

Reflection on Pregnancy and Births

As I watched the Population Reference Bureau's video on the relationship between fertility and economic growth, I could not help but wonder if the proper implementation of the RH law could improve the state of family planning in the Philippine economy. Given that the average GNI per capita increases as the fertility rate goes down, there's certainly something there that the government should be prioritizing. Of course, the RH law already exists, but its execution remains obscure and contested today. Given this, it becomes evident that more needs to be done—passing a law in and by itself is not, and will never be, enough.

I have always believed that everything we do needs more time and effort than we are willing to give. For laws to be institutionalized, the government must do *more* than pass a bill. There must be an active effort to communicate with the church and other lobbying groups, even if they are not currently receptive. In addition, there must be an understanding that those contesting the RH law are not all doing it for religious reasons. Cultural expectations give women too much pressure to get pregnant and have children. In previous research interviews, I met women who felt like they weren't ready to have children but had their hands forced to bear them because of said expectations. They love their children, of course, but the belief that all of them would have been in a much happier place if they didn't feel like they were forced to be mothers in the first place was a common sentiment. Many of these women experienced postpartum depression, which is not suitable for either the mother or the child. Adjusting religious and cultural values will take a significant amount of time, but I genuinely believe it should be given just as much priority as legislative work.

When it comes to personal experiences and thoughts about pregnancy and birth, I found that many of my peers would instead not do it. I mentioned in previous reflections that finances are probably the most significant reason why younger people would rather not have their own traditional families. I have also heard that the current state of the environment makes many people my age reluctant to bring kids into the world, saying that they do not want to burden their kids with the responsibility of saving a dying planet. Another common sentiment was that there were too many orphans in the world, and they would instead adopt. These are all valid views, in my opinion. I do want to have my children. But, like most of my peers, I am reluctant to do it because of the financial challenges it brings, not to mention that there is merit in the view that I would simply be bringing them into a world that is too difficult to live in. Nevertheless, the dream of having children remains something wistful and hopeful in my eyes.

Justine V. Rivera

Demo 1 WFX, First Sem, AY2021-22