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Paul W. Mathews



We the faithful are engaged in battle every day in the bloody dust of the amphitheatre where, let us be honest about it, the cool reason of theology sounds faint and far away (West 1993).

Among the various aspects of the socioeconomic environment influencing fertility, fertility control or the adoption of Family Planning, religion has not been considered as important as it may be. Although several studies have been undertaken to study fertility behavior by religious affiliation, these have generally been conducted among multireligious populations and have found variations in fertility among different religious groups. But while findings of various studies often seem to contradict, overall there is substantial evidence that the fertility of Catholics exceeds that of Protestants and other religious denominations.

Nevertheless, of all the variables used in the study of fertility, fertility control and Family Planning, regardless of which social, economic or demographic model is used, religion has been the most neglected. This is especially so in that religion per se has not been focused upon, but rather, as just another variable, religion has been cross-tabulated with other variables such as education, urban/rural residence, or religiosity (e.g. Church attendance).

But correlations between religions and fertility are simply correlations, and ignore religion in a generic sense, as an ideological influence. While different correlations may suggest or support notions of ideological content, this latter aspect in particular needs to be examined, for many studies deal more with the relationships between the variables rather than with religion in its own right and draw attention away from the notion of religion as ideology or culture.

For abbreviations used, see pp. 101-2.

This neglect is particularly so in the Philippines where, despite massive research by NEDA, the Population Institute of the University of the Philippines, the IPC at Ateneo de Manila University, and other relevant organizations, few studies of religion, even correlated with other socio-demographic variables, exist. Data collected by POPCOM, City Halls, and FPOP fail to register the religion of Family Planning acceptors. And even data collected by the National Bureau of Census on a variety of factors, fails to correlate religion with anything. In fact, because religion did not appear to be an important factor in contraceptive use or pregnancy in the Philippines by the late 1970s, the 1983 National Philippine Demographic Survey dropped religion as an item on its questionnaire.

Church and Religion

Religion as a "variable" is important because most major religions in the world were or are pro-natalist. These religions, however, have responded differently to the ideology of birth control which was brought forth by technological and economic development. Resistance to human interference in fertility has been common among most religions, yet was less persistent where central authority was lacking, as in the Jewish and Protestant religions. But I suggest that "central authority"—taken here to mean a collegiate of priests that decides policy and doctrine—is of less importance than religion as an ideology entwined with a way of life.

With the introduction of artificial, modern birth control a new dimension of the study of fertility correlated with religion has been added. In a "natural fertility" society, variations in the fertility levels were mainly due to varying norms towards reproduction: different customs and practices regarding age at marriage, proportion marrying, and sexual behavior within and without marriage, etc. With the introduction of modern fertility control, ethical-moral questions arose so that norms and values had to be reformulated or reconfirmed. For fertility studies this necessitated the assessment of Church sanctions for or against birth control, i.e. official Church policy; and, secondly, the extent of adherence to the religious doctrines in general and those governing the use of birth control methods in particular, i.e. religiosity of the population.

In the Philippine context these two distinct factors of Church and religion have often been conflated. In contradistinction, I argue that

the former is in its effect of little significance—although it is significantly important for what it can be used for in terms of legitimation. I suggest that religion and religiosity have frequently been equated with being a Catholic—which in the Philippines is often only the nominal case. In fact, Church and religion/religiosity may be separated. Catholicism refers to the formal acceptance of Church doctrines, rites and sacraments and the Church as a legitimate, divine-inspired, institutionalised body of clergy. Religion refers to the recognition of a superhuman controlling power(s) and the effect of such recognition on conduct and mental attitude.

By this I mean that religion is one of many kinds of discourse through which social groups represent relationships between the secular and spiritual world and which provide systems of meaning, frameworks of interpretation or intelligibility, through which they "make sense" or "give meaning to" their social existence and justify or legitimate particular interests and actions. The value of such ideological discourses lies in their capacity to generate meanings around which action and struggle can become socially organized, focused or meaningful (Hall 1985).

Religiosity refers to the degree of adherence to the doctrines of one's religion, to one's social commitment to carrying out religious-social rites, i.e., a matter of institutional versus social religion. The Filipinos are commonly referred to—and refer to themselves as—a religious people, not a Church-oriented people. And this important distinction should not be obfuscated, as has commonly been the case in past social studies.

When the ordinary layperson speaks of the Church, he/she is thinking of bishops, priests and nuns—they are the Church. The Church is something outside oneself, commanding, ruling, and demanding. When people speak of the Church, especially when they have something to say against it, they do not ordinarily say or imply "we" (Tagalog: *tayo*); they say, "the Church . . .," which in their minds means the formal leadership. In practice the Church leadership seems to corroborate the layperson's way of thinking. For when the Church leaders talk to laypersons who are actually members of the Church by virtue of their baptism, they say, "What do you think the Church should do?," instead of saying, "What should we (*tayo*—in the inclusive sense) do?" When a Filipino Catholic is asked what the word "Church" means, he/she may come out with a definition memorized a long time ago in religious-classes. But when really confronted by issues germane to the Church, the Filipino reveals almost

spontaneously what he/she personally feels and thinks by equating the clergy with the Church.

One explanation for this has suggested a syndrome of "split-level Christianity," resulting from the Filipinos' inability to synthesize the divergences in his/her wide cultural contact. It is a theory which states that the Filipino Catholic has not internalized Christian values in spite of—or perhaps because of—Christianity having been authoritatively imposed by the Spanish for over 300 years. Or perhaps the channels by which Filipinos have communicated with pastors, and they with the laity, were at best sclerotic and clogged with protocols and protective procedures. In any case, the end result has been a gap between doctrine and practice, Church and religion (cf. Reyes 1970, 42-43; Rafael 1988).

Missionaries of "great traditions" commonly find themselves in such a poignant dilemma when they attempt to carry the message to the peasantry. If the message and its bearers are accepted at all, they are largely assimilated into an existing set of meanings, symbols, and practices which frequently do great violence to the message as understood by its high priests. This cognitive abyss may be inconsequential so long as "body counts" are more important than ideological orthodoxy. After all, the social power of the church may well rest as much on the number of its nominal adherents as on the success with which they have absorbed its catechism. But when it comes to the quality of beliefs—that is, their orthodoxy as measured by formal doctrine—the peasantry has sorely tried the patience of archbishops and commissars alike. Such a gap or slippage may be observed within any major world religion, between its written, codified doctrine and its folk variants in the countryside. Some slippage is to be expected merely by virtue of the fact that the "folk" adherents create, in part, their own religious meanings and practices in line with their local experience, their social structure, their history, and their cosmology (Scott 1977, 1-2).

These issues are exemplified by a discussion with one informant. Being quite intelligent and articulate, he claimed to have a substantial number of academic college units in theology. Briefly, he asserted that because he was baptised a Catholic he was therefore a Christian; and because he fulfilled certain sacraments in chapel from time to time, he would automatically go to Heaven. But he rarely attended Mass, or said the Rosary, etc. The "sacraments" he referred to as being fulfilled were those of a more social and public nature: commemoration of death anniversaries; All Soul's Day; Christmas and

Easter functions; baptisms and marriages. It was because he fulfilled these functions that he considered himself both a good Catholic and Christian—which he had equated with one another.

But to belong to a religion it is not necessary that one attend Mass or the other chapel services—although one must carry out appropriate socio-religious roles and rites, usually in public, and in consensus with the community's prescriptions. The point is that, what is important for these Filipinos is not the purity of soul by Church standards, but a commitment to religion in a social sense, through participation in socio-religious rites. Thus religion is a public matter, not merely theological or administrative.

