown to the writers and appear worthwhile investigating.

Implications of Childbearing Patterns on Future Fertility Levels

Although the fertility of Manila women is extremely high by world standards and has shown little change over the past decade, the childbearing patterns which

seem to be emerging are different from those displayed by populations with high and rising birth rates. The emerging patterns seem to indicate trends followed by developing countries with a low or decreasing number of births. During the demographic transition in Sweden, the effects of mortality improvements on fertility were counteracted by a wider spacing of children coupled with a voluntary termination of childbearing rather early in life. Japan and Taiwan, in the course of their demographic transition, utilized the latter procedure in more drastic fashion than did Sweden and thereby achieved a lower mean age of childbirth as well as a shorter period of actual reproduction for most of their women.

Age at marriage among Manila women may be rising, a trend which shortens average exposure to childbearing activity. However, any negative effect on overall fertility is overridden by the tendency

for first children to arrive earlier after marriage and by the closer spacing of succeeding children, a change which in principle increases the fertility potential of women. The question then arises: Are the women of Manila resorting to the same measure used by their Japanese and Taiwanese counterparts, i.e., are they beginning to curtail their fertility at the older childbearing ages? If they are not, the birth rate is bound to rise in view of the shift in spacing patterns described above, as well as mortality improvements for mothers, which can be expected to continue, at least for lower-class members.

While it is difficult to compute age-specific birth rates for successive cohorts

from the age-truncated Manila data, which could provide a clue to that question, Table 16 represents a substitute measure: the average number of live births per woman for successive five-year periods following first marriage.

Holding year and age-at-marriage constant, a number of patterns suggest themselves, though not always in very marked fashion:

(1) Figures for the first five-year span after marriage point toward a higher fertility for younger cohorts. For example, women belonging to the 1941-45 marriage cohort who married at age 15, had an average of two live births during their first years of married life. Women who

Table 16: Average Number of Live Births in Successive Five-Year Periods After First Marriage, By Year of Marriage and Age at First Marriage, Manila, 1966

Year of First Marriage	Age at First Marriage	Five-Year Period After First Marriage			
		First	Second	Third	Fourth
1941 - 45	15-19	2.00	1.87	1.61	1.26
	1946 - 50	15-19	2.43	2.15	1.52
1951 - 55	20-24	2.41	1.71	1.41	
	15-19	2.36	1.74		
	20-24	2.64	1.68		
	25-29	2.85	2.07		
1956 - 60	15-19	2.49			
	20-24	2.50			
	25-29	2.25			
	30-34	2.56			

got married at the same age between 1956 and 1960 had an average of 2.49 births. This increase in fertility during the early years of married life may be explained—at least in part—by better medical care available to pregnant women. However, it also confirms the previously

suggested shift in childbearing toward the younger ages, similar to that observed in the West as well as Japan and Taiwan during their periods of fertility decline.

(2) Women who married at older ages display a higher fertility during their

first five years of marriage than do their younger counterparts. Members of the marriage cohort 1951 to 1955 who had married between the ages of 15 to 19 had an average of 2.36 live births during their first 5 years of married life. By contrast, women ten years older at the time of their marriages had 2.85 live births, on the average.

(3) For the second five-year span after marriage—a period for which data are less complete—the trend of younger marriage cohorts to have higher fertility is not quite as clear. A change may have taken place between 1950 and 1955, or chance fluctuation may obscure the real trend in the relatively small sample.

(4) For all marriage cohorts, marriage duration-specific fertility decreases with length of married life. While this trend is not surprising but rather expected, it is noticeable that the decline starts with the second five-year period after marriage including those women who had married before reaching the age of 20. This can be seen as another indication of crowding childbirth into the earlier years of

reproductive life, and it definitely contradicts the oftentimes propagated notion that a married Filipina is in an almost constant state of pregnancy during most of her childbearing life span. What is more important, however, is the fact that this decline is more pronounced for younger marriage cohorts.

The facts that: (1) there appears to be an indication of fertility decline for women of longer marriage duration (see Table 16), (2) this decline has been more pronounced for younger marriage cohorts than for older ones, (3) the total fertility rate has remained relatively stable over the last decade despite the earlier arrival of the first and the faster succession of subsequent children as well as mortality improvements for mothers, and finally (4) spacing patterns resemble closely those found in countries with declining fertility, distinctly different from patterns displayed by populations with a rising birth rate (see Table 17) suggest an affirmative answer to the question as to whether or not Manila women like their contemporaries in Japan and Taiwan

Table 17: Fertility Parameters for the Philippines, Japan, and Honduras

Fertility Parameters	COUNTRY AND PERIOD		
	Japan 1940-60	Manila, Philip- pines 1966	Honduras 1957-65
Overall Fertility	Declining	Stable	Rising
Mean Age of Mothers at Childbirth	Declining	Declining	Rising
Actual Period of Childbirth	Shortened	Shortened	Prolonged
Age Specific Fertility for Older Women	Sharply Declining	Starting to Decline	Rising

have begun to terminate childbearing earlier than the onset of menopause. However, whether this curtailment of fertility during later years of married life will continue in even stronger fashion in the future or just "make up" for increased reproductive activity during earlier years, thus not affecting the total fertility rate, cannot be stated at this moment. Better data and more time are required to come to more accurate and definitive conclusions.

Summary

It is difficult to find reliable measures of age at marriage and birth spacing that can be used to make accurate comparisons between different groups of couples currently in the reproductive years of life. The difficulty is greater among younger cohorts because more members of these cohorts will marry in the future and because many of the cohort members have not yet completed their families.

Still, with the data available from the Manila survey certain trends are clear. First of all, while it cannot be stated categorically that age at first marriage is rising, the proportions of city women who have married younger men has been increasing significantly with increasing age at marriage. Thus, it appears that the later a woman marries the more likely it is that she will marry a man younger than herself. Second, there seems to be a slight increasing trend toward consensual unions without formal marriage as well as toward a "companionate" relationship for recent marriage cohorts. Third, a real shift in childspacing is taking place. The proportion of women who bore children in average intervals of less than one year and a half increased sharply when marriage cohorts of 1946-50 are compared with those of 1960-65. Fourth, the older

the woman at the time of her nuptials, the shorter is the time span until the first birth occurs. Fifth, younger brides tend to be in less of a hurry to increase the size of their families than are older ones and apparently follow a policy of more deliberate childspacing. Sixth, there has been an increase in the number of pre-marital pregnancies and extra-marital births over the last few decades. Seventh, the proportion of mothers expecting more births in the future is consistently higher for those women who have not seen any of their children die. At the same time, the percentage of mothers who expect more children is higher throughout among women who have experienced difficulties in their childbearing than among those with no anomalies in their reproductive careers. Eighth, there appears to be an indication of fertility decline for women of longer marriage duration. This decline has been more pronounced for younger marriage cohorts than for older ones. Ninth, the total fertility rate has remained relatively stable over the last decade despite the earlier arrival of the first and the faster succession of subsequent children as well as mortality improvements for mothers.

Finally, spacing patterns resemble closely those found in countries with declining fertility and are distinctly different from patterns displayed by populations with a rising birth rate.

It is too early to predict whether the trends and patterns noted in the Manila data, if continued, will affect overall fertility of the population. Though fertility patterns similar to those of countries which experienced fertility decline seem to crystallize, it is yet too early to predict what exact course the people of Manila will follow in the years to come.