DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF THE INDONESIAN FAMILY

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This paper explores some consequences of rapid changes in contraceptive use, fertility and mortality in Indonesia. An examination of demographic trends over four decades reveals a behavioural disjuncture, with implications for diagnoses of social problems arising from changing family structures, and for policy prescriptions to overcome these problems. One important issue not revealed by statistics representing average behaviour is the way in which lower fertility implies a change in the distribution of women between mothers and the childless, and between mothers with very small numbers of children and those who more than reproduce themselves. To the degree that these distributions reflect the emergence of new social roles that are a function of reproductive status, any efforts to prevent fertility from going to the very low levels typical of Europe and many countries of East Asia imply the need to address the core nature of new roles adopted by Indonesian women. Looking to the future of childbearing in Indonesia, the emergence of low fertility seems to be bringing the nation to a crossroads: will increasing numbers of women adopt no-fertility roles that preclude childbearing; or will patterns of near-universal marriage be maintained, with the bulk of women becoming mothers of very small numbers of children? Convincing evidence to answer these questions is likely to emerge only in the next decade, but this paper presents some speculations that suggest the answers may be very surprising to the current generation of policy-makers.

In the second half of the twentieth century Indonesia experienced a major transformation in the social behaviour that determines the reproduction of society: first mortality, and then fertility fell substantially, in line with the theory of the demographic transition. At the end of the century fertility and mortality were still falling (see Muhidin 2002). When the results of the 2000 Census emerge, measures of fertility can be expected to show that Indonesia is near replacement level of fertility, with women overall producing an average of two children who will themselves survive to reproduce. Within the next few years, women in Indonesia will achieve average levels of fertility that will imply below-replacement family sizes, so that

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Appendix Table A1   Age specific and total fertility rates, Indonesia, 1965–2000

Period	Age specific fertility rates							TFR
	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	
1965–70	158	290	277	224	146	75	12	5.9
1971–75	127	265	256	199	118	57	18	5.2
1976–79	116	248	232	177	104	46	13	4.7
1980	90	226	213	163	105	43	14	4.3
1981–84	95	220	206	154	89	37	10	4.1
1983–87	75	189	174	130	75	32	10	3.4
1983–87	78	188	172	126	75	29	10	3.4
1985	46	176	173	134	83	32	10	3.3
1985–89	71	179	171	129	75	31	9	3.3
1988–91	67	162	157	117	73	23	7	3.0
1991–94	61	148	150	109	68	31	4	2.9
1995–97[a]	62	143	149	108	66	24	6	2.8
1996–99[a]	44	114	122	95	56	26	12	2.3
% decline 1965–70 to 1996–99	72.2	60.7	56.0	57.6	61.6	65.3	0.0	61.0
								SUSENAS estimates[b]
1989–1993								2.7
1990–1994								2.6
1991–1995								2.6
1992–1996								2.6
1993–1997								2.4
1994–1998								2.5
1995–1999								2.3
1996–2000								2.2

a   The TFRs for 1995–99 are calculated from the 1999 and 2000 data which are of questionable reliability.

b   Rele regression method of estimating TFR from child–woman ratios.

Sources: 1971, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Censuses; 1976 SUPAS; 1987 Contraceptive Prevalence Survey; 1991, 1994, and 1997 Indonesian Demographic and Health Surveys; 1989–2000 SUSENAS.