It is important to make this distinction between the notion of religion in its substantive aspect, and Church as the institutional aspect of religion, i.e., the institutionalized, organized hierarchy of a governing body, a collegiate of clerical officers and affiliated laypersons. It is particularly important to make such a distinction in the case of the Philippines where, following the influential 1967 BRAC Study by Lynch and Makil (1968), there has often been a conflation of the two notions, which in turn has affected the nature and limited the number of relevant studies. It becomes evident in any critique of the BRAC Study that Lynch and Makil have confused religion as substantive and Church as institutional, and consequently they have claimed that neither Church nor religion have any influence in Family Planning acceptance.

Family Planning Background

It has been evident to various observers that religion plays an apparently contradictory role in the Philippine population program. At the level of policy decision the role has been negative and somewhat important. At the level of implementation, religion has also played a negative but weak role. Ness (1979), for example, notes that a number of surveys in the Philippines have attempted to shed light on this phenomenon, undertaking such measures of popular religiosity as Church attendance and knowledge of Church doctrine. While she notes some tension or contradiction in "religion," she argues that, to understand the survey findings we must recognize that religion has—what she calls—both doctrinal and organizational aspects.

At the level of program implementation the religious hierarchy plays a small role in the choice of contraceptive methods. The Philip-

piners has a large number of acceptors—on paper at least—using the rhythm method of contraception. The specific organizational unit promoting this method, the Responsible Parenthood Council, has been a member of POPCOM since its inception, but the Council owes its life and resources more to its religious backing than to its known program accomplishments. At the level of policy decision the role of the Church has been more important, particularly in terms of its obstruction to modern population policy.

In 1966-67 the Philippines was moving toward the adoption of an official antinatal policy. The technocrats were vocal in presenting the socioeconomic arguments for some form of action, and President Marcos had signed the international declaration on population. The Church in Rome had the population question under consideration: Vatican II offered promise of greater democratization in formulating Church doctrine, and the *Popularum Progressio Encyclical* of 1967 offered some hope for change in Church policy regarding contraception. Further, international aid had entered the population field, bringing promise of rich financial rewards for the adoption of a national family planning program.

However, the following *Humanae Vitae Encyclical* of 1968 reaffirmed the Church's ban on the use of most new contraceptive technology and thereby gave support to the more conservative Church leaders in the Philippines, while progressive priests attacked the *Encyclical* in form and content. To avoid a crisis of authority the Responsible Parenthood Council was created to promote family planning based in part on the use of the rhythm method of contraception.

Remaining outside of this (un)holy debate, Marcos created a population commission to examine the population problem in the Philippines, the conclusion of which was held over until 1969 and full implementation after the declaration of Martial Law in 1972. While Marcos was no longer concerned with public contests with the Church, and attempted to eliminate the Responsible Parenthood Council from POPCOM and deny it government funds on the grounds of poor program performance, he met with sufficient protest to keep the Council alive and partly solvent.

The 1978 Philippine population conference ushered in a new agreement with the Church, permitting the family planning program to be pursued, although with a supposedly low profile. This indicates that the religious hierarchy continued to exercise significant influence on national policy, and that in population matters this influence was largely negative. In this there is nothing new.

What we see is a recurrent dramatization of Church-State relations wherein the two institutions have never been fully separated and thus allowed the Church to intervene directly in secular affairs. While one cannot deny the right of the Church, as any other group, to voice an opinion on social issues, the historical precedence of Church-State relations in the Philippines suggests the ecclesiastics' view that the Church has the right to interfere in policy formulation and implementation; and to add substance to this view, the Church has the political and material resources (schools, pulpit, etc) to exercise this assumed right. This power and position of the Church was reinforced in the "honeymoon" relationship with the Aquino government, commonly reflected in Constitutional provisions that highlight the importance and integrity of the Filipino family and in changes in Family Planning policy.

Family Planning and contraceptive use are thus part of the wider issue of State-Church relations having been played out over the last 400 years in primarily the elitist political arena of Manila. In this cosmopolitan capital, geographically and socially isolated and generally indifferent to the urban and rural masses, a moralistic and rhetorical debate has raged, generally out of touch with the reality of the poor and the potential devastation that overpopulation and underdevelopment may bring to the country.

Thus, while Manila-based political rhetoric caters to mass demands, these are usually forgotten or overridden at the local (provincial or village) level. Inadequacies in policy formulation are at least matched by those in policy implementation by both Church and State. Perhaps this is a consolation, for as Health Minister Juan Flavio commented, "there ain't no priest in the barrio." The Catholic Church traditionally has had little direct contact with the village; it was a rare barrio that had a visit from the parish priest once a year, usually on the day of the local patron saint.

While the Church undoubtedly commands significant physical and moral resources and claims the spiritual allegiance of 85 percent of the Philippine population, precisely how that allegiance translates into direct grass-roots terms is problematic. On those few occasions when the Bishops have offered collective advice in joint Pastoral Letters there has been little evidence one way or the other that their pronouncements have had a significant effect. However, as Shoesmith (1985) notes, at the broader level of popular perceptions the Bishops and clergy exercise diffuse influence. The abstract language of the official statements issued by the Philippine Catholic Bishops, while

themselves the product of compromise between conservatives, moderates and progressives—who despite their differences all share an overriding sense of their corporate character and interests—offer theoretical grounds for clerical pronouncements. Translated through the local priest to lay leaders and community groups, the Bishops' pronouncements provide moral authority or a convenient rationale for behavior.

Beyond its influence as a social institution, the Church exercises symbolic power in the Philippines. It claims, and is widely accepted as possessing, a universal, divinely sanctioned spiritual and moral authority. It is the focus of deeply held Filipino values and beliefs. But the Philippine Church, despite its institutional strengths, is organizationally clumsy and slow moving. Traditionally, the Church has not been an innovator; rather it has been embedded in the status quo, resistant to change. Despite the changes in social teaching and organization encouraged by the Second Vatican Council (1965) and a new emphasis on social action and involvement in the world, much of this inherited conservatism and inertia still characterizes the Philippine Church.

The failure of the State and, in a perverse way, the failure of the Church, to effectively extend itself into the village has meant that barrio folk have failed to identify the need for and appropriately deal with population control. Certainly in the current milieu population policy still exists primarily at the level of a rhetorical and moral debate; and if one is to believe my respondents in Surigao's villages far from the cosmopolitan city, fertility control is something that people other than themselves need.

BRAC 1967

While Frank Lynch and Perla Makil have jointly and individually made significant contributions to the understanding of Philippine society, there also remains a legacy of their work which we must now consider. This legacy consists in part of questionable methodology and findings in various Philippine studies. The well known 1967 BRAC Study serves as a point by which to focus a number of issues: 1) the methodological and substantive inaccuracies in past research; and 2) the question of the place of religion—theologically and substantively—in Philippine society, and how and why it seems to have been dealt with lightly, as though it were a taboo area of social criticism. Catholicism, in particular, seems to be so ingrained in one

sense or another in the Philippine psyche that its critique by Christian Filipinos is often subdued and may obscure cultural bias. This is evident in the relationship between religion and population issues, on which so little has been written—even after the BRAC Study of 1967.

The BRAC Study was, like Madigan's (1972) famous study in Cagayan de Oro, conducted in the late 1960s just prior to fertility control becoming a national issue; hence it comes as no surprise that Lynch and Makil found no fertility differential for various religions and that they considered the Catholic Church to have little impact on fertility. This was because, as would be reasonable to expect, that until people had become familiar with the notions and means of fertility control as well as the views of any particular church that no differential would emerge until perhaps the mid-1970s or later.

