

Table 9 Distribution of Main Reasons Why A Marriage Does Not Need Children

Reasons	Freedom	Economic burden	Career	Couple's life	Don't like	Childcare	Other reasons
<u>Male</u>							
College above (n=97)	20.6	37.1	5.2	3.1	7.2	15.5	10.3
Below college (n=126)	13.5	50.0	1.6	2.4	7.9	11.9	15.1
<u>Female</u>							
College above (n=132)	23.5	34.8	3.0	4.5	9.1	18.2	6.8
Below college (n=116)	18.1	45.7	2.6	3.4	6.0	11.2	11.2

Sources: Survey of Social Development Trends, DGBAS, 2002.

Gender Equality and Fertility

Through the process of industrialization and modernization, Taiwanese women have achieved significant progresses for status at least include the following aspects: tremendous increase of female college students, shrink in gender gap among university graduates, more and longer female participation in labor market, increase of female workers in professional or technical jobs with higher income and prestige, shrink in wage differentials by gender, legal protection of gender equality in employment field and family violence events, all the efforts led to the elevation of women's social and economic achievements and status. Women's status measured by indicator of GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure), which was developed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), scored 0.707 in 2005, ranked 19th among 94 countries in the world. In the context of Asian societies, Taiwanese women's GEM score ranked only behind Singapore's 0.761 even exceeding Japan's 0.557 and South Korea's 0.510.

The change of women status in Taiwan is similar to those happened in the Western societies in a step advanced. Changes of women's status in public sphere bring about a decreasing merit of married life with patriarchal inheritance for women, help result in postponement of marriage and childbearing and some of the reluctance result in celibate. The Survey of Social Development Trends (DGBAS, 2002) provided the evidences with respect to single women's reluctance against enter into marriages. In response to the main reasons remained unmarried, females had much higher proportions expressed they were "satisfied with present condition" or "Afraid of unhappy marriage" than male respondents. Table 6 indicates there were 22.1 percent of unmarried women attributed their reason remained single to be "satisfied with present condition" compared to only 8.1 percent of unmarried men held the same reason. There were another 12.4 percent of unmarried women attributed their reason remained single to be "afraid of unhappy marriage" compared to only 2.4 percent of unmarried men had the same thought.

Changes of women's status also increased the difficulties combining work and childcare for married women, might have also led to the lowering of attraction of married life. There is evidence that both extended family type and stem family type coexist with modernization in Taiwan, continuing upholding traditional patrilineal value as well as patrilocal practices. The percentage co-resident of newly-weds with husband's parents was still 67 percent in 1985 just after the transition in Taiwan, though it had declined from 92 percent in 1958 (Freedman et al., 1994; chi, 1992).

As women have become more educated and engaged in jobs outside of home, the percentage of dual-earner family increased. For married women aged 25-34, working couples have increased from 48.2 percent in 2003 to 52.2 percent in 2006. According to Time-use survey, employed women work 7.9 hours and men work 8.4 hours on average per day. Time-use survey also indicates that men's role has not changed significantly until recently, the average time that men aged 15 years and above spent for family matters was 0.5 hour per day compared to women's 2.4 hours. In addition to the long working hours for the employed, women are still taking charge of most household work spending time about five times to men. Of course, working wives find it difficult

to combine work and family duties they are assigned.

As score of Gender Empowerment Measure signified women's power increase in public life, women's conscious raised toward egalitarianism. Educated and professional women would particularly feel frustrated in women's familial role as submission to husbands and the assignment of taking care of husband's parents, also taking charges of household chores and childcare, that all are expected in the traditional family system. Such disparities between women's social and familial roles led to the lowering of attraction of married life, particularly for those independently capable women living in urban areas and having jobs of higher prestige.