While the value of the BRAC Study is questionable, its influence is not without significant repercussions. Not least of all was the conclusion that religion in the Philippines played no part in the acceptance or rejection of Family Planning or contraceptive methods. This resulted in subsequent studies largely ignoring the religious factor. But where a few studies (e.g., Concepcion and Hendershot 1968) did deal with religion, the assumptions, methodologies, and even the questions, can often be traced back to Lynch's and Makil's (1968) original BRAC study.

In fact, the "study" by Concepcion and Hendershot (1968) is not a study-survey in its own right, but a reiteration of Lynch's findings. On this basis, the conclusions by Concepcion and Hendershot are predictable: there is no difference in preferred or ideal family size according to Catholic and non-Catholic respondents. The conclusion (*ibid*, 363) that, "other factors which apply equally to Catholics and non-Catholics must be responsible," (my emphasis) shifts focus away from the study, methodology and religious factor, to other factors which "must" be responsible, and thus evades a proper understanding of the nature of religion *per se* and its possible influence.

A similar result is noted in regard to the influence of religion on approval of Family Planning; differences between Catholics and non-Catholics are statistically insignificant. But again, as in the BRAC study, the question pertained to the influence of the Church, in the sense of a collegiate body making pronouncements on Family Planning and contraception. This confused equation of Church and religion is further highlighted, as in the BRAC study, with a question pertaining to the influence of the local pastor [*sic*], an official and recognizable member of the Catholic Church, i.e., the collegiate.

The overall conclusion reached by Concepcion and Hendershot is that,

the Church, as usually understood, has little influence—one way or the other—on the degree of family-planning approval in (the Philippines). This suggests that it may be more fruitful to look toward the structure of the family and the local community as determinants of Family Planning attitudes (*ibid*, 373).

What is overlooked is that religion—and the Church—in fact do play significant roles in family structure formation, local community, local political economy, community norms about fertility, etc. In addition, numerous questions implicit in the study beg an answer: in what way is “the Church usually understood”?—what is this “one way or the other”? While it certainly would be fruitful to look at family and community in their own right as factors in family planning attitudes, this should not be at the cost of excluding religion in a “religious” country.

Given that about 85 percent of the Philippine population is Catholic, the assumption behind the neglect of religion as a factor seems to be that, since “everyone” is Catholic, religion cannot be a “variable.” That is, since there are differential fertility rates within a nation of primarily one religion—differentials usually accounted for by reference to class, education and rural/urban factors—there is no point in examining this “invariable variable.” This is similar to the assumption Westoff and Bumpass (1973) make: they assume that women who have never used any method of contraception, or those who use NFP methods, are conforming to Church teachings. Clearly other motivations may apply.

But a cursory look at fertility rates of other countries where religion is treated as a variable, shows that Catholics indeed have one of the highest fertility rates. This suggests that there is something about Catholicism as a particular ideology, apart from purely collegiate proscriptions against artificial contraception, which may predispose people to a higher fertility rate.

Therefore, rather than merely correlate religion and fertility or Family Planning, I have attempted to explore the role of religion in contextualizing attitudes and norms pertaining to fertility, fertility control and Family Planning. No attempt has been made to control for other relevant socioeconomic or demographic variables involving complicated computations. Omitting such variables provides the

opportunity to focus on religion as a "cultural life force"—as a way of life having features of belief and practice most relevant to a body of people.

My argument, then, is that folk traditions are considerably more powerful than statements or programs issued by a formal Church organization or State Family Planning agency. For most people the official Church position on Family Planning is of little practical influence, and thus one can hardly accuse Church authorities of effectively inculcating a "have-more-children," "God-will-provide" attitude among those people. Rather, the more likely reason for the run-away population trend in the Philippines might be "the dead hand of tradition on the throttle of human behaviour" (Lynch and Makil 1968, 54). This tradition, I argue, is constituted in part by the past teachings and philosophy of a religion that older folk have imbibed, and continue to imbibe as "tradition" into their children, who are not given any effective counteractive education by either Family Planning agencies or the school curriculum.

To say that religion has no influence on the lives of people is to negate the essence of religion. Yet this is exactly what Lynch and Makil (1968) claim. According to the BRAC Study, while theological objections have been cited as one of the main obstacles to artificial birth control, they are by no means exclusively or significantly responsible for non-adoption or discontinuance of contraceptive use. The Church, in fact, is considered by Lynch as a "silent partner in population control" (Lynch 1971)—assuming a neutral position, both theologically and pragmatically; in his view the Church has neither campaigned for nor against Family Planning. But the Church's "silence" does not remove it from influence. As Laing (1982, 102) shows, while only 14 percent of Full-Time Outreach Workers reported the presence of organized opposition to family planning within their territories, most of this opposition was attributed to Catholic Church-affiliated groups.

However, until 1986 the Church certainly never used all its resources and political base to explicitly, systematically and comprehensively press its views on Family Planning, in part, perhaps, because of its own internal controversy over the issue. If anything, its campaigning has been orientated toward the violation of freedom of choice, the exercise of moral integrity and the bureaucratic nature of the program, (eg. POPCOM's bias for pills and IUD, adoption of a quota system, utilization of paramedics and government health institutions, etc.).

According to Lynch and Makil (1968), in the 1960s and early 1970s the Church did not seem to have a great influence on the clients' attitude toward Family Planning. While disapproval of Family Planning was derived from the perception of it being "sinful" or "against God's will," client opposition to Family Planning more likely sprang from a "cultural imperative" that arose in response to high infant and child mortality: the survival of family and community necessitated high fertility which was sanctioned by folk religion.

Based on the 1967 "nationwide" BRAC survey of the Filipino family Lynch and Makil also asserted that, while women believed that their local pastor disapproved of Family Planning, a majority of them nonetheless personally approved of it (Concepcion and Hendershot 1968). A follow-up survey in 1970 after the promulgation of the Papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, further revealed that, among Filipinos who perceived the Pope's disapproval of Family Planning, the majority still personally approved of it (Lynch and Makil 1971, 25). The 1972 National Acceptor Survey revealed that many Filipino women, mostly Catholics, generally thought that their Church approved of methods such as the Pill or IUD (Laing 1973, 22).

These conclusions received further support from a later (1983) Natural Family Planning Survey (NFPS). See Table 1.

Table 1. Natural Family Planning Survey (NFPS), 1983.

Is your religion a factor in your preference for NFP over other methods ?
Respondents: 589 Catholics.

	%
yes	26
no	73
don't know	<u>1</u>
	100

Source: Laing 1987

Respondents were also asked if they knew the Church's stand on Family Planning; 50 percent admitted they did not. Many of the remaining 50 percent gave either completely or partially incorrect responses, including: the Catholic Church accepts Family Planning because we already have a large population; it is all right with the Church as long as you can raise your own children; only abortion is against

the Church; the Catholic Church favors NFP and artificial methods; the Church seems to have no comment about Family Planning.

In fact, method choice was influenced by safety, convenience and effectiveness rather than moral or religious considerations (Laing 1973, 22). This latter conclusion suggests that Filipinos were not concerned with religious-moral matters in regard to the method of contraceptive used, when in fact the more important issue was the acceptance-rejection of Family Planning in which religion does play a significant part.

According to Lynch and Makil (1968), while disapproval of Family Planning was derived from the perception of it being "sinful" or "against God's will," this segment of the population did not resist Family Planning because of Church influence, for these were the same people who seldom attended Church regularly or consulted a pastor [sic] on serious family concerns. Neither had they enrolled in a Catholic school [sic]!