Nuptiality behavior can become a dominant factor affecting the below-replacement and ultra-low fertility, owes to the condition that extra-marital fertility is rare. Unlike their counterparts in the West, educated and working women in Taiwan stay single longer but scarcely dare to cohabit and have extra-marital births. Suzuki (2005) also pointed out the deficient contribution from extramarital births in Japan and Korea in comparison to some Western countries ever experienced fertility resurgence during 1995-2000. Atoh et al. (2004) explained the common low incidences of cohabitation and extra-marital births in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore is due to the remaining of patriarchal family system and the cultural heritage of Confucianism which inhibit fertility performance of unmarried women. Cohabitation is, on principle, based on free decisions by equal partners. Although women's emancipation progressed in these countries, still hasn't yet brought about power of free decision on having a child or not than men at societal level or even in a cohabiting union.

Social Responses to Below Replacement Fertility

Anxiety of Demographers about Ageing Effects

During the mid-years of 1980s, population ageing grasped new attention of demographers in Taiwan (Tu & Chen 1989, Chen 1997). In particular, the drop of net

reproduction rate that fell below replacement level in 1984 revealed the alerting sign of it. After many efforts, demographers finally influenced the concerns of population policy from aiming at birth control to the attention on population ageing. The relationship between low birth rates and ageing of population was emphasized and their consequences and mechanism were illustrated (Tu & Chen 1989, Tu, Chen & Chen 1992). A research on re-assessing the population goals was launched out by the government in 1988 (Chang 2005), which resulted in a paradigm shift in addressing population problems. In 1992, the Guideline for Population Policy was thus revised. The previous goal for reducing population growth was then modified into that for maintaining a reasonable growth of population.

The 1992 revision of population policy guideline represented the effect of demographer's effort in the 1980s, however, did not account a drastic change to become a pro-natal policy. The general public has been used to the idea that limitation of births is good for family as well as important for the nation's development. Evidences associate successful planned family program and achievement in economic development for country seemed to well support the ever prevalent ideology of birth control. It seems the government as well as the society, were not yet prepared for a drastic change in policies from anti-natal nature to a pro-natal one. Even then, both demographers and policy makers did not fully realize the substantial changes in the nature of people's fertility behavior.

Accompanied with the 1992 revision of the Policy Guideline, strategies proposed to maintain a reasonable level of population growth mainly focused on increasing marriage rates. Based on demographic analyses displaying significant effects of postponement of marriage on fertility decrease, educational strategy was emphasized to promote marriages at appropriately young ages. Meanwhile, total fertility rate then still remained around 1.8 to 2.0 per woman, though below replacement, but not far from the replacement level of 2.1. Policy makers were convinced that encouragement of marriage could bring more young people into sexual unions, hence brought in more births as its consequence. Higher marriage rate, in accordance with the prevalent marital fertility rate, would together bring about an effect that shall compensate the gap of fertility level below replacement.

The population policy revision in 1992, with its mild strategies, only existed in analytically wishful thoughts. In order to realize goal of maintaining “reasonable population growth”, further concrete measures, including financial plans or budget resources, were lack or ever being put forward to implement. Meanwhile, fertility kept on declining in the subsequent years toward the end of 1990s. Issues of population ageing and its social and economic consequences succeeded the central stage of policy considerations.

Issues related to population ageing gradually gained the attention by government as well as media and the public since mid-1990s. The potential burden of an over-aged population and its implications for universal pension plan became comprehensible to the legislators and government officers of various ministries. That knowledge eventually leads to the legislation of pension insurance in 2008. However, the anxiety of demographers calling for pro-natal policies didn't receive equal recognition, unlike closely linked problem of ageing. When it comes to the proposition of a direct policy which encourage births explicitly in order to lift fertility level, social attitude diversified, government's stance became cautious and undecided.

Concerns from Feminists and Environmentalists

Taiwan is characterized a country with high population density, needless to mention the large increase of population during fertility transition, the public has been always thinking there is problem of overpopulation on the island. Environmental exploits also caused popular attention in the process of economic development particularly the effects resulted from rapid industrialization. These life experiences led people persistently think overpopulation is always a social problem in this country. Besides the historical impression people has hold, the structural force of population momentum still bring in natural increase each year even after fertility declined below replacement. Under such circumstances, it has been not easy to achieve a consensus to lift fertility in Taiwan.