As indicated previously, there are serious methodological flaws in the 1967 BRAC Study, as well as in subsequent studies and commentaries (see for example, Hendershot 1982; Concepcion and Hendershot 1967 and 1968; Lopez and Nemenzo 1976; Yu and Liu 1980; Tan and Ballweg 1984; Laing 1973; and Lynch 1971). These flaws include selective sampling along class, gender and residential lines; improbable generalizations to total populations; pigeon-holing and misinterpretation of respondents' answers, (see Hendershot 1982, 41, in particular); a basic misunderstanding of what Family Planning actually means to the respondents (see Yu and Liu 1980; Tan and Ballweg 1984); a failure to deal with the confusion of women respondents reporting on Church approval/disapproval of contraceptives; and a neglect of the role of secular and nonsecular schools in attitude formation (see Lopez and Nemenzo 1976); as well as theoretical muddles involving economic and cultural "imperatives" (e.g. Lopez and Nemenzo 1976). There were also attempts, particularly in the BRAC Study, to measure Catholic religiosity and associate it (as well as Family Planning attitudes) with "Church Attendance" and "Closeness to Pastor" [sic], with the suggestion that the Church has little influence in the acceptance or rejection of Family Planning by the majority of Filipinos, and that both cultural and economic imperatives are more determinant. However, perhaps all they succeeded in achieving, I would suggest, is measuring social status, and not simply religious commitment. These are just some of the errors apparent in the BRAC Survey and similar researches.

If one takes the findings of the BRAC Study to a final conclusion, one finds that 50 percent of rural peasants reject Family Planning; that is, the poor, less, educated, rural dweller who goes to Church less often than his/her urban, upper-status, educated counterpart, is less influenced by the Church, but rejects Family Planning more; therefore, according to Lynch and Makil, the Church cannot be a major influence in the rejection of Family Planning. One is left to wonder if the Church can therefore be a pronatal influence among peasants, and if not, what exactly is its role and influence?!

That there are all sorts of missing links in the logic of the BRAC's argument reflects the inadequacy of that Study. Nevertheless, on the basis of the foregoing, the BRAC Study concludes that those who disapprove of all forms of Family Planning are, as a group, more remote from the Church than those who approve of Family Planning. This only makes sense when one considers that disapproval was in fact related to religion, not official Church policy. The articulations, "it's sinful," "it's against God's Will," which the BRAC Study noted, were wrongly assumed by Lynch and Makil to be parrot-imitations of Church sermons, rather than expressions of religion. Thus it was not necessary for disapprovers of Family Planning to regularly attend Church or consult a priest on serious family concerns, i.e. to be "good Catholics."

While both secular and nonsecular education and various religious observances put one in contact with official Catholic teaching, and while there may be the occasional direct exhortations from the pulpit or confessional, Filipinos are likely to be exposed to the influence of other media which extol the virtues of the large family (Stycos 1968, 169-70). The composite result from both verbal and behavioral cues is the embellishment of a religion which already condones high fertility and needs little input by means of clerical exhortations. While the Church may have some direct influence through policy, this influence does not have a dynamic of its own. Rather, there is a religious dynamic which people live and use which opposes Family Planning; it is not merely Church edict as Lynch and Makil suggest—and as Family Programmers seem to believe.

In short, throughout much of their report Lynch and Makil fail to clearly distinguish "religion" from "church," by implicitly referring to—and attempting to exonerate—"Catholicism." They fail to realize that "religion" is, as I argue, an ideology which permeates everyday life and influences one's world perspective; it is in this sense that religion is a social rather than theological phenomenon.

Other Philippine Studies

Let me briefly summarize some of the other studies and findings with respect to fertility differentials and religion in the Philippines. Research in Cagayan de Oro City of 1958, for example, found that Catholics and Aglipayans had a higher fertility than Protestants and those with no religion (cited in Madigan 1972, 105).

Data from the 1963 Bureau of Census, however, indicates a less clear picture (table 2):

Table 2. Children Ever Born
(Philippine Bureau of Census, 1963)

women 45+	Aglipayan	Protestant	Moslem	Catholic	other
weighted by frequency of mothers in each age group:					
women 15+	Aglipayan	Catholic	Protestant	other	Iglesia
women 20-44	Iglesia	Catholic	Aglipayan	Protestant	other

Source: Madigan (1972, 105).

Madigan (*ibid*) suggests that Protestant couples until 1963 had not extensively practised fertility control; and that the high Aglipayan fertility may result from the large percentage of rural people in their membership as well as their generally below-average educational attainment.

Madigan (1972), in his own survey, concludes that the differential stance of the churches on the morality of contraception does not seem to have significantly influenced decisions about the use of contraceptives. He posits relative high birth rates across most religious denominations in terms of cultural conditioning, i.e., traditional values and outlook of Filipino culture.

Three issues arise from his conclusions. The first is some conflation of religion and Church, ignoring the very possibility that the cultural conditioning, the traditional values and outlook of Filipino culture, are in fact religion in a substantive sense. Second is that, while Madigan denies both religion and Church influence contraception adoption, he is of the opinion that several years into the future (i.e. in the 1970s) religion or Church may play a prominent role in regard to differential fertility rates. The third point to be noted in Madigan's conclusion is that he recognizes that Protestant groups,

with the approval and co-operation of their religious leaders, have spearheaded a Family Planning clinic in the Cagayan de Oro Provincial hospital; and he suggests that Protestants seem to be more supportive of fertility control and implicitly more progressive in this matter than Catholics, for he says that the Protestants are obviously highly motivated (*ibid*, 138) and they vigorously promoted Family Planning among members of their own Churches.

Lacar (1974), and Ballweg (1972), using 1971 KAP survey data, followed up Madigan's (1972) study and found that Madigan's speculation—that an important Protestant-Catholic difference in reproductive goals or contraceptive use would emerge by the early 1970s—was not supported. Ballweg also found that the most frequently cited reason for non-use of any method of family planning was a desire to become pregnant, not a concern for the "sinfulness" of family planning (*cf.* Johnson and Burton 1987, 219).

Similarly, a 1978 Republic of the Philippines Fertility Survey (RPFS) suggested that Catholicism still played no important role in pregnancy rates. The average number of children born in 1973-78 per continuously married woman was about the same for Catholics (1.2) as for non-Catholic Christians, such as Protestants (1.2), Iglesia ni Kristo (1.2), and Aglipayans (1.1) (NCSO 1979 100, cited in Johnson and Burton 1987, 219-20).

Later, Laing (1984) argued that the rise in popularity of the rhythm method during the 1970s, and the absence of any religious differential in fertility or its control, represented a general cultural resistance to Western methods of modern contraception and that Catholicism still played no important relevant role in the Philippines.

According to one ESCAP (1978) report, Filipino Catholics on average marry earlier than Aglipayans and Protestants. In the same report (*ibid*, 165) the centrality of values attached to having children were listed; the value "because of your religion" not only ranked last in saliency, but was substantially lower than the second-last value.

In another survey further evidence of fertility differentials was found (see table 3).

In Dumaguete City of the Philippines the mean number of pregnancies is the same for Catholics and Protestants, although Catholics expect a larger completed family size. Fifty-two percent of Catholics expect to have seven or more children, compared with 32 percent of Protestants (Laing 1967, 21). Also, one finds a high proportion of women planning to use Family Planning regardless of religion, but more Protestants are of this mind than Catholics (Jones and Nortman 1968).

Table 3. Mean Number of Children Born to Ever Married Women Who Have Been Married 10-19 years Correlated with Religion.

Roman Catholic	5.1
Protestant	4.9
Iglesia ni Kristo	4.4
Aglipayan	5.1
Islam	5.0
Others	5.2

Source: 1978 Fertility Survey Report.