As a sharp contrast in terms of political environments, the launching of the family planning program in the 1960s was rather straight-forward and determined, while the contemporaneous reversal of birth control faces through different climate. The

authoritarian climate in 1960s and 1970s provided the government at any convenience to implement national policies. The lift of Martial Law in 1987 brought about a series of democratization process in Taiwan. In the present time, public issue takes long period for negotiation among stakeholders and communication to formulate a new policy. In the late 1990s, as the calling for modification of the Guideline for Population Policy increased, government confronted oppositions from feminists and environmentalists. Both groups jointly expressed serious concerns and disputes.

The oppositional rationales, ever exerted influences through international fronts (Mitchell 2000, Martin & Mitchell 2000), contain three major arguments. Firstly, make assertion that there is no such a social problem as population ageing. Labor force productivity can be promoted through technological innovations, and the elderly productivity can be continued and preserved through later retirement policy in the future. Both of these two factors were pointed out to have usually been underestimated. Secondly, low fertility should be taken as a rare opportunity for doing compensation for environmental destruction in the past economic development as well as a relief for existing over-dense population. Policy intended to raise fertility is seen as a foe would further worsen Taiwan's already exploited natural environment. Environmentalist argument even ever won strong support from the top leader of science, the renown former President of the Academia Sinica in Taiwan. This viewpoint certainly affects many people taking a reluctance opposing pro-fertility population policy.

Thirdly, the discourses phrased by some active feminist scholars forcefully dispute pro-natal policy as a sort of discrimination against women. Pro-natal policy represent an sort of instrumentalization of women's body, taking women's body as an instrument to fulfill nation's target goal. Also, it deprives women's autonomy and subjectivity, represents an objectification of women. The same logic applied to family planning movement, which also represent a humiliation towards women in collective. Population policy with any quantitative goal for fertility or with a targeted number of births, A quantitative goal of fertility implies certain amount of childbearing tasks that women are required to fulfill. No matter what birth control or birth promotion, share the problem of employing women's reproductive function to accomplish a national goal under male's dominance. In such cases, women's will is neglected.

Environmentalists take low fertility and population reduction as good signs to ease the burden on natural resources due to over population as well as over consumption. They were concerned that once pro-natal policies were adopted, another wave of population increase would interrupt the chance of recovery to the balance of population and ecological system. During the late years in 1990s, these loud voices doubt fertility lifting, from the feminist groups and environmentalist groups and their coalition, interrupted government's plan for raising fertility to a certain extent.

Population Policy Development After Below Replacement Fertility

Since 1997 the already below replacement but stagnant total fertility rate resume its decline. Turning into the new century, TFR reached new lower levels. . It was down to 1.40 in 2001, 1.34 in 2002, 1.23 in 2003, 1.18 in 2004, 1.12 in 2005. The decreasing trend showed no signs of standing needless to say recovery. Eventually aroused actions of the government Ministry of Interior resumed population policy planning, aiming at formulation of new population policy from every perspective to mobilize resources for tackle of new problems (Hsieh 2004). In pursuit of public consensus, different forces were included, which involve feminist groups as well as demographers.

In response to the feminists' concerns, a leading group, i.e., Foundation for Women Right Promotion and Development, supported by Executive Yuan, played an active role (FWRPD 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005). In 2005, FWRPD set up a platform for communication with various women's groups. The platform reached a common stance stressed that population policy should not repeat its wrong emphasis on fertility goals and quantity, over stating productivity and economic growth. In order to pursuit good quality of life, population policy should not lack of gender perspective and ignore the needs of women. The platform organized by FWRPD proposed an ideal version for the guideline of population policy, which stresses the value of co-existence of all creatures, socially and naturally. Reflections in that version endorsed by women's group, emphasized the priority of building up a national childcare system in order to relieve women's family burden and benefit women for labor force participation. Their

stance was clear in terms of opposing setting any fertility goals, against direct measures that subsidize women's childbearing behavior.