A more recent paper by Johnson and Burton (1987) tested the religious-minority group status hypothesis (cf. Day 1968) with respect to religion and reproduction in Philippine society. The authors indicate that Protestant males desire fewer sons and daughters than do Catholic males, and that Protestant females do not want fewer sons but do want fewer daughters than Catholic females. Protestants are less likely than Catholics to view the instrumental roles of sons and daughters as the most salient advantages of having children, and more likely than Catholics to think a married couple should start to practice contraception even before the first birth. The result suggests that support for the "religious minority group status" hypothesis is not limited to minorities with an explicitly pronatalist creed or to religious groups in more developed nations or to nations with an indigenous European culture. Consistent with these findings are attitudes as to when married couples should start using Family Planning, cross-tabulated by religion and sex of respondent:

Table 4. Attitudes About When Married Couples Should Start Using Family Planning, by Religion and Sex of Respondent.

Timing of 1st use of FP	Men %		Women %	
	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant
Never	4.44	0	2.42	0
Before 1st birth	26.67	40.74	33.87	56.90
After 1st birth but before last wanted birth	22.22	16.05	31.45	21.55
After last wanted birth	31.11	30.86	17.74	13.79

Source: Johnson & Burton (1987, 228).

As can be seen in the first row, while only a small percentage of Catholic men and women rejected Family Planning altogether, no Protestant women rejected it; perhaps more significant, in the second row, is the substantially greater number of Protestant men and women who considered the use of Family Planning as appropriate before the first birth compared to Catholics. Consistent with this, too, is that Catholics are more likely to consider artificial contraception as being against God's will; Catholics consistently are more likely than Protestants to view diaphragms, IUDs, pills, condoms and surgical sterilizations as contrary to Divine Will.

Finally, while fewer Catholics than Protestants may view the world rate of population growth as serious, Jones and Nortman (1968) report on Laing's (1967) finding, again in Dumaguete city, that a consistently high proportion of Catholics approve of fertility planning, are interested in going to a clinic, would use an IUD or other effective methods, and plan to use fertility control methods; however, Protestants have a consistently higher proportion responding in the affirmative to these issues.

Ambionia

In Surigao City I conducted my own examination of birth registrations at City Hall, and using a somewhat arbitrary categorization, found the following data:

Table 5. Birth Registrations by Protestant* and Catholic Religions, Surigao City Hall, 1988.

# of children %	Protestant* %	cumulative %	Catholic %	cumulative %
1	33	33	26.17	26.17
2	26	59	24.06	50.23
3	16	75	17.72	67.95
4	12	87	13.17	81.12
5	5	92	9.75	90.87
6	4	96	4.87	95.74
7	4	100	4.22	99.96

*includes Christian denominations other than Catholics.

In this above sample, and at this time, 25 percent of Protestants have four children or more, compared to about 32 percent of Catholics. Overall, 59 percent of Protestants have one or two children, while only 50 percent of Catholics so have; in effect, this leaves more Catholics to have three or more children. Generally, in what is admittedly a rather poor sample—particularly since many non-Catholic but Christian denominations have been included under the rubric of "Protestant," and the data do not take account of the age of parents nor completed family size—while the differences between Protestants and Catholics may not be great, there is nevertheless a consistency in the difference between the two denominations.

In Table 6, again there is a consistency of difference as well as larger differences, while other Christian denominations have been excluded from the Protestant category. Effectively, nearly 90 percent of Protestants have four or less children, compared to 75 percent of Catholics; or to put it another way, 55 percent of Protestants compared to 46 percent of Catholics have only two children.

Table 6 Detailed Birth Registrations by Protestant and Catholic Religions, Surigao City Hall, 1988.

# children	<u>Protestants</u>			<u>Catholics</u>		
	# Respondents	%	cum%	# Respondents	%	cum%
1	15	30.61	30.61	161	24.24	24.24
2	12	24.48	55.09	148	22.28	46.52
3	11	22.44	77.53	109	16.41	62.93
4	6	12.24	89.77	81	12.19	75.12
5	2	4.08	93.85	60	9.03	84.15
6	1	2.04	95.89	30	4.51	88.66
7	1	2.04	97.93	26	3.91	92.57
8	0	0	97.93	19	2.86	95.43
9	1	2.04	99.97	13	1.95	97.38
10	0	0	99.97	8	1.2	98.58
11	0	0	99.97	4	0.6	99.18
12	0	0	99.97	3	0.45	99.63
13	0	0	99.97	2	0.3	99.93
14	0	0	99.97	0	0	99.93
Totals	49	100	99.97	664	100	99.93

Turning directly now to the issue of religion in barrio Ambiona, the following question was asked of Ambionian residents and sought to clarify the influence of the Church and/or religion on acceptance/rejection of Family Planning: Does religion influence decisions about Family Planning (acceptance)? How or why? Fifty-three respondents answered this question: twenty-four (45 percent) said yes and believed that religion was against Family Planning and/or contraceptives; nine (16 percent) said no and believed that Family Planning was approved by the Church and/or religion; five (9 percent) said yes and no or were confused; and fifteen (28 percent) of the respondents did not know.

Table 7. Does Religion Influence Decisions about Family Planning Acceptance? Ambiona, 1987-88.

	#	%
yes—against Family Planning:	24	45
no—not against Family Planning:	9	16
yes and no:	5	9
don't know:	<u>15</u>	<u>28</u>
Total:	53	98

Apart from showing that a majority indicate that religion or the Church does influence decisions about Family Planning, the data show some confusion on the part of some respondents. Some 9 percent of respondents were clearly in two minds as to whether or not Church or religion influences Family Planning decisions; another 28 percent did not know and were often hesitant in making a reply. Confusion also reigned in those answers for and against such influence, with many saying the Church approved of Family Planning but not abortion; while others said no but indicated that priests disapprove of Family Planning; others of course simply said they do not think so, as if to imply that they were not sure.

But the responses as a category do tell us two things: First, everyone is familiar with the issue of Family Planning, and most are aware of some relation to religion or Church. Secondly, whatever message is getting across to these people from either pro- or anti-Family Planning groups, it is a very distorted, confused and incomplete one.

Although some 45 percent of respondents affirmed that the Church or religion influences their decisions on Family Planning, there was some confusion over whether or not this was official Church preachings, or religion in its substantive sense. However, the BRAC Study suggested that the Church itself has little influence, and this seems to be supported by the fact that, for Ambionian residents, Church services are held mostly in the *poblacion*, which few men or women of the barrio attend regularly. A local barrio priest has also not been present for many years—in fact, most Ambionians could not name who their local priest was supposed to be!

What Religion Is

Doubtless there are many reasons why people do not adopt fertility control, but these must be contextualized within a social and ideological framework. It is in this sense that religion can be seen as a far-reaching ideological base to which all other attitudes and behaviors can at least refer for justification.

While Lynch's and Makil's explanation is at times pointing in the right direction, it remains incomplete and thereby provides us with a point of departure. Thus we need to ask: how does religion, in its substantive sense, influence attitudes toward fertility control, and Family Planning in particular? Lynch and Makil postulate that family planning attitudes are influenced by popular norms largely independent of Church sermons, an argument supported by the data that most respondents who disapprove of fertility control appeal to general norms of religion, morality and health, but rarely mention the Church *per se*—as we have noted above. To account for such attitudes and differentials between high and low status groups, the authors refer to traditional and nontraditional behavior, and to Philippine society as a "sharing society," in the sense of prescribed reciprocity between equals or between clients and patrons. They indicate that the preference of new ways of doing things is associated with high educational attainment, upper social status, as well as frequent media exposure, youth, and being a member of the Iglesia ni Kristo or a Protestant church; thus they conclude that the rural and relatively uneducated Catholics are more conservative and less prone to accepting Family Planning.

In conjunction with this conservatism is another attitude held by disapproving Catholics, which serves to emphasize a value of children

perspective: it is the contention of Lynch and Makil that having a large number of children, like the sharing of any economic surplus, is a traditional value, of benefit to traditional, pre-modern Philippine society, and it is strengthened by folk-religious sanctions. Perhaps this notion is best encapsulated in an example the authors give, in terms of a moral economy:

"... patterns promoting group survival and enhancement are developed which receive popular religious and moral support serving to perpetuate their practice. In the Philippines. . . . Religious motivation is apparently introduced to support and perpetuate a practice beneficial to the community at large. . . ." (Lynch and Makil 1968, 68).

Here we have a legitimation of the social order articulated in religious terms—so say Lynch and Makil. But it is a legitimation that exonerates from blame the Catholic Church for promoting or condoning high fertility, because it posits blame on indigenous folk-religion or culture which co-opts certain aspects of Catholicism to maintain or enhance local influence. While there is a large amount of truth in this proposition, the motivation of Lynch and Makil make their study rhetorical and suggest a view of Philippine peasant practices as rustic remnants of tradition or anachronistic social mechanisms.

Subsequently, Lynch and Makil conclude that high fertility among the lower classes arose as a response to a sociocultural problem. The problem was the survival of both the individual and the community. In circumstances of high infant mortality, encouraging the production of children was necessary. Unfortunately, the authors do not explain why or how this "cultural imperative" was reinforced by religious sanctions. Rather, they imply a functionalist and a *a priori* account of this cultural imperative. By means of this assumption Lynch and Makil account for lower class Filipinos who, despite having been instructed in Family Planning since 1970, continue to have high fertility, a *bahala-na* attitude, and ignorance or fear of modern contraceptives.

I suggest that, while the authors are heading in the right direction, their analysis is simplistic and biased. The authors ignore the reality of peasant life, the social roles for men and women, the psycho-social consequences of sexual values and norms, and the social as well as the economic value of children. They look upon "tradition" as a quaint evolutionary remnant, almost as a museum piece, located within a supposedly fast developing, modernizing and educated nation.

Nevertheless, taking a cue from Lynch and Makil, we can account for a general negative attitude toward Family Planning—in Ambionia at least—in terms of religion as ideology. Religion can be defined as a world view by which one engages in a perception and justification of behavior such that one ultimately refers to a particular basic theme of life. Just as we in the West may refer behavior or phenomena to a scientific-rationality theme, although we may not be an academic attending all the rites of University life, so may rural people of the Philippines refer to a rationality imbued with religiosity or the sacred, although individuals may not regularly attend Mass.

Durkheim wanted to show that religion is in some way a sensing and expression of the human, social condition. Religion, then, is not merely a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things” (Durkheim [1915] 1976, 47), but also a way of perceiving and dealing with things both sacred and profane. Thus for Durkheim religion is “a pressure exercised by a society on its members” and incorporates a “system of ideas by means of which individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members” (ibid, 241). Accordingly, “society” is perceived as a complex system of social relationships, from which is derived moral imperatives, rights and obligations. While religious practices have the apparent function of strengthening bonds attaching the believer to his/her god, at the same time they really strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the society. Religion, then, is essentially social.

As interpretative, religion “represents” society—comprehending or rendering intelligible social realities at a cognitive level. Religion is also expressive, symbolizing and dramatizing social relations at the expressive level (ibid, 462–65). At these levels, Durkheim argued, religion, through its constitutive symbols, allows members to mutually show one another that they are all members of the same moral community and to become conscious of their kinship uniting them. In particular, commemorative or representative rites have the function of representing the community in the mind, awakening certain ideas and sentiments that attach the present to the past and future, or the individual to the collectivity (ibid, 468–69).

Religion is not important merely because it describes the social order, but because it also shapes it (Geertz 1966). Religious belief is not merely the ecstatic engulfing of the total person amidst esoteric ritual, but also the pale, remembered reflection of that experience in the midst of everyday life. The importance of religion lies in its capacity to serve as a source of general, yet distinctive conceptions of

the world, the self, and the relations between them, on the one hand, and of rooted "mental" dispositions on the other. From these cultural functions flow, in turn, its social and psychological ones (ibid).

Religions, however "other worldly" they may appear, inform social practices and have a mobilizing impact on society. They organize men and women into action, they win hearts and minds. They form the common sense in which the everyday practicalities of life are calculated and expressed. Religions draw groupings together; they help to constitute and unify social congregations, supporters, participants; they cement social alliances. They also serve to divide: they mark out and separate, drawing distinctions between those who belong and those who do not. Religions are both the medium in which collective social solidarities are constructed and the means through which ideological differences or conflicts are pursued (Hall 1985).

Religion in Ambiona

Whether or not people of a community accept or reject Family Planning is, of course, a matter of being able to formulate, articulate and work through views or problems; and in making a decision, bringing to bear certain social forces and cultural legitimations.

Fertility is a part of the social cosmos in Ambiona, and therefore it is usual there as elsewhere in the Philippines for a woman to encounter moral and divine censure should she attempt to limit her fertility, particularly by the use of "pills." These perceptions are formulated and publicized, with respect to fertility and children, by means of gossip and rumor.

Lene, for example, has only one child, Felin, who has a cleft palate. Residents of Ambiona tell how Lene became pregnant before she was married. Concerned about community opinion, she attempted to abort the fetus by having her abdomen thoroughly massaged by a *hilot* and, some say, by also taking contraceptive pills. The abortion, however, was not wholly successful, in that eventually Lene gave "birth" to a still-born and deformed child. Subsequently she married her current husband and bore him a child, Felin, who is facially deformed. It is widely believed by Ambionians that this deformity is Divine punishment for Lene's previous sin.

In another case, a young woman, Estelle, had gone to Manila; whilst unmarried, she had a sexual relationship there, and fell pregnant. The man left Estelle, who, in shame and desperation, attempted

an abortion by taking "pills"—which many Ambionians believe to have affected the fetus. Three days after birth, the baby boy, Francis, contracted a "fever" and turned yellow; this was diagnosed by doctors in Manila as "fever and poor nutrition." The end result is that Francis is a spastic. He appears to have sustained some brain damage following acute untreated jaundice. Explanations offered by Estelle and others seem implausible; there is no evidence that contraceptive pills or "fever" lead to jaundice, although in local explanatory models there may be a relationship. [Prof. Lenore Manderson, private communication].

These and similar stories suggest that moral integrity is very important in ensuring good health and reinforce notions of normative behavior.

A major point arising out of these cases is that of Divine retribution. Lene's experience suggests a notion of folk-Christianity in Ambiona, whereby children are perceived as gifts from God, and that to reject or tamper with such Holy prestations invites various Divine retributions. In another case, the eldest son of the Llano family had a deformed hand; this, some locals claim, is Divine retribution for two first-cousins marrying. Grace Estera suffered a worse fate: she married her (distant) nephew, who died within a short time. Grace's spinster aunts had been opposed to the marriage as it contravened Divine Providence. Thus "God" may punish any moral transgression, even by tarnishing the very "gifts" He bestows.

A supreme deity, however, plays a rather indirect role in Ambiona (as in other parts of the Philippines [cf. Pertierra 1988]). Although God is recognized as the ultimate source of well-being, and His power is called upon in healing rites, supplications are often made to an intermediate Saint or ancestral spirit, and punishment of wrongdoers is usually left to the appropriate offended spirit. Where no such spirit is evident, as in the preceding examples, a kind of general principle of retribution (*gaba*) is attributed directly to God.

Philippine literature is full of references to taboo violations that result in punishment by a supernatural being in the form of illness or other misfortune—not only upon the transgressor but also against his/her family, community or even descendants. Many of these folk notions contain strong elements of social control.