The 2006 Population Policy Guideline Revision

As a consequence of endeavors since 2004, a new revision of the national Guideline for Population Policy, intended to overshadow the 1992 revision, was accomplished in June 2006. This revision incorporated much ideas pursued by feminist group and environmentalist group. Compared to the previous of 1992, the 2006 version forgive most of the population growth ideas; put more emphases on population quality through improvement of educational system, and stress balanced development between urban and rural areas, with a careful watch on ecological equilibrium. With respect to the family and reproduction, the 2006 Guideline stressed the implementation of population and health education which emphasize the respect for life. In terms of promotion for sound family functions, the Guideline stressed the needs to change social conditions in favor of assistance to parents for bearing and caring children and providing vigilant protection for children's rights.

The 2008 Population Policy Proposal

In order to formulate concrete measures to ameliorate emergent population problems, Ministry of the Interior (MOI) initiated a major project since July 2006, to accomplish the White Paper on Population Policy, mainly dealt with three major challenges in Taiwan. Three major problems to be tackled include: firstly, measures affecting fertility to ease population ageing and prevent depopulation in the future,; secondly, measures to meet the needs and improvement of life quality for further tremendously increase of the elderly; thirdly, measures to manage the continuous increase of various international immigrants, to meet plural goals of guarding human rights, social welfare and nation's security. This project tried to be inclusive of different social sectors and various interest groups, to be effective in consequences, to be able to coordinate dissonant stances, and to achieve the largest consensus among public, in a hope for future plausible implementation. The White Paper of Population Policy was announced by Ministry of Interior in May, 2008.

The White Paper of Population Policy is basically in accordance with the spirit of 2006 Population Policy Guideline, representing policy's continuity and consistency. In regard with low fertility and potential depopulation issue, policy research concluded a proposal of seven major measures. Methodology of policy research for proposal consisted of a through evaluative references of advanced countries' experiences (McIntosh 1981, Walker 1994, Chamie 1994, McNicoll 2001, Sleetbos 2003, Va de Kaa 2004, D'addio & D'ercole 2005, Li 2005, McDonald 2006), besides the demographic and social analysis for Taiwan. In summary, the aim for fertility recovery, although not mention a specific fertility level, is proposed through the carry out of following measures.

Building up comprehensive public childcare system

The first measure proposal is to build up a comprehensive childcare system. Specific aim of childcare policy is to reduce the burden of childcare for parents therefore increase the compatibility of family and work for employed women. Current childcare practice in Taiwan is characterized as highly relying on family and market provision, but deficient in socialized care (Fong 1997, Wu 2006). Childcare burden is high or childcare cost is expensive for most of family with young children. On the other hands, married women's participation rate is comparatively lower than other industrialized countries (Daly 2000, Hsu 2005). Proposal calls for establishment of public childcare system that government should provide sufficient, affordable, and quality assured childcare services for parents. Measures should emphasize on an enhancement of community nanny supportive system. An ideal model of community nanny supportive system consists of management, training, licensing, registration, supervision of nannies as well as making matches for family in need of childcare. Community nanny supportive system should be operated by non-profit organizations, with some public subsidy, working at community level. Inspired by women's group, the National Bureau of Children's Welfare already started some pilot projects since 2001, with subsequent extension to 40 supportive systems spreading over 23 counties until 2005. Recent statistic showed that there are 7,582 nannies registered in community supportive system, among a total of 40,553 licensed nannies in the whole

country. The care capacity of community nanny supportive system is proposed to be greatly enhanced and assisted with public resources in order to benefit more family.

Improvement of unequal maternal leave and unrealistic parental leave policy

The second measure proposal is to improve the maternal leave and parental leave policies. These measures aim at reducing the cost immediately following childbearing for parents. In respect of maternal leave, current regulation was found benefit is insufficient in general, and unequal among different occupational categories. The proposal maternal leave benefit should be raised to a universal standard of three months' salary and must be stipulated in employment insurance term. As for parental leave, since 2002 Equal Employment Act has been promulgated in Taiwan, the Act has stipulated eligibility of two years' parental leave at maximum. However, only few workers applied for parental leave. Major applicants have been women of government employees. Positions in public sector have more warrant for woman employees' return after leave. Women worked in private sector have less supportive environment. Employers' attitude is not favorable since they have to undertake cost of leave-mothers' discontinuity at jobs. On the other hands, It is found a common reason that working women rarely apply for parental leaves is due to income interruption during leave would affect family economic condition. Interruption of mother's income may result in financial problems for two-earner's family. This effect can not be easily ignored when family sense their living cost is about to increase after childbirth.

This proposal advised a benefit of six months' salary at maximum should be entitled to parental-leave workers provided from employment insurance. A relief of financial burden for would be expected to some degree, extent the financial burden caused by the income interruption due to parental leave on one hand, and also be expected to avoid the increase of employer's direct cost on the other hand. According to Equal Employment Act which stipulates a right of parental leave of two years, its feasibility seems not matured yet, awaits further assessment.

Provision of financial support with dependent children

The third measure proposal is to provide financial support for family with

dependent children. Examination of public and private sharing of expenditure for children's rearing and education, it was found that government in Taiwan played a less sufficient role when compared to Japan.(Cheng 2007, Cheng & Hurng 2005) Take the situation in 2002, Taiwan's government shared only about 24% of the total childrearing cost for the families having one preschool-aged child, and for families with two children of ages between 13 and 15, government shared 35%. While In Japan, government shared 52% of the total childrearing cost for families having children aged below 18. The financial burden of raising children for family is relatively higher in Taiwan than in Japan. Therefore a moderate amount of children's allowance for family with small dependent children under six years old is proposed.

Besides child allowance, proposal also made for income tax reduction for dependent children under age 18. . The proposal also calls for an equivalent deduction for each dependent child aged below 18 to the same amount as of the elderly. In addition, measures include the income deduction for childcare payment.

In order to share the housing cost for family with more children, proposal also made to provide interest subsidy for housing loan to family with three or more children.

Construct friendly occupational environment for childbearing workers

The fourth measure proposal is to construct friendly occupational environment for childbearing working parents. During 1990s, The Worksite Childcare Project caught the attention of the National Council of Labor Affairs during 1990s, several projects were initiated to encourage enterprises to set up facilities or develop cost subsidy for employee's needs of childcare. An original idea of worksite childcare project intended to prevent women from drop out labor force participation. The 2002 Equal Employment Act even stipulates employer's responsibility in provision of adequate childcare services for employees. However, such Act only regulates those big enterprises with 250 or more employees, leave small enterprises unregulated. As a consequence, most employees did not benefit because small enterprises are majority in Taiwan's industries. In total, only around 40 to 80 enterprises received grants for childcare facilities between 2004 and 2006. However, the proportion of childcare by worksite services is still insignificant when compared to purchase childcare services

from market. The beneficiaries are mostly the employees in public enterprises.

In the construct of friendly work environment for childbearing parents, It is argued that local government should take more responsibilities, especially in the joint effort and coordination among various local agencies such as labor affair, social and educational administrations. Innovative and flexible are important principles for constructing friendly occupational environment.

Further improve the reproductive health care system

The fifth measure proposal is to further improve the reproductive health care system. Through years of successful implementation of family planning program, the consequences include the improvement of reproductive health delivery services in public health and medical system, besides the effective birth control in Taiwan. For achieving the new goal of raising fertility, existing health apparatus has been ready for providing knowledge and services for safe and healthy pregnant and maternal deliveries, An ideological alteration is in need for the health or medical professionals from birth control to pro-natal. In the reproductive health sphere, problems of high prevalence of induced abortion and sex selection of fetus still await solutions. Health education particularly for the teen-agers, and more tolerable social attitudes towards premarital childbirths are reminded.