In Ambiona, the concept of *gaba*, is commonly used to refer to the consequences resulting from what can be seen objectively as the violation of social norms which carry the potential for illness and misfortune (Tan 1987). For example, we saw how people have incurred

gaba through marrying kin; and how gaba may have affected Estelle and Francis; and a number of my informants suggested the use of contraceptives could incur gaba. Both Garcia (1976) and Hart (1980) make similar observations to my own.

A similar principle applies to good fortune (*suwerte*), or Divine blessing. For example, children are "gifts from God" in the sense that God, as ultimate adjudicator, dispenses good fortune. Although one may have children as a natural consequence of marriage, it is only by God's blessing that such a consequence will result.

Although illness and misfortune are often attributed to external factors such as spirits, traditional beliefs situate the individual within a broader social framework, where social responsibility is important in the prevention and treatment of illness or misfortunes. Reflected in supernatural beliefs, then, is communal welfare. This can be seen in the communal nature of many healing rituals, and the public concern for disrupted pregnancies.

Many of these beliefs and stories are acceded to and promulgated by influential barrio folk. For example, Lucena Edera and her husband, Angelo, are a respected elderly couple. Having raised seven children and modestly comfortable economically, they have a firm belief in God and espouse the notion that children are gifts from God and that "pills" (etc.) are sinful.

Within the barrio one encounters a pronatal influence, legitimated by a belief in the Divine and, for some at least, clearly manifested in the case of Lene's experience. On the basis of this legitimation and their personal status, barrio folk are able to intercede in the construction and enforcement of moral values in Ambiona. These beliefs are affirmed and passed on to one's children, borne out by the comments of Pablo and Francine Edera: that Family Planning is a sin, that the Bible preaches "go forth and multiply," and that if one does not follow God one does not receive Holy Grace.

Such beliefs and their propagation may be unfortunate for Family Planning Programs, but are further compounded by a lack of counteraction from such Programs. For Ambionians this means that pronatalist values and traditional beliefs about reproduction can more easily proliferate in the absence of a social context in which scientific information could be shared.

Indigenous practitioners, in particular, often have widespread popularity within a community. In Ambiona pronatal views are espoused by Sancho, the local hilot, who has a very firm belief in God and the words of the Bible.

According to Sancho most illnesses and misfortunes are caused by ancestral spirits. Offences against the social or supernatural order involve a breach of the moral code, as in the case of descendants failing to meet their ritual obligations to ancestors; disrespect to elders; physical violence; and incestuous marriages (cf. Hart 1978). One way to prevent or end retaliation is to admit fault and to offer compensation. "Such an offer acknowledges membership of a common moral universe and mitigates the fury of the offended" (Pertierra 1988, 132). Treatment prescribed by Sancho, then, is only effective if it is God's Will, since ultimately it is God who adjudicates over and controls the supernatural.

By way of summary, in presenting some of the people in Ambiona I have sketched their attitudes toward fertility control, and their possible influence on the Family Planning Program in that barrio. It is evident that, apart from any influence from "Right to Life" movements, Charismatics, Church or clergy, respected men and women in Ambiona echo and support a pronatalist view. Ambionians are subjected to this preference in every day discourse and generally accept it.

Sancho's exhortations, for example, were generally based on local religious and/or psychological notions, thereby tapping a ready source of traditional belief, morality and guilt. He thus placed the burden of well-being onto the patient and his/her social relationships.

Thus the significance of locally influential people lies in their contextualizing the individual or family within a broader social framework and accentuating collective social responsibility. In so acting, they manifest a form of social control in the reproduction of the social order. Hilot in particular, as representatives of indigenous medical knowledge, portray health and illness as functions of interactions among individuals, society, nature, and the supernatural. By operating within the traditional or local discourse, such influential people tap into already existing beliefs, hopes and fears. In this way exhortations are given substance and credibility. Often they are legitimated by reference to the Divine or supernatural.

Religious concepts thus spread beyond their specifically metaphysical contexts to provide a framework of general ideas in terms of which a wide range of experience can be given meaningful form. As a synopsis of the cosmic order, a set of religious beliefs is a gloss upon the mundane world of social relationships and events. It renders them graspable.

But more than gloss, such beliefs are also a template. They do not merely interpret social processes in cosmic terms, but they also shape them. In the doctrine of any religion there is also embedded—implicitly at least—a recommended attitude toward life, a recurring mood, and a persisting set of motivations, which cast a derivative light over the solid features of a people's secular life. Religious beliefs express and advance certain interests; they are used to legitimate particular structures of power, to defend a particular order of society, or to oppose it; they become linked with certain groups or classes and, as such, either help to preserve their position or are used by others to contest that position (Hall 1985).

Thus understanding the role of religion is to understand how it is that people's notions of the "really real" and the dispositions these notions induce in them, color their sense of the reasonable, the practical, the humane, and the moral (Geertz 1966).

Through the birth and baptism of children, social integration and identity are perhaps most accentuated, for the birth of each new child brings hope and expectation that the human social condition will continue and prosper, and has social consequences for the community. Because children have such a pivotal role warrants their defence against bureaucratic intrusions to limit their number and threaten the continuity of how things are perceived to be. To reject Family Planning, then, is to sense and express the human condition.

Wider Issues

Studies, overall, leave little doubt that both religious affiliation and religiosity are important factors in fertility: Catholics by and large appear to want large families, and generally they have them; and whether or not they approve of the practice of family limitation, Catholic wives still expect more births than Protestants and others (Stycos 1968, 162–63).

One of course may ask to what extent is higher natality among Catholics a function not of religious doctrine but of other determinants instead—for example, differences in patterns of marriage, or in the comparative social positions of Catholics and non-Catholics? (Day 1968, 29).

However, that high Catholic fertility persists vis-à-vis Protestant fertility regardless of education levels suggests that religious differentials are not merely artifacts of socioeconomic characteristics. Even

if we are to concede some of these other determinants we need to ask: what is there about the society and its values, or the differential values that may be related to religion, that create in the first place the comparative social positions or the differential marriage patterns for Catholics and non-Catholics?

Westoff (1961, 431), for example, consider the influence of religion on the fertility of Catholics in terms of a system of values that limits the use of contraception and extols the virtue of marriage and the large family.

Day (1968, 28) indicates that there are a number of both direct and indirect ways in which Catholic doctrine or practice could support higher natality, resulting in either intentional or unintentional responses on the part of individuals. For example, additional children could be born intentionally in response to religious teachings, or unintentionally as a consequence of clerical proscription of effective birth control methods. More indirectly, ideological encouragement of behavior conducive to higher natality or the passive acceptance of one's present life condition could occur. There is also the possibility of inculcating and reinforcing those values and attitudes that are conducive to higher natality, and ignoring or even actively working against those that are conducive to lower natality.

While it is possible that the Catholic Church's less direct activities—those that retard or deflect social and cultural change—are the more important determinants in this sphere of human activity, the causal connection can often only be inferred. But quite obviously, more than Catholic doctrine is at work. But just what is at work, and how it works, often remains obscure.

Perhaps, then, within any particular population, what is at work in the aggregate is the whole cultural matrix within which are determined: 1) the extent to which one has control over childbearing; and 2) the range of acceptable family size. Religion provides a reference point and legitimation for behavior and moral beliefs that constitute this cultural matrix.

While we may talk about fertility in relation to religion, one may also consider the wider issues of development and a "progressive spirit": how does religion, as a justification or reinforcement of values and action, temper or enhance particular views and behavior generally?

If, as Benjamin Franklin says, men and women are dominated by considerations of self interest and absorbed in the pursuit of material gain, then the question is not whether religion causes one thing

or another, but if and how particular religions either temper or enhance values and action. It is thus important to locate economic processes, programs, events or systems within the social frameworks which, in reality and in an empirically verifiable manner, affect them.

Common is the description of the Southeast Asian as dependent upon spiritual forces for defining his/her present place and future. Commonly animist spirits are still powerful influences that must be propitiated and in conjunction with interpretations of the dominant world faith can have an effect on medical and agricultural practices. To the extent that the individual does not seek to meet problems in a "practical" manner and looks to external powers, he/she may not be able to confront "real-world" issues.

Filipino Catholics have been similarly described as fatalistic, seeing their lives determined by God. According to one Catholic prelate this belief is founded upon views concerning "the world and man's [*sic*] relation to it: man is governed by a set of forces beyond his control" (ARI 1975, 40, cited in Von Der Mehden 1986, 105). This is perceived by modernists as shirking one's duty and withdrawing from personal responsibility, which is detrimental to development and makes it difficult to start and maintain socio-economic projects (Von Der Mehden 1986, 105).

These descriptions are very much stereotypical and do not portray the normal behavior of villagers, who usually make decisions on grounds related to highly practical and social considerations. Nevertheless, popular beliefs and attitudes are important when viewed within the more circumscribed limits of localized belief systems. Within that smaller community, behavior results from an amalgam of religious contexts, some orthodox and others not. One must consider holistically the relationship to the outside world and a host of internal factors, rather than simply refer to the impact of Christianity or other major religions. As Frank Lynch noted regarding the Philippines,

Concrete religious behaviour (beliefs, attitudes, practices) of a Catholic is a function not only of official doctrine and practice, universal or particular, but also to the culture in which he [*sic*] is reared, and the community in which he dwells (*ibid*, 106).

While we have a good deal of illustrative evidence of this, the very personal and local nature of much of it makes any macro analysis difficult.

Having said all this what we must admit is that a distinction between attitudes or values, on the one hand, and actions on the other is conceptually sound. While we may not concede to Weber's grand theory of the causes of capitalist development, we can nevertheless investigate empirically the relationship between values and action in a contemporary setting, where the results of attitude surveys can be checked against observed behavior, and the intervening conditions of action which in part may determine whether the former are translated into the latter can be similarly explored (Marshall 1982, 66).

Factors other than religion, such as those based upon the character of rural life in general or pragmatic considerations inhibiting the adoption of new innovations, have too often been translated into critiques of religion alone as the chief obstacle to change. The intimate relationship of religion to social structure and action makes it quite difficult to disentangle the one from the other. At many levels religious belief has been a force in delaying change, but very often as an indistinguishable part of a more complicated process.

There are of course methodological problems in assessing the relationship of religions to modernization, and their concomitant diversity of attitudes; as well as problems of the lack of comparative empirical data, and the problems of internalization and impact upon behavior. But these problems nevertheless should not deter investigation of such phenomena.

What this means for fertility, Family Planning, religion and Church in the Philippines is that with which I began this paper: there has been an assumption that because up to 85 percent of the Philippine population is at least nominally Roman Catholic, that there is little point investigating the relationship of Church and/or religion to fertility and fertility control. My argument, however, is, precisely because such a large proportion of the national population is Catholic, and that because Family Planning adoption has been lagging behind many other Asian countries, that whilst taking into account political, economic and structural features, it could well be that religion—in the sense of a set of values reflected in action—predispose resistance toward low fertility.

If we view the question as such we can see that it is a phrasing of the moral/political-economy debate with some attempt to account for a moral economy outlook in terms of a more holistic ideology or world outlook called religion. One danger of course is suggesting that religion or world outlook is the definitive or most predominant causal factor, or the factor for the containment of values and motive for

action. But we all know that Philippine society is more complex than this, and that in stating an argument such as this, one runs the risk of tautology. Nevertheless, following Weber's methodological lead, it is important I believe to investigate the relationship between values and action, incorporating the notions of religion and church with respect to fertility and fertility control.

Conclusion

In this article I have noted that, while the contributions to Philippine studies by Frank Lynch and Perla Makil have been substantial, there have also been certain ramifications in terms of methodological flaws, a limitation of debates, and a rhetorical stance taken in subsequent, often functionalist-type studies. This is clearly evident in the few studies dealing with fertility (control) and religion. The main contributions by Lynch and Makil were made in four studies between 1967 and 1972 (Lynch and Makil 1968; 1971; Silayan-Go and Lynch 1971; Pahilanga-de los Reyes and Lynch 1972) which, as a connected series of surveys, consistently argue that: 1) the Catholic Church and Catholic religion in the Philippines has little effect on the the (non)adoption of fertility control; 2) folk traditions and morality are largely responsible for high fertility among rural Filipinos. Despite methodological and conceptual flaws, these series of studies acted as authoritative pronouncements which largely foreclosed on any debate of the issues. The few studies undertaken on the subject in the last twenty-five years have been largely influenced in method, orientation and conclusion by the foregoing. In the Ramos administration, under the direction of Health Minister Flavio, these entrenched views were directly challenged.

I also argued in this paper that Lynch and Makil were generally on the right tract in suggesting that the Catholic Church and its official doctrines were of little influence for most rural Filipinos, and that the more likely cause of high fertility is a "consistent and homogeneous folk morality, . . . which includes a belief that any form of conception control is an interference with the divine order of things" (Lynch 1971, 6). However, Lynch and Makil failed to explain and develop this notion; and that while they advocated the Church take a more active and responsible role in promoting "acceptable" family planning, the authors themselves tended to exonerate the Church from any anti-developmental blame, or their studies were used by the Church to buttress its position on the issue.

Rhetoric aside, a more careful examination of Lynch's view of a "folk religion" shows some promise in explaining—in part—Filipino fertility. Both Lynch and myself (cf. Mathews 1986; 1992; 1992a; 1993) have indicated the existence of this indigenous, "folk" religion, suggesting that even if the Church has (or had) advocated family planning, it has largely been ignored because the Church, like POPCOM and FPOP, fail to effectively reach down to the grassroot level; and that where these organizations do intrude into barrio life, they often run counter to well-established prior beliefs and practices.

I have therefore argued that Family Planning must confront a religious and thus public situation, for it is men and women who, in playing out their public social roles, do so within a religious context and often articulated through religious idioms. However, men—who dominate the public sphere—are usually excluded in practice from Family Planning programs. The public position of men, and thus their religiosity, appears to be a matter of little concern to Family Planning staff and researchers. Family Planning programs to date, in the Philippines, seem to have chosen to keep Family Planning a private, individualistic affair, and have thereby excluded from consideration those public and social features of culture which impinge upon Family Planning effectiveness: the social context of reproduction, and the social nature of resisting ideologies.

Perhaps it is that all Catholic Filipinos go to Heaven—regardless of how little they attend Mass—simply because they are baptized Catholics (Mulder 1987). But one's social position, one's sense of being a social person, and hence a member of a community, is dependent on one's religiosity—on whether one fulfils certain social rites within a religious context, and how diligently.

Abbreviations used

NEDA	National Economic Development Authority of the Philippines.
IPC	Institute of Philippine Culture, based at Ateneo de Manila University.
POPCOM	The State Population Commission of the Philippines.
FPOP	The Family Planning Organization of the Philippines—an international, non-government organization.
BRAC	Baguio Religious Acculturation Conference, Baguio City, 1967.
FP	Family Planning, as the administrative and bureaucratic organisation or Program imposed by the centralized State, is distinguished from family planning (ie. fertility control, or planning one's family generally) as may be practiced by any family. I will use the capitalized term "Family Planning" to refer to the official Program/s, and "fertility/birth control" or

"family planning" where appropriate to refer to planning a family in the more general sense, noting that "fertility control" does tend to connote more the sexual and contraceptive aspects of family planning.

NFP

Natural Family Planning (methods).

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