Enhance children's right and improve child protection system

The sixth measure proposal is to enhance children's right and improve child protection system in Taiwan. Child protection movement started to gain social notice since late 1980s. In 1990s, this movement achieved important progress in term of legislative revision of Children's Act in 1993, Prohibition and Prevention Act of Child-and-Teen's Sexual Transaction passed in 1995, and Bureau of Child Welfare was instituted in 1999. However, child abuse and low fertility problems ranked among Taiwan's top ten social welfare issues in 2005 (Yu 2005). Child abuse remained salient and childbirth kept falling, this parallel development signified a dangerous condition for the survival of children. Both are telling a decreasing value of children and ignorance of children's right in contemporary society. A precondition for the raise

of fertility is recognized that values of children need to be enhanced and their rights need to be guarded.

Improve marriage opportunity and children's value as public goods

The final measure proposal is to improve opportunity of marriage at societal level, and to enhance children's value as public goods. Marriage rates have been decreasing that lessen the proportion of married in population. Taiwan shares the similar cultural norms with other Asian countries that praise the virtue of reproduction within marriage (Sun & Lee 2006). Nuptiality decline has exerted important influence on below fertility. Therefore marriage rate has to be raised that one can expect an increase of fertility.

There are factors working at different levels which caused low marriage rate. High education and employment competition prolong marriage timing generally for males and females. The obligation of military services among high educated males also contributed to late marriage particularly for males. At the individual level, lacking motivation of marriage is a syndrome in postmodern era (Van de Kaa 2002, Bernhardt 2004), particularly prevalent among female population. More and more women gain independent economic status but many of them resent the traditional family system and the patriarchal dominance in family (Bahr 1982). On the other hand, Cohabitation behavior probably increased but did not contribute childbirths.

Measures proposed to improve opportunity of marriage through relax the tight institutional restraints which force young men and women dare only think about getting marriage at very late ages. Reflection upon high educational institutions and compulsory military services, suggests their constraints on marriage should be considered to be waived. Possible measures that may have effects on increasing the compatibility between marriage and higher education and compulsory military services is suggested, include provision of family housing for married graduate students, substitute social services in stead of military services for married men with children. Such measures are expected to reduce the holding-up effect of university education and the subsequent military service and further career development on marriage and potentially oppressed fertility in society.

Gender equality in marital relation and housework division is seen important to the reviving of motivation for marriage. However men's progress in sharing housework has always been reluctant. Related measures are proposed through obligatory education, both male and female students will be exposed to family life education which stress values and the practices of liberal, equal and cooperative gender relationships in family.

By and large, the proposal stresses the importance of enhance the social attitude in recognition of children as public goods of society, not just private goods of family. More public support for family with children needs to be realized. It is proposed that public transportations, public educational facilities, and public recreational services should grant free services for whole family's activities which have two or more children together with.

Conclusion

Instead of manifesting any successful stories concerning the effective policy measures that can be applied to raise up the fertility level in Taiwan, the historical developmental process of population policy in respect of fertility change is reviewed in this paper.

The emergence of lowest-low fertility in Taiwan in 1990s, in a society with robust marriage and family system, signify that traditional gender division of labor in family and in society, is no longer workable in new era and is harmful to reproduction. In pre-industrial period, decision of marriage and childbearing was in patriarchal family's hands, now-a-days women gained the decision-making power. In many situations, women have become, in the family, the major partner with reproductive capability in pregnancy and delivery. Although gender equity is still an issue, women's status may still below men's in general, a resistance right or not-to-conform power exercised by women, could result in great effect.

The experience of Western and Northern European countries and English-speaking countries have successfully avoided lowest-low fertility shed some light on pro-natal

policies for Taiwan. Gender equity is a non avoidable direction to pursue. However, gender equity need to be realized within family. Compatibility between work and the family is not pertaining to the need of women only. As gender equity improves, men will suffer the conflict between work and family further, or may intensified discordance in marital relationship.

The value of children needs to be respected from a public and societal stance, not just from private family or parental perspectives. Public support for family with children is itself worthy, no matter how much effect or none on fertility increase.

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